

Your syllabus is a document that represents your online course and you will conduct it. The syllabus sets the tone for your course at the beginning of the semester. Rather than perceiving the syllabus in the traditional fashion of a “cover all your bases” teacher-centered document, you can create a student-centered mutual learning contract.

Key Components

- Can become a learning contract for the course.
- Sets out expectations for students to fulfill to be successful with the learning targets.
- An overview of exactly what your course will cover.
- Your plan for the content you will cover and how it fits into your teaching philosophy.
- Logistical information they will need to succeed in the course.
- Provides a framework for the course, and the learning outcomes.
- Describes the broader context that the course content exists in.
- Communicates the role of technology in the course.
- Information regarding all college, department, and course policies that you and your students will refer to throughout the semester.

A **student-centered course** requires a syllabus that demonstrates your commitment that your students’ ability to achieve the course objectives are at the center of everything that takes place in the course.

What is a student-centered course and how is it different?

Domain	Teacher-Centered	Student-Centered
Knowledge	Transmitted by instructor	Constructed by students
Student Participation	Passive	Active
Role of Professor	Leader/Authority	Facilitator/Learning Partner
Role of Assessment	Few tests/assignments. Utilized for assigning grades	Many tests/assignments. Utilized for ongoing feedback
Emphasis	Learning correct answers	Developing deeper understanding
Academic Culture	Individualistic and competitive	Collaborative and supportive

Adapted from Western Washington University’s Tools & Techniques for Program Improvement: Handbook for Program Review & Assessment of Student Learning (2006)