



## Inclusive, Learning-Centered, Transparent Syllabus



**Make the Course Explicit**

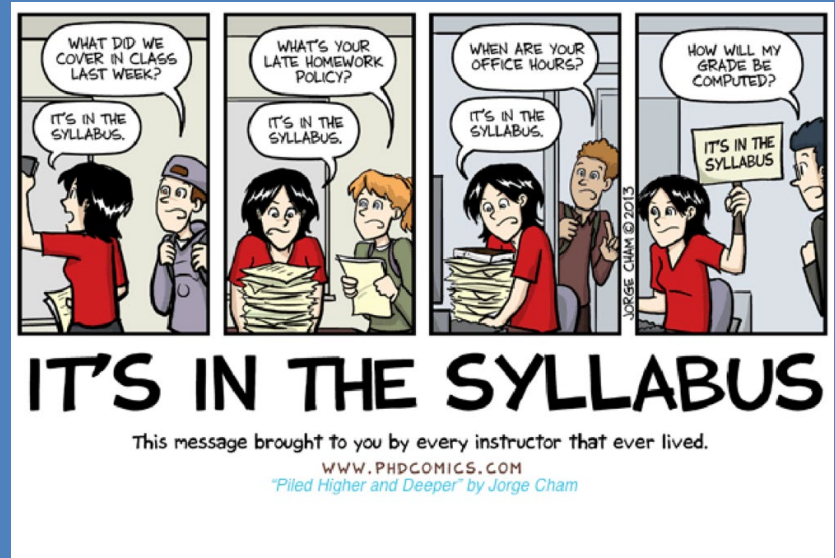
**Support Student Success**

**Set the Climate for  
Learning**

**[VITAL Syllabus Resource](#)**

# Context/Purpose

- Provides a contractual agreement
- Offers framework for students and faculty
- Articulates promise to students
- Conveys faculty values about learning and teaching process in the discipline
- Offers learning support for students
- Affirms institutional mission



