

Syllabus Analysis Summary Report

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Purpose

The purpose of the syllabus analysis was to evaluate the quality of syllabi developed by faculty across the university by part-time and full-time faculty and propose a revised guideline to generate consistency of format that comply with ULV Quality Assurance guidelines.

Procedure

Altogether 224 syllabi across the University were collected during the spring semester of 2000. The following full-time faculty from various colleges participated in the content analysis of the syllabi: Paul Alvarez, Leticia Arellano, Sharon Davis, Janis Dietz, Gerard Lavatori, Rita Thakur, Bob Wakeling, Ann Wichman, Matt Witt, Steve Lesniak.

Table 1 summarizes the information about the sample of syllabi. Table 2 identifies the frequency of course syllabi from each prefix reflecting programs and department.

Table 1

Information about the sample of syllabi (Total n = 224)

(Semester syllabi were prepared: Spring, 2000)

Schools/Colleges	<u>Percent</u>
Arts and Sciences	50
Business and Global Studies	29
Education and Organizational Leadership	10
Public Affairs and Health Administration	10
Location	<u>Percent</u>
Main Campus	56
CAPA	13
SCE	22
Undetermined	9
Faculty status	<u>Percent</u>
Full-time	33
Part-time	38
Undetermined (per catalog)	29
Course level	<u>percent</u>
Undergraduate	73
Graduate	24

Table 2

Frequency of syllabi form different departmental prefixes

Department	Frequency	Percent
Anthropology (anth)	2	1
Art (art)	3	1
Behavioral Sciences (bhv)	12	5
Biology (biol)	11	5
Chemistry (chem)	7	3
Computer Engineering (cmpn)	1	1
Computer Science (cmps)	11	5
CORE	7	3
Economics/Business & Global Studies (ecbu)	63	28
Educational Management (edmt)	2	1
Education (educ)	22	10
English (eng)	3	1
Geography (geog)	1	1
History (hist)	2	1
Honors (honr)	1	1
Health Service Management (hsm)	3	1
Humanities (hum)	1	1
Math	14	6
Management (mgmt)	11	5
Movement and Sport Science (mss)	1	1
Music (mus)	2	1
Natural Science (nasc)	5	2
Public Administration (padm)	11	5
Physics (phys)	4	2
Political Science (plsc)	2	1
Psychology (psy)	18	8
Sociology (soc)	1	1
Special Education (sped)	2	1
Theatre Arts (thar)	1	1
Total	224	103

Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation criteria included 170 elements and 20 domains (See Table 3). The criteria were adopted and modified from the following sources:

- a. Bers, T., Davis, D., & Taylor, W. (1996). Syllabus Analysis: What are we teaching our kids? *Assessment Update*, 8, 1-2, 14-15.
- b. Morey, A. I., & Kitano, M.K. (1997). Multicultural course transformation in higher education: a broader truth. In what course will look like after multicultural change (pp. 18-34). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- c. ULV Health Services Management Department Guidelines for Syllabus Preparation.
- d. University of La Verne Quality Assurance Manual

Each course was evaluated by two faculty members in terms of the presence (Yes) or absence (No) of each of the elements of the criteria.

Findings

Table 3 identifies the percentage of courses that included particular elements. The following are highlight of the elements that were deficient in the syllabi:

1. One-third did not include the name of the university
2. Less than 60% indicated meeting dates and times
3. Quarter failed to mention learning objectives regarding knowledge
4. Over half failed to mention learning objectives regarding skills
5. Nearly one-third had text and reading dates older than 5 years
6. Only about one-third provided dates for specific activities and four-fifth had dates for specific text reading assignment
7. Less than half mentioned criteria for class participation
8. Less than half mentioned penalties for absenteeism
9. One-third did not give due dates for papers
10. Just over 60% described requirements for papers and 20% mentioned information to be handed later
11. Only eight (8) percent allowed multiple drafts of papers
12. Less than half required papers 5 or fewer pages
13. About 40% required papers 6-10 pages
14. About a quarter did not mention exam dates
15. Only about one-third described the nature of final exam (comprehensive, etc)
16. One quarter failed to describe criteria for grading although 96% indicated how students would be evaluated
17. Only about half indicated how evaluative marks are translated to a final letter grade
19. Description of the relationship of the course to GE, major or minor were nearly completely absent
20. Two thirds made no reference to issues of academic integrity
21. Only about 10% made reference to support services
22. Only about 60% showed correspondence between learning objectives and assessment or grading criteria.

