

EQUITY-MINDED INQUIRY SERIES

# Syllabus Review



CENTER *for* URBAN  
EDUCATION

USC Rossier  
School of Education

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENTS**

The inquiry tools presented in this guide are the product of the staff who worked at the Center for Urban Education (CUE) from 1999 to 2018. The tools evolved over time, in response to what CUE staff learned from using the tools at campuses across the country, as well as from research on race, racism, and racial equity. Presented here is a collection of CUE's most impactful tools, organized and edited by Cheryl D. Ching, PhD., who served as a research assistant at CUE from 2012 to 2017 and as a post-doctoral scholar from 2017 to 2018.

## **HOW TO CITE**

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## **ADDITIONAL TOOLS**

For additional inquiry tools, please contact [cue.media.communications@gmail.com](mailto:cue.media.communications@gmail.com).

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## INTRODUCTION: ON COURSE SYLLABI AND SYLLABUS REVIEW

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Syllabus review is an inquiry tool for promoting racial/ethnic equity and equity-minded practice. To achieve this goal, the syllabus review process promotes faculty inquiry into teaching approaches and practices, especially how they affect Blacks, Latinx, Native Americans, Pacific Islanders, and other racially/ ethnically minoritized students; facilitates a self-assessment of these teaching approaches and practices from a racial/ethnic equity lens; and allows faculty to consider changes that result in more equitable teaching approaches and practice.

### WHY FOCUS ON SYLLABI?

Syllabi are a key feature of every academic course, documents that serve multiple purposes. Often, syllabi are seen as **contracts** between students and the instructor, and as **records** of what courses cover and how student outcomes and performance are evaluated for accountability purposes (Parkes & Harris, 2002). Syllabi, however, are also **learning tools** that can help students develop effective learning practices and strategies, as well as **communication devices** that share how teaching will be approached (Grunnert, 1997; Parkes & Harris, 2002). While syllabi are not documentation of what actually happens in the classroom, they serve varied purposes, making them rich sources of information about teaching as a practice.

**ALEGRA EROY-REVELES,  
ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF  
CHEMISTRY AT SAN  
FRANCISCO STATE UNIVERSITY,  
ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE  
SYLLABUS FOR STUDENT  
LEARNING AND SUCCESS**

*(Science, October 18, 2017)*

“Building a supportive learning culture takes many forms. Sometimes it means encouraging other professors to emulate what their colleagues are already doing to engage and nurture students. At a recent orientation for new faculty members, Eroy-Reveles read aloud from a syllabus in which math professor Federico Ardila promises students will be ‘challenged and supported’ as they ‘build [a] rich experience together.’ He asks them to ‘take an active, critical, patient, and generous role in your own learning and that of your classmates.’ Some of the new faculty members were stunned. ‘They were like, ‘Oh my God, you can write that in your syllabus?’ Eroy-Reveles says. ‘We’re telling everyone it’s OK to come from behind that screen to say, ‘I’m a person and I want this to be joyful and meaningful.’”



## WHY INQUIRE INTO SYLLABI?

Teaching is a core practice of college faculty, yet inquiry and self-reflection are rarely routine and often occur in an unstructured manner. Syllabus review is an opportunity for structured inquiry and reflection, providing a safe space to assess aspects of teaching as reflected in syllabi—for example, course goals, class norms and rules, expectations for and evaluations of student learning, and forms of assistance and support.

As artifacts of practice that capture how faculty see the course, what they assume students should be able to accomplish, and what they will do to advance student learning, syllabi have the potential to reveal the assumptions, attitudes, values, and beliefs that shape teaching. Also, examining the content and language of a syllabus can help make explicit **who** it is written for (e.g., students, faculty, institution) and **who** it serves.

## WHAT DO SYLLABI HAVE TO DO WITH RACIAL EQUITY?

With few exceptions (historically black colleges and universities being the most notable), higher education institutions were founded and designed to serve white students, particularly those who are male, middle- to upper-class, heterosexual, able-bodied, and Christian. Despite the increasing diversity of the American college student population, many of higher education's policies and practices have not been reconfigured to equitably support, affirm, and validate students from racially minoritized groups.

As artifacts of practice, syllabi can reinforce and reproduce the norms and rules that generally align with the experience of white students, or syllabi can counter those norms and rules. For racially minoritized students who have experienced exclusion, marginalization, discrimination, and oppression in education and elsewhere, syllabi can be tools for **equity-minded practice**. Faculty can use syllabi to **demystify** the implicit norms and ambiguous processes that characterize college, such as how to be a “successful” student. Syllabi can **welcome** them into a classroom where they will be cared for and **validate** their pursuit of a college degree and ability to be successful. They can send the message that while students need to work hard in college, faculty are there to support and work in **partnership** with them. Finally, syllabi can affirm the belonging of racially minoritized students in higher education by **representing** their experiences

in course materials and **deconstructing** the presentation of white students and white experiences as the norm.

