Building a Course Outline

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An outstanding student experience is at the heart of an outstanding university. As a research and teaching intensive university the University of Alberta is well positioned to offer exceptional learning opportunities to all of its undergraduate and graduate students [...]

UofA Academic Plan 2011-2015
Purpose of a course outline

Tool for instructors to express clearly to **students** what they will be expected to **learn** in the course.

Instructors should endeavor to:

- Make informed, pedagogically-sound decisions emphasizing congruence/alignment and critical reflection
- Understand the relationship between course design (content, instructional strategies, objectives) and evaluation/assessment (outcomes)
- Establish connections between learning objectives/outcomes in the course and overall program of study
- Establish both instructor and student responsibilities
Terminology: Course Outline

- The course outline addresses the formal University Calendar requirements (General Faculties Council; GFC)

- Contract between instructor(s) and student(s)

- Should not change during the term unless there is general class consent and fair warning

- The outline serves institutional purposes (states university-wide policy, informs students about formal requirements, evaluation methods, grading policy, dates for major course activities, etc.)
The syllabus provides additional information about your course:

- Commonly: course schedule, tips for student success, additional reference material, departmental / faculty required statements and sections (check with your unit)
- Teaching methods/strategies (e.g., community service learning), technology integration (eClass, clickers, etc.)
- The syllabus serves instructional purposes in that it provides more detailed information to students regarding what is expected of them (e.g., description of learning outcomes, description of major assignments, weekly calendar, etc.)
Course outline

- In practice (outline+syllabus) = “course outline”
- In the immediate, what do I need to know?
  - Required?
  - What other additional information?

**Resource for required components:**
http://www.registrar.ualberta.ca/calendar/Regulations-and-Information/Academic-Regulation/23.4.html#23.4

Note: always consult the most recent version as this calendar section changes
23.4 Evaluation Procedures and Grading System (See Addenda (June 13, 2012))

(1) **Weighting of Term Work and Final Examinations:** In each course in which a final examination is held, a weight of not less than 30 percent and not more than 70 percent will be assigned to the final examination, except where a departure from this arrangement has been authorized by the council of the Faculty in which the department offering the course is situated. The remaining weight of the course will be assigned to term work.

(2) **Course Requirements, Evaluation Procedures and Grading:** The policies set out below are intended to provide instructors and their students with general course information. GFC, in approving these guidelines, expected that there would be a common sense approach to their application and understood that circumstances might develop, during a term, where a change to the course outline, as set out in §23.4(2)a., made sense to all concerned. Such changes shall only occur with fair warning or general class consent.

Students concerned about the application of these guidelines should consult, in turn, the instructor, the chair of the department by which the course is offered, and the dean of the faculty in which the course is offered.

a. At the beginning of each course, instructors are required by GFC to provide a course outline which must include the following:
   i. a statement of the course objectives and general content
   ii. a list of the required textbooks and other major course materials
   iii. a list of any other course fees as described in the 'Student Instructional Support Fees Policy' and their associated costs
   iv. an indication of how and when students have access to the instructor
   v. the distribution of weight between term work and final examination
   vi. identification of all course activities worth 10% or more of the overall course mark
   vii. whether marks are given for class participation and other in-class activities as well as the weight of such participation
   viii. dates of any examination and course assignments with a weight of 10% or more of the overall course mark
   b. The manner in which the official University grading system is to be implemented in that particular course or section, i.e., whether a particular distribution is to be used to determine grades, or whether there are absolute measures or marks which will determine them, or whether a combination of the two will be used. Instructors should refer to the University of Alberta Marking and Grading Guidelines.
   c. An indication of how students will be given access to past or representative evaluative course material.

b. Every course outline should contain the following statement: "Policy about course outlines can be found in §23.4(2) of the University Calendar."

c. Every course outline should contain the following statement: "The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (Online at www.governance.ualeda.ca) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicion of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University."

d. Nothing in any course outline, syllabus or course web-site may override or contravene any Calendar regulation or GFC policy. In resolving any discrepancy, GFC policy and Calendar regulations will take precedence.

e. Instructors may indicate in the course outline the date, time and place on which the deferred examination for the course will occur, should one be required. See §23.5.6.

f. Instructors should discuss with the class their expectations with respect to academic honesty issues and outline both permitted and prohibited behaviour.

g. Every course outline must contain the following statement: "Audio or video recording of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the instructor or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Recorded material is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the instructor."

h. Instructors must follow copyright regulations as established by the University from time to time in the duplication of course material.

i. Instructors should allow students a reasonable time in which to complete an assignment, bearing in mind its weight.

j. Instructors should mark and return to students with reasonable dispatch all term examinations and, provided the students submit them by the due date, all course projects, assignments, essays, etc.

k. All projects, assignments, essays, etc., should be returned on or by the last day of classes in the course, with the exception of a final major assignment (which may be due on the last day of classes), which should be returned by the date of the scheduled final examination or, in non-examination courses, by the last day of the examination period.

l. Upon request, instructors are required to provide the method which was used to translate final and, where appropriate, term marks into grades.
Items that must be in your outline

- Required textbooks / other major course materials
- Course fees, if applicable
- Instructor availability to students (how and when)
- Distribution of weight between term work and final examination
- Relative weight of all term work
- Weight of class participation and other in-class activities, if applicable
- Dates for all course assignments and tests weighing 10% or more
- Process by which term marks will be translated into a final letter grade for the course
- How to gain access to past or representative evaluation course material
You must also include the following statements:

- “Policy about course outlines can be found in §23.4(2) of the University Calendar.”

- “The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at www.governance.ualberta.ca) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.”

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Other considerations

- Course outline cannot override nor contravene Calendar regulations or University Policy
  - For example, university policy does not allow instructors to ask for a sick note from a physician if a student misses class due to illness.

- At the beginning of your course, you are required to discuss expectations pertaining to academic integrity and to outline both permitted and prohibited behaviour.

- Each assessment is to be linked to course objectives and/or learning outcomes.

- Criteria for assessment should be provided to students early on.
Are you thinking about...

- Including a textbook, coursepack, and/or permanent embedded links?
- Incorporating community service-learning?
- Designing assignments requiring the participation of human subjects?
  - Check whether ethics approval is required for your course or individual projects
- How to prevent, detect, and report cheating and plagiarism?
  - Familiarize yourself with the dark blue booklet “Truth in Education”: [http://www.tie.ualberta.ca/](http://www.tie.ualberta.ca/)
PSYCO 329
Adult Development and Aging
January – April 2012

Note: As per section 23.4 of the University Calendar, parts in red are required

Course Outlines: “Policy about course outlines can be found in Section 23.4(2) of the University Calendar.” [Calendar 23.4(2)b]. The University Calendar is available online at http://www.registrar.ualberta.ca/calendar

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Moodle eClass: https://eclass.srv.ualberta.ca/portal

Course Description: Overview of physical, psychological, and sociocultural realities of aging. Topics may include sensory and perceptual changes in aging, pathology, cognition, personality, late life relationships, and work. Although some major health problems and challenges of aging will be covered, individual differences and usual trajectories of aging will be emphasized.

Prerequisites: PSYCO 104 or SCI 100, and PSYCO 105 and PSYCO 223.

Course Objectives: On the completion of this course you should
- Know some of the key theories in the adult development and aging area
- Know some of the key “changes” in the physical, psychological and social domains of aging
- Understand the multiple influences on aging trajectories
- Be able to distinguish myths versus realities of aging
- Be able to demonstrate evidence-based reasoning and argumentation
Contact us!

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