

## A Faculty Guide to Syllabus Construction and Course Policies

### Office of Academic Affairs Purdue University North Central Spring 2011

#### Course Policies

A common faculty concern is that course syllabi become too large and in turn confusing for students. A way around this concern is to develop a separate course policies statement that contains many of the issues that are common to most courses. Then a syllabus need contain only information specific to an individual course. Course policies could be a separate document or posted on Blackboard with a link within the syllabus. Course Policies examples include:

- **Academic Integrity:** statement of expectation regarding academic integrity. This statement should direct students to the Code of Student Conduct:  
<http://www.pnc.edu/cd/Policy/conduct.html>.
- **PNC Password:** Students must obtain and use their PNC password for this course.
- **Email:** There are two sources and uses of PNC email. First, the email tool in Blackboard can be enabled and students could use this option for communicating with the instructor about individual or private matters. Second, if Blackboard experiences interruptions in service, the instructor can send messages about adjustments and class work through the PNC regular email system, the one outside of Blackboard. Thus, students must check their PNC email regularly directly or by forwarding it to their home email.
- **Internet:** Some learning activities may require students to use the Internet.
- **Emergencies:** Include statements from the Guide on Academic Continuity Fall 2009 or insert a link to the Academic Continuity Guide.
- **Attendance policy:** Federal Regulations on Title IV financial aid require all faculty to document a last date of attendance for students that are not attending classes. If a student misses more than 3 consecutive classes that are not approved by the instructor, then the student's name must be sent to the Student Success Center's "Early Alert Program" at <http://www.pnc.edu/ssc/early.html>.
- **Statement concerning disability accommodation(s):** The Disability Services Coordinator, in SWRZ 38, extension 5374, provides information and resources to all students with disabilities, faculty and staff, ensuring equal access to educational opportunities. The office will provide guidance regarding appropriate accommodations. Academic accommodations and other services are provided on an individual basis determined by documented need. Documentation of the disability completed by a physician or qualified health care professional must be on file in the office.
- **Blackboard**
  - **Access-** Students must be capable of accessing the Blackboard Learning Management System from home, campus, or other computer capable of connecting on a regular basis with the campus version. Since students must develop a good working knowledge of Blackboard, it is recommended that they are directed to the following student website for support:  
<http://www.pnc.edu/distance/studentssupport.html> In addition, students should have access to the

Blackboard Student Tutorial that faculty can provide their students from within their Blackboard courses.

- **System Outage-** A statement should be present concerning Blackboard system outages and resulting contingency plans. For example: inform students that they must use their regular PNC email accounts to continue communication. Consider including a statement about giving extensions. For long-term outages, consider informing them that they should use their PNC email to continue to receive instructional materials and assignments, as well as submit them.
- **Communication/Participation-** A statement regarding communication expectations should be present. Timeframes for student and instructor response should be clearly defined. For example: require students to respond within 24-48 hours during the week, longer on the weekends and holidays. Inform them that you will follow the same protocol. If using discussion boards, debates, or online journaling, etc., provide a clear statement of how often students are expected to participate in posting and responding within those activities.

### Course Syllabus

- The course syllabus should be available to students the 1st day of class or before using Blackboard.
- A copy of each course syllabus should be submitted to the departmental secretary within the first week of the semester.
- Service courses with multiple divisions (e.g., ENGL 101, MA 153, COM 114, PSY 120) should have, in general, a common syllabus (i.e., common course requirements) for each division.
- A course syllabus should contain, at minimum, the following information:
  - ✓ Instructor's name
  - ✓ Instructor's office number (departmental office if an instructor does not have a designated office on campus)
  - ✓ Instructor's phone number (departmental secretary's phone number if a PNC phone number is not available – it would be advisable for part time instructors to provide a home or work phone number for at least the departmental secretary)
  - ✓ Instructor's PNC e-mail address\*
  - ✓ Department office number and phone number
  - ✓ Office hours; 4-6 hours per week
  - ✓ Course title and class (lab) scheduled time
  - ✓ Required text(s), lab manual, etc.
  - ✓ Tentative lecture (lab) schedule for the semester, which should include all assignments and due dates, quiz and exam dates and any other important information
  - ✓ Comprehensive grading policy
  - ✓ Statement concerning missed exams/quizzes+
  - ✓ A Course Calendar should be present that lists all of the required assignments, assessments, and activities for the entire course, as well as the associated due dates.

\* The PNC e-mail system is the campus default communication system; accordingly all instructional staff must use their PNC e-mail account

+ In general, instructors are responsible for proctoring all course exams