Demystifying, welcoming, validating, creating partnerships, representing, and deconstructing are equity-minded practices that are associated with three perspectives of equity discussed in Alicia Dowd’s and Estela Bensimon’s *Engaging the ‘race’ question: Accountability and equity in US higher education* (2015). Each speaks to an aspect of equity that faculty and other practitioners must adopt if they are to serve students from racially minoritized groups in equity-minded ways. Below is a brief description of the equity perspectives and the equity-minded practice(s) described above with which they are associated.



EQUITY PERSPECTIVE	DEFINITION	EQUITY-MINDED PRACTICE
Fairness	Every student has equal right to opportunity and resources that will advance their learning and achievement.	Demystifying
Care	Every student has the right to self-respect in educational settings, to feel cared for by college practitioners, to have their experiences (personal, cultural, and otherwise) affirmed, and to be acknowledged as producers of knowledge.	Welcoming Creating a Partnership Validating
Transformation	Racially minoritized students have the right to learn in educational spaces where their voices are heard and valued, where inequities they experience are being actively eliminated, and where their agency to change the conditions that contribute to the inequalities that affect them and their communities is cultivated.	Representing Deconstructing

## WHAT IS EQUITY-MINDEDNESS?

The term “equity-mindedness” has so far been referenced without precise definition. According to Estela Bensimon (2012; Dowd & Bensimon, 2015), achieving racial equity requires that practitioners develop competence in equity-mindedness, which is characterized as being:

- Critically race-conscious;
- Aware that practitioner beliefs, assumptions, knowledge, and approaches are racialized and can have racial consequences, typically to the disadvantage of racially minoritized students;
- Aware that norms, policies, and practices that are taken for granted in higher education can perpetuate racial hierarchies and inequalities, even in the absence of explicit racism; and
- Willing to reflect on racialized outcomes and exercise agency to produce racial equity.

In practice, equity-minded competence manifests in the following ways:

 <b>EQUITY-MINDED COMPETENCE</b>	 <b>LACK OF EQUITY-MINDED COMPETENCE</b>
<p><b>Aware of their racial identity</b></p>	<p><b>Claims to not see race</b></p>
<p><b>Uses quantitative and qualitative data to identify racialized patterns of practice and outcomes</b></p>	<p><b>Does not see value in using data disaggregated by race/ethnicity to better understand the experience of racially minoritized students</b></p>
<p><b>Reflects on racial consequences of taken-for-granted practices</b></p>	<p><b>Resists noticing racialized consequences or rationalizes them as being something else</b></p>
<p><b>Exercises agency to produce racial equity</b></p>	<p><b>Does not view racial equity as a personal responsibility</b></p>
<p><b>Views the campus as a racialized space and actively self-monitors interactions with racially minoritized students</b></p>	<p><b>Views the classroom as a utilitarian physical space</b></p>

## IS SYLLABUS REVIEW JUST ABOUT IMPROVING SYLLABI?

The short answer to this question is “no.” While the course syllabus is the focus of inquiry and self-reflection here, and while the expectation is that you’ll identify ways to modify and improve syllabi in equity-minded ways, the broader hope is that you’ll take this opportunity to think more about teaching practices in general.

In some respects, the idea behind conducting structured inquiry into an artifact of practice that captures teaching beliefs, values, and approaches is that this inquiry will indeed lead to critical reflection on those beliefs, values, and approaches. **As much as syllabus review is about creating more equity-minded syllabi, it’s also about critically and systematically reflecting on your teaching, as well as learning how to make inquiry a key, routine aspect of your practice.** Syllabus review is part of a larger suite of inquiry tools that includes reviewing course completion data, reflecting on institutional documents, and conducting observations of the classroom and other campus spaces.

Continuous inquiry and self-reflection are necessary for developing equity-minded competency, because so many aspects of how higher education institutions have been designed and are currently practiced need to be re-thought and re-engineered so they in fact serve the students who make up an ever-increasing share of the student population and who for the most part come from racially minoritized groups. Regular inquiry and self-reflection allow faculty to better understand which of their classroom practices support student success, particularly for racially minoritized students, and which policies and practices could be re-developed to better them.

# GUIDE CONTENTS

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The syllabus review guide offers the conceptual knowledge and practical know-how to conduct equity-minded self-reflection on an essential document in academic life: the syllabus. Throughout the guide are examples that illustrate the ideas motivating syllabus review, as well opportunities to practice inquiry and reflect on how to change your syllabi—and your teaching more generally—to be more equity-minded.

## **THE PROTOCOLS** **PAGE 10**

1. Do I Know My Syllabus?
2. Who Does My Syllabus Serve?
3. How Does My Syllabus Demonstrate Equity for Racially Minoritized Students?
4. What Will I Do Now?

