The Online Course Syllabus

Every online course must include an online syllabus. The syllabus establishes the course guidelines and is the basis of a successful learning experience. Through the syllabus, students receive class information, course learning objectives, and information about course expectations and policies.

As instructors migrate their courses from onground to online, they often question if an online syllabus differs from a traditional syllabus. An online syllabus should contain the same components of a traditional syllabus. Elements of an effective syllabus include:

- a course description/overview
- required prerequisites
- required text and materials
- course goals and objectives
- expected learner outcomes
- assessment of learner outcomes
- instructor contact information

Many colleges and universities are also including information regarding:

- academic integrity
- compliance with the American Disabilities Act, and
- statements regarding EEO

An online syllabus should include the following *additional* information:

- a statement that the course is delivered online
- a listing of onground meetings, if any
- a listing of basic computer skills needed
- technology requirements (i.e., access to the World Wide Web, browser/version requirements, an email account, etc.)
- How many times per week students should log on to the course
- Suggested number of hours per week required to complete the course
- How many of those hours will be online

Some instructors also include:

- Student Self-Assessments (“Is Online Learning Right for Me?”)
- Tips to help students succeed online

©Kirkwood Community College, 2005
No portion of the printed copy may be reproduced without permission. All rights reserved.