Table 3
The percentage of elements present in 224 course syllabi

Syllabus Element	Percent "Yes" or Present
<u>Course Information</u>	
(1 & 2 were identifying codes)	
3. Name of university	66
4. Name of department	47
5. Year	85
6. Course prefix	88
7. Course number	99
8. Course name	94
9. Semester	85
10. Course credit value	18
11. Campus location	19
12. Location on campus	26
13. Meeting dates	58
14. Meeting times	55
15. Pre-requisites mentioned	24
<u>Instructor Information</u>	
16. Instructor's name	99
17. Instructor's office	37
18. Office hours	26
19. Office days	19
20. Availability by appointment	30
21. Phone number	84
22. Fax number	19
23. Electronic mail address	67
24. Course or subject web-page	6
25. Other ways of reaching instructor	20
<u>Course Description/Goals/Objectives</u>	
26. Course content is mentioned	91
27. Clear and thorough description of the course's general content	85
28. Why the course is important or its purpose is mentioned	60
29. Instructional methods to be used are mentioned(e.g. Lecture, discussion)	55
30. Learning objectives concerning knowledge is outlined	75
31. Multicultural Intellectual contributions to the subject are stated	12
32. Instructor's beliefs or assumptions about the student are mentioned	36
33. Learning objectives concerning skills are outlined	48

34. Teaching / learning process is mentioned 31

Textbooks(s)

35. Textbooks are mentioned 92

36. Publication date of textbook or readings is current (5 years) 69

37. Chapters or pages are delineated on syllabus 82

38. Supplementary readings are mentioned 49

39. Other reading assignments are delineated 35

40. Other reading assignments are mentioned at instructor's discretion 40

41. Additional references for further research, if desired, are given 22

Course Format Mentioned

42a. Lecture 40

42b. Discussion 34

42c. Current events 4

42d. Videos 16

42e. Guest speakers 3

42f. Group work 18

Course Etiquette / Classroom Behavior Mentioned

43. Respectful interaction 8

44. Rational discussion 9

45. Control of cell phones 5

46. Control of pagers 5

Course Calendar / Schedule

47. Outline of topics is on syllabus 87

48. Dates on which topics to be covered are included 79

49. Specific activities are mentioned (e.g. fieldtrips, speakers, videos) 27

50. Dates to specific activities are given 31

51. Dates of assessments are given (e.g. tests, quizzes, reports) 79

52. Due dates of assignments indicated 67

53. Dates for learning activities, projects, and assignments to be completed in/ out of class 60

54. Dates of textbook reading assignments are listed 77

55. Dates of other reading assignments are listed 26

Course policies-Attendance

56. Instructor's expectations/policies regarding attendance are mentioned	71
57. Specific penalties for absenteeism are spelled out	49
58. Penalties for absenteeism are at instructor's discretion	34
59. Certain amount of absences are allowed	26

Course Policies-Tardiness

60. Instructor's expectations/policies regarding tardiness are mentioned	17
61. Specific penalties for tardiness are spelled out	26
62. Penalties for tardiness are at instructor's discretion	23
63. Certain number of late arrivals are allowed	11

Course Policies-Class participation

64. Class participation is mentioned	66
65. What constitutes acceptable class participation is spelled out	57
66. Criteria for class participation are mentioned	48
67. How students will know how they are doing with regard to class participation	41
68. Does participation affect grade	82

Writing Assignments-Out of Class

69. Papers are mentioned	61
70. Papers required in this class	90
71a. One paper is required	67
71b. Two papers are required	16
72. Number of pages required is mentioned	47
73a. Required pages are 5 or less	47
73b. Required pages are 6 to 10	41
74. Mention of late papers is made	20
75. Late papers are permitted	24
76. Actual due dates for papers are given	67
77. Is grade affected by late papers	50
78. Can papers be rewritten	11
79. Point deduction if rewritten	6
80. Can they be submitted via email	3
81. Requirement of paper described	64
82. Expectations of mechanics (grammar) described	72
83. Must be typed	56
84. Must be double spaced	33
85. Expectation of citations and/or footnotes mentioned	30
86. Mention specific citation style (e.g. MLA,	

APA, etc)	35
87. Further information to be handed out later	20
88. Multiple drafts allowed with possibility of corrections	8
89. (Skip)	-
90. (Skip)	-