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1. The Syllabus: A Tool that Shapes Students' Academic Experiences
2. Sample Equity-Minded Syllabus





## PROTOCOL: DO I KNOW MY SYLLABUS?

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An important first step of any inquiry process is to ground your equity-minded inquiry with purpose and intentionality. For syllabus review, this begins with articulating your thoughts on what a syllabus means to you, purposefully selecting the syllabus on which you'd like to conduct your inquiry, recalling the origins of this syllabus, and outlining changes you have made to it over time. To lay the groundwork for inquiry, please answer the following questions in the space provided.

1. What are three words or phrases that come to mind when you hear the word "syllabus"?
  - Word/Phrase 1:
  
  - Word/Phrase 2:
  
  - Word/Phrase 3:
  
2. Is the syllabus important to you as an instructor? Circle one: Yes/No
  - If your answer is Yes: In what ways is the syllabus important?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - If your answer is No: Why is the syllabus not important?

3. List the courses you currently teach. Which course syllabus will you focus on while walking through the other protocols in the syllabus review guide? Circle that course.

- Course 1:

- Course 2:

- Course 3:

- Course 4:

4. Did you create this syllabus? Circle one: Yes/No

- If your answer is Yes: When did you create it?

- If your answer is No: Where did it originate? When did you first start using it?



# PROTOCOL: WHO DOES YOUR SYLLABUS SERVE?

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Now that you're (re)acquainted with your syllabi and have chosen the one you'll focus on, now you'll turn to the first round of equity-minded inquiry: understanding who your syllabus is written for and who it serves.

Although syllabi are documents used primarily by faculty and students, they often contain information for a wider range of higher education audiences.

## HOW SYLLABI SERVE

### THE INSTITUTION

The institution can require faculty to include content in their syllabi that meets accreditation standards, makes students aware of institutional policies, and promotes college values and beliefs.

**Example:** “[Name of college] Educational Priorities and Outcomes: The objectives in this course address the Knowledge, Inquiry, Reasoning, Vocation and Communication outcomes, and may address others.”

### ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS

Academic departments can require faculty to use a standard syllabus and incorporate departmental values and beliefs. Academic departments also have their own expectations of what constitutes legitimate instruction, knowledge, and demonstrations of learning.

**Example:** “This course builds on [other course], connecting students’ knowledge about paradigms and how to think about inquiry, and supporting students to align their methods in the field with a particular research tradition or paradigm.”

### FACULTY

Faculty create new or use existing syllabi to communicate the structure of their classrooms, including their rules/policies; the relationship they expect to have with students; and what they/their academic field deems legitimate knowledge and forms of instruction.

**Example:** “We will read more about [growth mindset] for our first essay of the semester, but essentially a person with a growth mindset believes they can learn (even when it’s difficult), and that the key to learning is putting in effort. I will do my best to encourage a growth mindset in our class, and I hope you will do the same.”

This protocol takes you through a two-step process that is designed to prompt inquiry into the various audiences your syllabus serves.

1. Deconstruct
2. Reflect

Each step includes a series of questions to guide your inquiry.

### 1. DECONSTRUCT

Deconstructing your syllabus in terms of who it serves entails categorizing the content of the document by the audiences described on page 13. Read through your syllabus and:

- Write INSTITUTION next to the sections required/expected by your institution.
- Write DEPARTMENT next to the sections required/expected by your institution.
- Write FACULTY next to the sections that share your classroom's rules/policies and the relationship you expect to have with students.

As you deconstruct your syllabus, write down your observations—ideas, ah-ha's, insights—and your sense-making. Ask yourself: What is the process of deconstructing my syllabus helping me see about who my syllabus serves?





## HOW DOES A POLICY SPEAK TO STUDENTS?

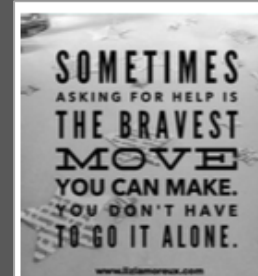
Being cognizant of who your syllabi are written for is important. With the varied purposes syllabi serve, it's inevitable that these documents will have information for institution, department, academic field, or faculty audiences. It's also likely the parts that speak to these audiences also speak to students, offering information that you as faculty believe is for their benefit.

Consider the first statement on the right on disability services that was included in a syllabus from a research university. This statement serves the **institution** by demonstrating compliance with federal policy (Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990). At the same time, this statement can be seen as serving **students** because it offers information about the disability resources on campus and what students have at their disposal.

Consider a second statement on disability services, this time from a community college syllabus. As with the first example, this statement serves the institution by naming the federal policy with which the college must comply (Americans with Disabilities Act). However, as compared to the first statement, the second speaks more to students by including:

- **encouraging messages** (e.g., “Sometimes asking for help is the bravest move you can make. You don’t have to go it alone.”);
- **being written in an accessible way for students** (e.g., “Understanding how you learn is the first step to success.”); and
- **stating what will happen if students receive the accommodation** (“The DSPS will then notify me of needed accommodations ...”).