# Learning-Centered Syllabus

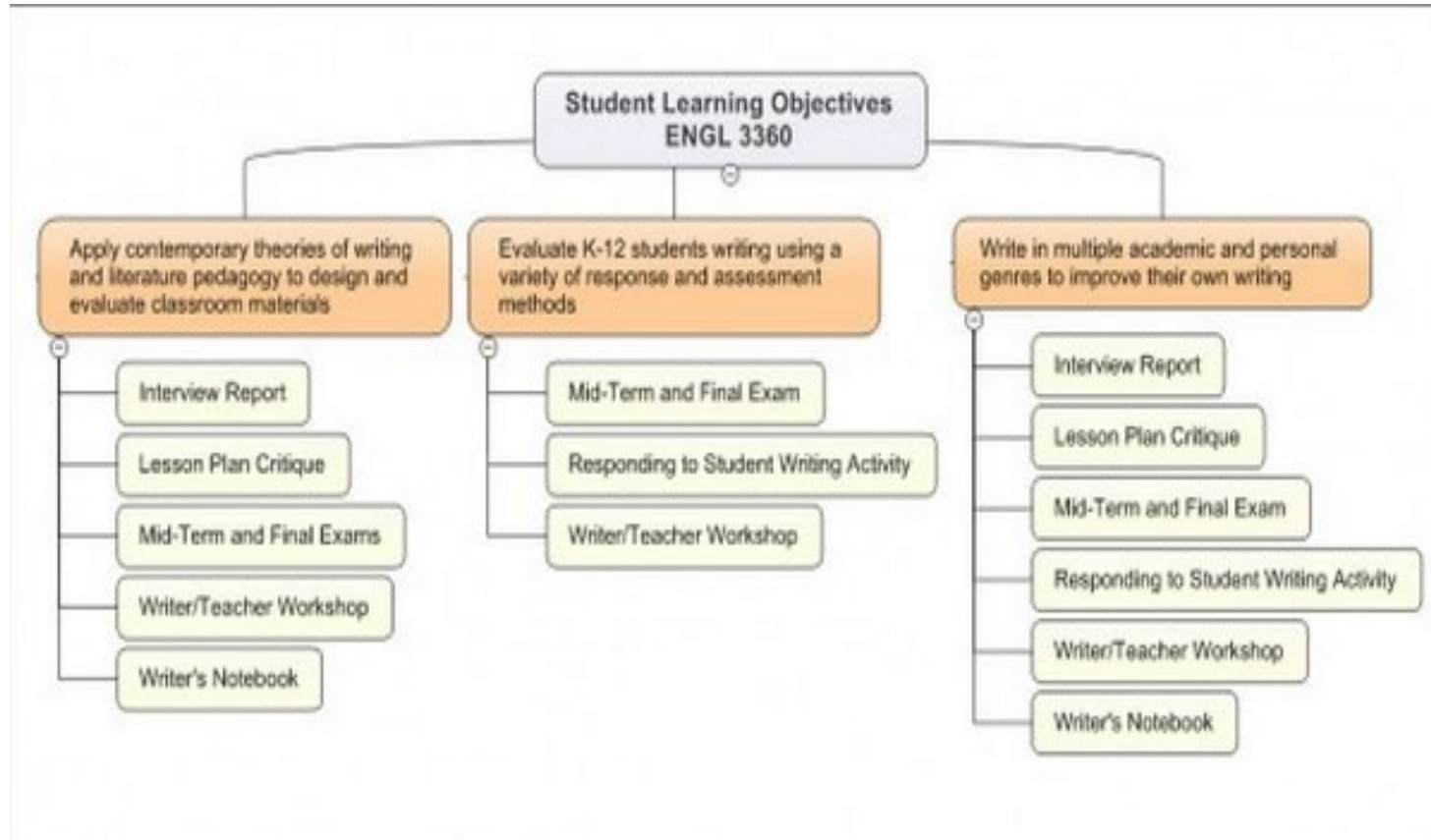
- Describes what students will learn, ***why and how***
- Articulates ***students' role*** in their learning
- Outlines how ***feedback*** will support students' learning
- Offers ***resources*** for students' success
- Sets a supportive ***tone*** with emphasis on learning together

Gannon, K. (2023, August). [How to create a syllabus. Advice guide](#). *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

Grunert O'Brien, J., Millis, B., & Cohen, M. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). (2008). *The course syllabus: A learning-centered approach*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

# Making the Course Explicit

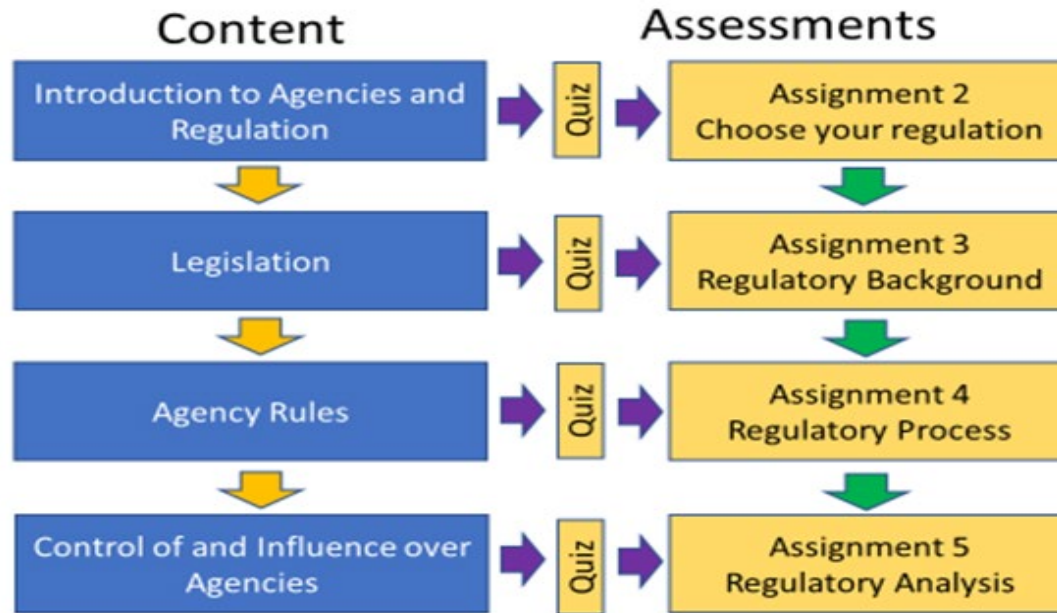
## Graphic Syllabus English, Chronicle, 2010