In-Class Writing Assignments

91. Mentioned as part of class	12
92. Expectations are described	33
93. To be turned in for credit	55

Projects/Presentations

94. Mentioned as part of class	63
95. Requirements are outlined	59
96. Late assignments are permitted	7
97. Penalties indicated for not completion	33
98. Further information to be handed out later	11

Homework Assignments

99. Homework mentioned	32
100. Late assignments permitted	20
101. Affect grade if not completed	80
102. Nature of homework described	68
103. Further description to be handed out later	31

Exams/Tests (Not quizzes)

104. Mentioned as part of class	83
105. Number of exams/test	(78%, 1-3 exams/tests)
106. Dates of exams listed on syllabus	77
107. Consequences for missing exams	20
108. Final exam/test mentioned	86
109. Final exam/test required	90
110. Nature of final exam/test described (e.g. Cumulative)	32
111. If so, it is comprehensive	47
112. Exam review/study guide mentioned	22
113. Mention of exam/test can be dropped	10
114. Type of exams/tests indicated(e.g. essay)	32

Make-up Exams/Test

115. Mentioned in syllabus	34
116. Make-up exams are permitted	43
117. Grade is affected because it is late	16
118. Indication of whether make-up is same or different from in-class exam	24

119. Indication whether department will charge for make-up exam	51
120. Indication of number of exams that may be made up	33
121. Number of exams that may be made up	(83%, 1 exam)

Quizzes

122. Mentioned in the syllabus	28
123. Quizzes will be part of class	97
124. Possibility of taking quizzes for extra credit	5
125. Ability to drop lowest quiz grade	11
126. Number of quizzes indicated	27
127. quiz scheduling is mentioned	55

Make-up Quizzes

126. Mentioned in the syllabus	15
127. Make-up quizzes are permitted	92
128. Grade affected because the quiz is late	15

Grading

131. Indication of how students will be evaluated	96
132. Criteria to be applied for grading indicated	74
133. Indication of how evaluative marks are translated to a final letter grade	53
134. Class policy on incomplete grades is indicated	13
135. Extra credit is mentioned	11
136. Extra credit is available	51
137. Ways of obtaining extra credit are indicated	45
138. Impact of extra credits on final grade are mentioned	30
139. Number of points for extra credit	(58%, 1-15 points)

What Counts in the Final Grade

140. Attendance	74
141. Class participation	79
142. Regular tests	93
143. Comprehensive final	88
144. Quizzes	60
145. Extra credit	18
146. Papers	81
147. Homework	62
148. Presentations	83
149. Other activities	31

Program Relationship

150. Relationship of course to ULV's General Education requirements (Undergraduate courses only)	
N/A	40
No description	53
Some description	5
Detail description	3
151. Relationship of course to any major, minor, or other program (including certificate and credential Programs)	
No description	72
Some description	18
Detailed description	9

Issues related to ULV's Mission

152. Values orientation: reflections about personal, professional and societal values in light of the health and well being of people.	
No description	75
Some description	18
Detailed description	5
153. Diversity of intercultural orientation: understanding and appreciating diversity of cultures in the workplace and/or community at large.	
No description	79
Some description	16
Detailed description	5
154. Sustainable environment: impact/dependence of human beings on the health and well being of the environment	
No description	91
Some description	5
Detailed description	3
155. International orientation: understanding and appreciation of the global inter-relatedness and scope of the issues covered in the course.	
No description	84
Some description	13
Detailed description	4
156. Lifelong learning: teaching of learning process, critical thinking, research, and accessing/integrating information to foster career and personal growth.	
No description	71
Some description	21
Detailed description	8
157. Community service: understanding and appreciation of engagement in the community.	

No description	97
Some description	2
Detailed description	1
158. Expectation about the utilization of information technology	
No description	76
Some description	17
Detailed description	7
159. University's Mission statement attached	20

Academic Integrity

160. Academic integrity: Behavior that the college considers to be academically dishonest, student's responsibility, and consequences for plagiarism.	
No description	69
Some description	21
Detailed description	9

Support Services

161. Reference to support services (e.g. tutoring, computer labs)	
No description	89
Some description	9
Detailed description	1
162. Additional resources to be used in class (depending on course - e.g. computer use, labs, fieldwork)	
No description	75
Some description	19
Detailed description	6

Safety

163. Requirement of safety guidelines in this particular class	9
164. Are safety procedures outlined	3
165. What to do in case of emergencies included, in the event dangerous substances are mishandled or accident occurs	1
166. Are important college dates listed on syllabus (e.g. date to drop classes make-up, incomplete grade request)	3