**Disability Resource Center (DRC)** – The Disability Resource Center (DRC) coordinates all academic accommodations for students with documented disabilities. The DRC is the official office to review and house disability documentation for students, and to provide them with an official Academic Accommodation Plan to present to the faculty if an accommodation is warranted. Faculty should not provide students accommodations without being in receipt of this plan. **UNLV complies with the provisions set forth in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, offering reasonable accommodations to qualified students with documented disabilities. If you have a documented disability that may require accommodations, you will need to contact the DRC for the coordination of services. The DRC is located in the Student Services Complex (SSC), Room 137, and the contact numbers are: Voice (702) 895-0866, TTY (702) 895-0652, fax (702) 895-0651. For additional information, please visit: <http://studentlife.unlv.edu/disability/>.**



### Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Statement:

**“Students with disabilities who need any assistance or accommodations should contact the instructor.”**

Disabilities are not a reflection of who you are, but of how your brain works. Maybe eventually we won't even call them "disabilities" anymore. Understanding how you learn is the first step to success. While I was in school I used their support services several times. I actually regret waiting so long to ask for help! If you know or think that you have any learning or physical disabilities, please contact the Disabled Student Programs and Services Office MA 100.

Email [DSPLATTC@LATTTC.EDU](mailto:DSPLATTC@LATTTC.EDU)  
Phone 213-763-3773.

The DSPS will then notify me of needed accommodations, such as additional testing time, note taker, etc.



## PROTOCOL: HOW DOES MY SYLLABUS DEMONSTRATE EQUITY FOR RACIALLY MINORITIZED STUDENTS?

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As noted on pages 4-5, an equity-minded syllabus intentionally seeks to support students from racially minoritized groups by incorporating six equity-minded practices. The equity-minded inquiry process outlined in this protocol focuses on identifying whether these practices are present in your syllabus, and how they're manifested. We offer two options for inquiry. Both follow the same two-step process described in the previous protocol: deconstruct and reflect. They differ, however, in the way they ask you to identify the equity-minded practices in your syllabus.

### 1. THE CHECKLIST APPROACH

PAGE 23

The checklist approach presents a series of prompts that cover the content, tone, and language of your syllabus. For each prompt, you're asked to consider whether the thing being asked is already incorporated, and if it is important to you. The checklist approach is appropriate for those who are new to equity-minded inquiry.

### 2. THE CODING APPROACH

PAGE 35

The coding approach offers a more open-ended inquiry process, and is appropriate for those who are already familiar with the six equity-minded practices and have conducted other equity-minded inquiry. Similar to how you categorized your syllabus in terms of audience in the Who Does Your Syllabus Serve protocol, the coding approach asks you to identify (i.e., "code") where you did and did not exemplify the six practices.

# EQUITY-MINDED SYLLABI PRACTICES

## **WELCOMING** students and creating a classroom culture in which they feel cared for

Communicate care and support:

- Use language and tone that make students feel cared for and valued.
- Convey sensitivity to students' entering skill levels, note that aspects of the course can be challenging, and suggest that it is acceptable and beneficial for students to seek help, whether or not they're struggling.
- Convey a willingness to work individually with students who need extra help.

Establish respect and inclusion as class norms:

- Set ground rules for respectful class discussion.
- Include a class anti-discrimination policy.
- Communicate commitment to talking through racist and discriminatory comments or behavior that arise in class or on campus.

## **DEMYSTIFYING** college policies and practices

Provide students with the information needed to successfully complete the course:

- Include basic information about the course (e.g., course description, objectives, instructor contact information and office hours, grading scheme).
- Include information on how and where additional support can be obtained, both from the instructor and campus support centers.

Present the syllabus in a way that first-time college students can easily make sense of its content:

- Written clearly, in plain language, with limited academic jargon.
- Formatted and ordered in a way that highlights what students need to know to maximize their learning and success.

## **CREATING A PARTNERSHIP** in which faculty and students work together to ensure success

Communicate a commitment to working with students for their success:

- State what you expect of students as learners, and what students can expect from you as an instructor.
- Articulate willingness to receive feedback from students about your teaching practices.
- Articulate willingness to use a variety of teaching approaches to foster learning.

Communicate respect for students as learners:

- Articulate respect for students as autonomous, critical, and reflective learners.
- State how class and course objectives will help students succeed in future academic work, and advance career and life goals.

# EQUITY-MINDED SYLLABI PRACTICES

## **VALIDATING students' ability to be successful**

Communicate belief that all students are expected to succeed:

- Articulate that students—regardless of their stated intentions—are capable of obtaining their educational goals.
- Offer different types of assignments and forms of assessment that give students multiple ways to demonstrate their learning and strengths.