# Graphic Syllabus

Prof. T. Aagaard, Law, 2020 with permission

## Regulation: Graphical Course Syllabus



### Learning Goals

Upon completion of the course, you should be able to do the following:

1. Explain the role of administrative agencies in contemporary U.S. government and politics.
2. Analyze an action taken by an administrative agency.



# Sample Syllabus

## Dr. Toscano, Psychology & Brain Sciences

### Exams

There will be three exams (two non-cumulative midterms and a cumulative final exam). The goal of the exams is to demonstrate your understanding of the concepts covered in class, apply the scientific principles you have learned, and take a stance on current debates in the field, backing up your claims with evidence. Questions will be drawn from material presented in lecture and lab, as well as material presented in articles and background readings.

For each exam, you are entitled to one sheet of handwritten notes (front and back of one piece of paper). Each student must write their own note sheet. I will collect these with the exams, but you are welcome to have them back with your graded exam. I suggest using the note sheet as a study tool to help you organize your thoughts and the evidence that informs the debates we discuss in class. In fact, you may find that the process of creating the note sheet is more helpful than using it during the exam.

You may request a make-up exam if you have an authorized University absence/ Excused absences are described in the [University's official Attendance Policy](#). Please speak to me in person if you have an authorized absence that requires you to make-up a scheduled exam.

## Explicitness: Office (Student) Hours

I will respond to all emails and phone calls within 24 hours M-F and within 48 hours over the weekend/holidays. I tend to respond during regular working hours. I expect the same from you as a student. Requests for meetings/conversations outside regular working hours are possible with significant notice but cannot always be guaranteed. The night before exams or major assignment due dates I will schedule additional office hours online which will be announced in advance.

Please know that I am always willing to assist in improving your comprehension and application of the material.

Shared by Randy Weinstein, PhD, VP for Teaching & Learning, Professor of Chemical & Biological Engineering, with permission, January 2023

## Course Policies

### Sample Statement: Use of Technology

Villanova has no university-wide policy on digital technology in the classroom except for accommodating documented student need. In our class, technology is coordinated with course material to enrich your learning. To make this possible, use courtesy as described in the Student Handbook (esp. pp. 8, 13): silence, turn over, turn off, or put away your devices to avoid audible and visual distractions. Use them for class-related purposes only.

Consider these additional facts when working outside of class as well: counter to common belief, we are not good at multi-tasking because it leads to distraction. Once distracted, our brains take significant time to refocus (2-23 minutes) and our learning is impacted (e.g., lower test scores and grades). Paying attention pays off. Practicing digital self-control will greatly enhance our learning experience.

Carpenter, K., 2020. ACS Program and VITAL Faculty Associate, [Materials](#)



# Reflection and Action

## Reflection

What are current strength(s)?

## Action

What might you give more attention to and why?

## Learning Resources

### Inform Students How to Succeed in the Course

Villanova's Center for Speaking and Presentation provides expert guidance on topics including organizing presentation material, performing as a cohesive group, voice modulation, vocal interruptions, speaking anxiety and more! Walk-ins welcome, or book in advance online: [villanova.mywconline.com](http://villanova.mywconline.com), register for an account and select "Center for Speaking and Presentation". White boxes represent available sessions. Click any white box to book! For information, contact [juliana.studer@villanova.edu](mailto:juliana.studer@villanova.edu) or call 610-519-5862.