Grammar, Spelling, Citation

167. Correct grammar used and modeled	
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in the syllabus	87
168. Correct spelling used and modeled in syllabus	93
169. Textbooks and required readings have adequate information regardless of format (Author, title, publication date, publisher)	59
170. Number of pages in the syllabus	
1-3 pages	46
4-6 pages	39
Over 7	15

Objectives, assignments and grading

171. There is correspondence between learning objectives and assigned topics or activities	70
172. There is correspondence between learning objectives and assessment/ grading procedures and criteria	62

**Action Update
October 2002**

The findings of the analysis of the syllabi led to deliberations that resulted in the development of a syllabus construction guide to help full-time and adjunct faculty generate syllabi that address the observed deficits. It was approved by the faculty senate in October 2002, and is made available to faculty on the University webpage. It is attached below.

Also generated, and attached below, was a checklist, based on the guide, to evaluate syllabi.

University of La Verne
Suggested Guidelines for Syllabus Construction
(November 2002)

A syllabus

- Is an unambiguous detailed plan - a management and communication tool - that may be modified when so stated
- Reflects department's, program's and University's standards and expectations
- Projects instructor's professionalism, organization and credibility
- Contributes to the overall teaching evaluation process for promotion, and tenure (and rehire for adjunct faculty)
- Establishes an agreement ("Contract") that may be challenged in court

Elements of a syllabus (Words in **Bold** may be used as headers in a syllabus)

1. **Identification:** Centered at the top of the first page the syllabus identifies the University, department/program, campus/site and term/semester
2. **Information about the course:** Includes department prefix, number, title, semester, hours, pre-requisites, and identifies program relation - elective, required, GE, etc,
3. **Information about instructor:** Name, degree, rank, office hours and/or contact information by phone, email, etc
4. **Course description:** Briefly describes the general goals of the course in a way that is a little more than what is in the catalog, but is consistent with the original course outline (proposal) (may use bullet format), and identifies which of the following University *Mission elements* are salient in the course: Diversity and Intercultural Orientation, Values orientation, Interdisciplinary Thinking, Service Orientation and Life Long, Learning
5. **Student Learning Outcomes/Objectives:** Identifies in bullets the specific student learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, skills and competencies - may be narrative in form
6. **Nature of activities in the class:** Reflects and is consistent with objectives - such as specific types of writing, group projects, content of lectures, nature of presentations, computer-simulations and reflections about films, etc
7. **Texts and readings:** Describes in a complete professional format (MLA, APA, etc) required and optional readings and materials
8. **Weekly (or daily) plan:** Includes dates, topics, assignments, tests and exams-just giving chapter numbers is not adequate
9. **Evaluation and Grading:** Explicitly reflects objectives, clearly describes how grade is obtained, identifies points or weights given to each evaluation activity, and explains "Incomplete" or "In Progress" policy
10. **Plagiarism policy:** Refers to the ULV policy in the catalog, and establishes the policy involving potential consequences
11. **Attendance policy:** Describes instructor expectations related to grade, approved absences, and excessive absences
12. **Class Participation:** Describes instructor expectations related to what constitutes "participation" and how it affects grade

13. **Group Assignments:** If this is involved, describes instructor expectations, the nature of the tasks and how each individual's contribution will be evaluated
14. **Make-up and late assignment:** Describes if late assignments are acceptable, whether make-ups are provided and how grades will be affected
15. **Writing assignments:** If these are involved, describes nature and length of assignments, deadlines, submission of draft or portions for feedback, criteria and rubric to be used for evaluation (Suggestions provided by Writing Excellence Committee - see web site), electronic or hard copy submissions
16. **Tests and exams:** Describes specific dates, nature (essay, multiple-choice), coverage of topics or material, evaluation points associated with the test, make-up policy consequences if any
17. **Course modification statement:** This statement gives the instructor the latitude to modify course in the event of some untoward event. Suggested statement: *This course may be modified, verbally or in writing, at any time during the term at the discretion of the instructor or the department.*
18. **Liability release statement for student field trips:** If a field trip is included as part of this course, students are requested to complete the *Waiver of Liability Form* and obtain approval of the Department Chair.
19. It is recommended that the instructor consider attaching a statement of the ULV Mission Elements, and a bio-sketch of the instructor

Approvals

1. August 2002: Academic Assessment Committee¹
2. October 2002: Faculty Senate