## **REPRESENTING a range of racial/ethnic experiences and backgrounds in assignments, readings, and other materials**

Communicate the value of students' racial/ethnic backgrounds as sources of learning and knowledge:

- Include readings, activities, and assignments that are culturally relevant and inclusive.
- Include assignments that ask students to draw on their experiential knowledge and/or knowledge from their communities.
- Include assignments that ask students to investigate real-world problems affecting the communities they come from.

## **DECONSTRUCTING and countering the presentation of “whiteness” as the norm**

Promote awareness and critical examination of students' assumptions, beliefs, and privilege:

- Include readings, activities, and assignments that ask students to critically examine their assumptions about different racial/ethnic groups, and the privileges or disadvantages they accrue by virtue of their race/ethnicity.

Promote awareness and critical examination of dominant norms and broader social inequities:

- Include readings, activities, and assignments that ask students to examine the history and contemporary experiences of people and communities that face discrimination, racism, and marginalization.
- Include readings, activities, and assignments that ask students to question dominant, racialized norms, as well as inequities in major social institutions (e.g., education, health, law).

# EXAMPLE: EQUITY-MINDED PRACTICES IN A SYLLABUS

Fall 2017



College Reading and  
Composition 1

English 101  
Sec. 27280

Unit(s): 3 Lecture 3 Hours  
Transferability: ( UC:CSU )



**"Dominator culture has tried to keep us all afraid, to make us choose safety instead of risk, sameness instead of diversity. Moving through that fear, finding out what connects us, revelling in our differences; this is the process that brings us closer, that gives us a world of shared values, of meaningful community."**

Bell Hooks

**Prof. Jennifer Ortiz**

**Contact Information:**

**Email: [ortizji@lattc.edu](mailto:ortizji@lattc.edu)**

**213-763-5585 TE 5<sup>th</sup> Floor English Dept.**

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Organized by page  
numbers**

**Meets Monday/Wednesday  
3:00-4:50 and 3hrs Online  
TE 208**

1: Greeting, Contact Info.,  
Office Hours  
2. Pre. Reqs., SLO's  
3. What Materials do I need?  
How do I log onto CANVAS?  
How will my grade be  
determined?  
4. Explanation of  
assignments,  
How will I submit my  
essays?  
5 and 6. What support is  
available to help me reach  
my goals?  
7. Policy on Academic  
Honesty, Make Up Exams,  
Late Policy and Attendance  
8 Few final words  
9, 10, 11. Assignment  
Schedule

Welcome to LATTC's English Department:

I am looking forward to working with each of you this semester. I've taught this course several times and I am always impressed by the quality work my students produce. I am confident that you will also create a strong collection of writings at the end of the semester. Remember, writing is a process and it takes work but being registered for this class is a good step towards becoming a better writer.

Mindset: research shows that students with a growth mindset are more likely to reach their academic goals. We will read more about this for our first essay of the semester, but essentially a person with a growth mindset believes they can learn (even when it's difficult) and that the key to learning is putting in effort. I will do my best to encourage a growth mindset in our class, and I hope you will do the same.

**Student Hours:**

**Monday 9-10:10**

**Tuesday 8:30-10:10**

**Wednesday 9-10:10**

**Thursday 8:30-10:10 or by appointment**

1

## DECONSTRUCTING

This quote from bell hooks points to the existence and problems of dominant norms.

## WELCOMING

This statement warmly brings students into the class.

## VALIDATING

This statement also affirms students' ability to becoming strong writers.

## CREATING A PARTNERSHIP

The statement on mindset notes the instructor's commitment to foster students' learning.

THE FULL SYLLABUS IS  
INCLUDED IN THE APPENDIX.

## EXAMPLE: EQUITY-MINDED PRACTICES IN A SYLLABUS

### REPRESENTING

Including this image of Malcom X communicates the message that Black thinkers and activists are valued and legitimate sources of knowledge.



"The future belongs to those who prepare for it today"  
Malcolm X

### DEMYSTIFYING

The "quick tip" provides students with clear advice on how to tackle coursework.

#### How will my grade be determined?

Reading Summaries  
10 @ 5 = 50  
Discussion Posts  
12 @ 15 = 180  
Synthesis Quiz  
4 @ 15 = 60  
Quizzes  
4 @ 5 = 20  
Assessment 40  
Essay 1 40  
Midterm 60  
Essay 2 80  
Essay 3 100  
Final 100  
Total = 730  
Extra Credit will be available

#### What Materials Will I Need?

Times are hard and textbooks are expensive. Good news is I have uploaded **most** of your reading materials and all handouts onto our **CANVAS PAGE** (Can I get an applause?)

You will need **ONE** novel:

*Citizen: An American Lyric* By Claudia Rankine

**ISBN-10:** 1555976905

#### You will need a stapler and highlighter

Having access to a College Dictionary and *Roget's Thesaurus* (or electronic English /thesaurus) **will be very helpful**

#### Quick Tip:

Time: The expectation for all of your classes is that you will work for two hours outside of class for every hour spent in class. This out-of-class work can be by studying, reading, writing, going to tutoring or office hours, or doing homework assignments, depending on the requirements of the class. To help you manage this workload, you should use a calendar to track your responsibilities (class, work, and home). I can also help you plan a schedule to maximize the time you have, especially if you are very busy with work or family responsibilities.

