### Planning Your Syllabus: Guide Questions for Good Instructional Practice

**Instructional Design:** The syllabus articulates course goals, learning outcomes and performance criteria, and activities align with (when appropriate) program goals; encourages integration of ideas and their wider application (from WSU’s Rubric for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning).

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| Does the syllabus articulate what students should learn in this course and as a result be able to DO? | - Are there clear learning outcomes?  
- Do pedagogical approach and activities match learning goals?  
- Do assignments and exams foster independent thinking and learning, and encourage integration of ideas?  
- For undergraduate courses, are there connections to WSU’s Seven Learning Goals? |
| And WHY? What is the purpose, how does it further the Program Learning Goals. | |
| Does the syllabus provide rationales for core learning activities and sequencing? | - Will students understand why they are being asked to do certain tasks/activities?  
- Is the course design purposeful and public (providing some kind of road map or schema)? |

**Instructional Presentation & Facilitation:** Course design provides opportunities for active learning and student-generated content or materials, encouraging critical thinking; uses teaching methods that create a supportive learning environment and take into account various learner needs and interests; facilitates constructive interaction and collaborative learning among students, between students and faculty, between students, campus, and community; and provides prompt and useful formative feedback (from WSU’s Rubric for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning).

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| What tone does your syllabus convey? | - Does it invite questions and exploration?  
- Does it promote intellectual curiosity? Intellectual risk-taking?  
- Does it convey respect? Is it warm or cold? It is motivating? |
| How does the syllabus promote student engagement? | - Does it promote participation and independent thinking?  
- Will students be expected to critically analyze and synthesize, and integrate their own ideas and experiences?  
- Does it encourage students to ask their own questions or pursue their own goals? |
| How will students learn actively? | - Will students discuss, solve problems, work in teams, develop projects, keep journals?  
- How does the course capitalize on what students bring to the class, skills, experience, and knowledge? Will students generate some content or materials? Will they peer teach?  
- Are students encouraged to view classmates as resources? |
| What expectations are you establishing? | - Will students be expected to participate in discussions, to contribute ideas and/or resources?  
- Have you provided some positive guidelines for behavior and trouble-shooting? Standards for participation? |
| What kind of learning environment does your syllabus create? | - Allows / encourages interaction and participation?  
- Promotes collaboration in a safe environment?  
- Outlines responsibilities of students and instructor; respectful relationships and power between instructor and students? |
| Does the syllabus provide grading criteria? | - Gives clear criteria (rubric) for success?  
- Offers multiple opportunities to be graded? |
| Feedback: | Does the syllabus indicate how students will get feedback? | o Includes formative feedback in a timely manner, with chances to revise? Involves feedback from instructor, peers, self? 
   o Opportunities for students to give feedback to instructor on what they understand and where they are confused, and to ask questions, give feedback, or make suggestions? |
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<td>a) Does the syllabus indicate how students will get feedback?</td>
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<td>b) How the instructor will get feedback from the students?</td>
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| Does the syllabus identify skills and strategies for success? | | How will students be successful in this course? (What skills and strategies do students need to succeed, and how will those be developed?) 
   o What resources are available on campus, off-campus, on-line, etc.? |
| Does the syllabus identify learning resources for students? | |                                                                                  |
| How does the syllabus use time and resources? | | o Uses professional resources wisely? 
   o Is respectful and reasonable regarding students' time? 
   o Uses class time effectively? |
| Does the syllabus address basic course administration and logistics? | | o Course title and description 
   o Course calendar 
   o Instructor contact information 
   o Course policies and procedures; Department / university policies and procedures |