*Communication of Villanova resources: Copy directly into your syllabus*

## Resources

### Student Support

At times, personal problems, stress, or life circumstances can interfere with your academic functioning. Villanova's Counseling Center provides a variety of services to support you in your academic work and help you be successful. We encourage you to seek counseling to discuss normal, expected, developmental issues, such as loneliness, relationships, family concerns, decisions, sadness, anxiety, and confusion. We know that many students struggle with more challenging conditions that get in the way of health, happiness and academics.

ALL of these conditions are treatable. We strongly encourage you to give counseling a try. There is no risk, as all counseling services are free, and all contacts are confidential. Visit <http://villanova.edu/counselingcenter>

*Communication of Villanova resources: Copy directly into your syllabus*

## Course Materials - AMP

Villanova University is committed to providing affordable options for students to obtain textbooks and course materials. Here are some tips on how to save money:

1. Search Falvey Library Collection and course reserves to see if your books are available - <https://library.villanova.edu/Find/>
2. Borrow from other libraries via E-Zborrow - <https://library.villanova.edu/Find/EZBorrow/Login>
3. Find deals at the bookstore including rental and price matching programs [www.villanovabookstore.com](http://www.villanovabookstore.com)

For more tips and information on how to access the options above, please visit Villanova's Affordable Materials Program (AMP) website

<https://library.villanova.edu/amp/students.html>

*Resources:* *Copy pertinent resource statements directly into your syllabus*

# Reflection and Action

## Reflection

What are current strength(s)?

## Action

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# Setting the Tone/Climate

## Sample Syllabus, Dr. Diaz-Lopez, Mathematics

\*I am giving permission to VITAL to share this syllabus and post it on their website.



### VITAL INFORMATION



**Course:** MAT 5900: Mathematics Seminar

**Instructor:** Dr. Alexander Diaz-Lopez, SAC 373

**Email:** [alexander.diaz-lopez@villanova.edu](mailto:alexander.diaz-lopez@villanova.edu)

**Class times and locations:** T, Th 2:30 pm - 3:45 pm, Mendel 256

**Office Hours:** Mon. 2 pm - 3 pm, Wed. 2 pm - 3 pm, Thu. 3 pm - 4 pm

★ Please come and talk to me ★



### WELCOME STATEMENT



**You are almost there!** Welcome to the Math Senior seminar! This course is what some call a capstone seminar. In short, you should use the skills you learned in your previous courses to engage in a project and create a presentation and a paper based on the project.

## Sample Course Policy Statement - Attendance

Because class discussion is at the heart of this course, you are required to be in class, and what we do during our class meetings will determine a large portion of your grade.

I understand that sometimes emergencies or other unexpected circumstances arise that make attendance that day impossible.

If this is the case, please inform me as soon as possible so we can make arrangements to get you caught up.

If you will be absent from a class for a university-sponsored activity, please make arrangements with me — beforehand — regarding any work you might miss.

<https://www.chronicle.com/article/how-to-create-a-syllabus/>

Gannon, K. 2018. Accessed May 24, 2021

## Resources

**Syllabus Review: Inclusion by Design – [Link](#)**

**Sample syllabi – [Link](#)**

### **Welcome Survey: Sample text and questions**

Welcome to [class name]. My name is [your name] and I use the pronouns [preferred pronouns]. I'd like to invite you to tell me a bit about yourself through the survey below. You are more than just students—you have lives outside of this class and what happens there can affect how you show up in class. By completing the survey, I'll be able to better meet you where you are. It is confidential and voluntary—you can answer whichever questions you feel most comfortable answering. If you prefer to speak privately or would like to talk about anything you share in the survey, you can reach me at [email address].

Preferred name, pronouns

What responsibilities do you have apart from this class (e.g., work, heavy course load)

What challenges are you currently facing, or do you anticipate facing this semester?

What would you like me to know to best support your learning in this course?



# Reflection and Action

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