Gender Pronoun: Please let me know your gender pronoun preference.

#### **Active participation will be rewarded!**

#### **How do I log on to CANVAS?**

To be successful in the class you will need to log into CANVAS on a daily basis for additional readings, assignments, and handouts. This is mandatory and you will not be successful in this class unless you are checking the site regularly. Here is the link that walks you through how to log on:

<http://college.lattc.edu/academictech/files/2015/11/LAT-GettingStarted-Students-v2.pdf>

**Username = Student ID Number (example: 88123456)**

**Password = 88MMDD of our birthday (the 4 numbers that represent the month and day of your birth. Example: 880601)**

Student Help Desk:

office: MA-07A | email: [online@student.lattc.edu](mailto:online@student.lattc.edu) | voice mail number (213) 763-3988

## THE CHECKLIST APPROACH

### 1. Deconstruct

Ask the following inquiry questions to see which forms of equity (fairness, care, transformation) are present (and, conversely, which are absent) and how equity-minded practices (welcoming, creating a partnership, representing, deconstructing, demystifying, validating) are expressed in your syllabus, if at all. The questions are organized by equity perspective and equity-minded practice. They ask whether a particular piece of information or message is **already incorporated** (to determine presence or absence), and whether it is **needed** for your students to experience equity in your classroom. As you work through the questions, feel free to jot down observations, ideas, and ah-ha's as they occur to you.

## EQUITY AS FAIRNESS

Demystifying	Already incorporated?	Needed for equity?
<b>Does your syllabus provide students with information they need to successfully complete the course?</b>		
- What is the course about (course description)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- What is the aim of the course (goals and objectives)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- How can students get in touch with you (contact information, office hours)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- How will the course be taught (e.g., lecture, group work, student-led discussion)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- When will students be learning specific course topics (e.g., calendar, timeline)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- What will students be doing (e.g., assignments, exams)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- How will students' learning be assessed (grading)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- How can students obtain additional support (e.g., tutoring, office hours)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- What policies are students obliged to adhere to (e.g., policies on grading, accommodations)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Does it include information on how students can seek help from you, in and out of class?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Does it include information on how students can seek help from their peers, in and out of class?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Does it include information on what academic support services are available on campus, and how students can access them?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## EQUITY AS FAIRNESS

Demystifying	Already incorporated?	Needed for equity?
<b>Is the information presented in such a way that a first-time college student can easily make sense of the syllabus?</b>		
- Is the syllabus written clearly, in plain language, with academic jargon kept to a minimum and used only when absolutely necessary?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Is the information presented in an order and formatted in a way that emphasize what students need to know in order to maximize their learning and increase the likelihood that they will succeed in the course?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Are policies of high consequence (e.g., grading, how to make up missed work) written in a transparent and clear manner?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



## EQUITY AS CARE

Welcoming	Already incorporated?	Needed for equity?
<b>Does your syllabus communicate a willingness to create a classroom where students are cared for and valued as learners?</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Does it convey sensitivity to students' entering skill level, note that aspects of the course can be challenging, and suggest that it's acceptable and beneficial for students to seek help whether or not they're struggling?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Does it convey your willingness to work individually with students who need extra help?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Does it limit the use of language that "scolds" students for potential behavioral infractions (e.g., "Do not use mobile phones in class. Failure to comply will result in loss of class participation points.")?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Does it set ground rules for discussion to ensure respect in the classroom?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Does it include an anti-discrimination policy?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Does it suggest that if racist and discriminatory comments and behavior emerge during class or on campus, that you'll facilitate a discussion where students can talk through the issue?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## EQUITY AS CARE

Creating a Partnership	Already incorporated?	Needed for equity?
<b>Does your syllabus communicate a desire for all students to succeed at a high level and outline how you'll work with students for their success?</b>		
- Does it include a statement on what you expect of students as learners, and what students can expect of you as an instructor?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Does it include a statement outlining what you'll do to ensure that all students are equal members in the learning community, and your commitment to creating an inclusive classroom environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Does it communicate that while your intent as an instructor is to help foster students' success, you need students to help identify the blind spots of your teaching practices?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Does it convey your willingness to receive feedback from students during the course (e.g., by asking students to complete an anonymous survey midway through the term), and to either implement the suggested changes or provide a compelling reason to students why such a change is not feasible?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Does it convey a willingness to use a wide variety of instructional strategies to promote active learning (e.g., collaborative work, student-led discussion, learning-by-doing activities)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Does it convey a willingness to use teaching approaches to accommodate diverse learning preferences and language proficiencies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Creating a Partnership	Already incorporated?	Needed for equity?
- Does it convey a willingness to elicit participation in a variety of ways, diminishing the prospect that a small number of student voices will dominate the class?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Does it communicate respect for students as autonomous, critical, and reflective thinkers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Does it state how the instructor and course will help students further develop their capacities as autonomous, critical, and reflective thinkers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Does it suggest that students will have the opportunity to decide what they wish to read, study, and/or research?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Does it communicate the expectation that students play an active role in their success (e.g., they're expected to actively participate and lead in-class discussions and activities), and that they'll be supported by a community of peers and faculty?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Does it suggest that students bear responsibility for the success for the class and the creation of a learning community, through active and respectful engagement with their peers and the instructor?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Does it state how class and course objectives will help students succeed in future courses?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Does it suggest that instructors are willing to help students connect class and course objectives with their career goals?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Does it suggest that instructors are willing to help students connect class and course objectives with their life goals?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## EQUITY AS CARE

Validating	Already incorporated?	Needed for equity?
<b>Does your syllabus communicate your belief that all students are expected to succeed?</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Does it communicate the belief that all students—regardless of their stated intentions—are capable of obtaining their educational goals?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Does it describe different types of assignments and forms of assessment that give students multiple ways to demonstrate their learning and their strengths?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## EQUITY AS TRANSFORMATION

Representing	Already incorporated?	Needed for equity?
<b>Does your syllabus communicate the value of students' racial/ethnic backgrounds as sources of learning and knowledge?</b>		
- Does it acknowledge that students' learning benefits from deep and rich engagement of the students' racial/ethnic backgrounds and experiences?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Does it include a statement that recognizes the value of the racial/ethnic backgrounds and experiences all students bring into the learning environment?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Does it include readings, activities, and assignments that are culturally relevant and inclusive (e.g., those that incorporate issues of race/ethnicity, as well as gender, language, sexuality, and disability to show diversity of perspectives and lived experiences)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Does it include multiple assignments or discussion topics that allow students to share and draw on their experiential knowledge and/or the knowledge of their communities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Does it include multiple topics and assignments on the real-world problems and issues facing the communities or cultural groups students come from?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## EQUITY AS TRANSFORMATION

Deconstructing	Already incorporated?	Needed for equity?
<b>Does your syllabus actively promote awareness and critical examination of students' assumptions, beliefs, and privilege?</b>		
- Does it include readings and assignments that compel students and the instructor to critically examine their assumptions about different racial/ethnic groups?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
- Does it include readings and assignments that compel students and the instructor to critically examine the privileges they accrue by virtue of their race/ethnicity (and gender, socioeconomic status, ability status, etc.)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## EQUITY AS TRANSFORMATION

Deconstructing	Already incorporated?	Needed for equity?
<b>Does your syllabus actively promote awareness and critical examination of dominant norms and broader social inequalities?</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Does it include readings, activities, and assignments, as well as opportunities to engage in respectful class discussions, of the history and contemporary experiences of people and communities that face discrimination, racism, and marginalization?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Does it include readings, activities, and assignments, as well as opportunities to engage in respectful class discussions, that question dominant norms in major social institutions (e.g., what constitutes “success” in higher education) and assumptions made about people of color and others from marginalized communities?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Does it include readings, activities, and assignments, as well as opportunities to engage in respectful class discussions, on persistent issues of racial inequality in education, law, health, and other areas?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Does it include readings, activities, and assignments, as well as opportunities to engage in respectful class discussions, on the racialized (and gendered and classed) nature of social institutions?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Does it suggest that instructors are willing to help students see how class and course objectives will prepare them to contribute to their communities?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Does it convey the expectation (e.g., through a course goal or objective) that students learn in order to make change in, or for, their communities?</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## 2. Reflect

Now that you've completed the inquiry into your syllabus, ask yourself the following questions:

- Which of the equity **perspectives** are generally present? Which are generally absent?

Present:

Absent:

- Which of the equity-minded **practices** are generally present? Which are generally absent?

Present:

Absent

- Imagine you're a student reading the syllabus on the first day of class.
  - Do you feel the instructor is willing to provide opportunities and resources for you to do well in the course, and to gain the knowledge and skills you need to succeed in subsequent courses? Why or why not?



- Do you feel the instructor assumes that you want to learn and cares for your development as a scholar and human being? Why or why not?
  
- Imagine you're a student from a racially minoritized group reading the syllabus on the first day of class. Do you feel the instructor and the course speak to your experiences? Why or why not?
  
- What did you learn from completing this protocol?
  
- General reflections

## THE CODING APPROACH

### 1. Deconstruct

The coding approach asks you to identify the parts of your syllabus that exemplify (and do not exemplify) each equity-minded practice. As you read your syllabus:

- Write **DEMYSTIFYING** next to the sections you believe exemplify this practice. Next to the sections where you do *not* think you demonstrate this practice, write **DEMYSTIFYING -**.
- Write **WELCOMING** next to the sections you believe exemplify this practice. Next to the sections where you do *not* think you demonstrate this practice, write **WELCOMING -**.
- Write **VALIDATING** next to the sections you believe exemplify this practice. Next to the sections where you do *not* think you demonstrate this practice, write **VALIDATING -**.
- Write **CREATING A PARTNERSHIP** next to the sections you believe exemplify this practice. Next to the sections where you do *not* think you demonstrate this practice, write **CREATING A PARTNERSHIP -**.
- Write **REPRESENTING** next to the sections you believe exemplify this practice. Next to the sections where you do *not* think you demonstrate this practice, write **REPRESENTING -**.
- Write **DECONSTRUCTING** next to the sections you believe exemplify this practice. Next to the sections where you do *not* think you demonstrate this practice, write **DECONSTRUCTING -**.

As you work through the questions, feel free to jot down observations, ideas, and ah-ha's as they occur to you.

## 2. Reflect

Now that you've completed the inquiry into your syllabus, do or ask yourself the following.

- Count the number of sections in your syllabus that demonstrate and do not demonstrate equity-minded practices.

EQUITY-MINDED PRACTICES	+	-
Demystifying		
Welcoming		
Validating		
Creating a Partnership		
Representing		
Deconstructing		

- Were you surprised by the result? Why or why not?

- For each equity-minded practice, pick one instance where it is demonstrated and one instance where it is not demonstrated (i.e., one instance of DEMYSTIFYING and one instance of DEMYSTIFYING -). For each instance, first reflect on **how**, and then on **why**, you believe it is an example (or not) of that equity-minded practice.

EQUITY-MINDED PRACTICES		HOW	WHY
<b>Demystifying</b>	<b>+</b>		
	<b>-</b>		
<b>Welcoming</b>	<b>+</b>		
	<b>-</b>		
<b>Validating</b>	<b>+</b>		
	<b>-</b>		

EQUITY-MINDED PRACTICES		HOW	WHY
Creating a Partnership	+		
	-		
Representing	+		
	-		
Deconstructing	+		
	-		

- Imagine you're a student reading the syllabus on the first day of class.
  - Do you feel the instructor is willing to provide opportunities and resources for you to do well in the course, and to gain the knowledge and skills you need to succeed in subsequent courses? Why or why not?
  
  - Do you feel the instructor assumes that you want to learn and cares for your development as a scholar and human being? Why or why not?
  
- Imagine you're a student from a racially minoritized group reading the syllabus on the first day of class. Do you feel the instructor and the course speak to your experiences? Why or why not?
  
  
- What did you learn from completing this protocol?
  
  
- General reflections

## PROTOCOL: WHAT WILL I DO NOW?

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Having completed several rounds of equity-minded inquiry into your syllabus, what's next? Inquiry is critical for learning, and to better understand how policies, practices, and even artifacts of practice can perpetuate racial inequity. In other words, inquiry offers a way into defining a problem and investigating conditions under which that problem exists. From here, what next steps should be taken? This protocol provides a series of questions that can help structure your planning for equity-minded change.

1. Based on the inquiry you did around who your syllabus serves and how your syllabus demonstrates equity-minded practice, what changes—if any—do you intend to make to your syllabus? To your teaching practice more generally? How will those changes advance racial equity in particular?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Is syllabus review an inquiry activity you can imagine colleagues in your academic department and/or campus doing?
  - a. If yes, what specific steps will you need to take in order to hold a professional development workshop on syllabus review?

3. A course syllabus is merely one type of document/artifact of practice in higher education. There are other documents as well, such as assignments, transcripts, and applications (e.g., admissions, financial aid, scholarship applications) that also speak to what the institution believes and values. What other documents might you look at to assess for equity-minded practice? (See CUE's Document Review Guide for guidance on how to conduct equity-minded inquiry into other types of documents.)
  - Document 1:
  
  - Document 2:
  
  - Document 3:
  
  - Document 4:

## NOTES



## FINAL REMINDERS

### **SYLLABUS REVIEW IS NOT ABOUT COPYING THE “GOOD” SYLLABUS**

If you see any text used in the examples provided that will help you communicate your intended tone/culture, feel free to copy and paste. However, the purpose of this activity isn't to communicate what should or should not be included in a syllabus, or whether a syllabus is “good” or “bad.” There's a large range of syllabus content that supports student success. Remember that syllabus review is an inquiry process that encourages self-reflection on the teaching beliefs, values, and approaches communicated in syllabi, and the impact those teaching beliefs, values, and approaches may have on racially minoritized students. The intended “takeaway” of syllabus review is the importance of **continuous, structured reflection using artifacts of practice**. Going further, syllabus review is meant to help you identify new practices to deploy in your classroom, which you could test effectiveness toward achieving racial equity by using data disaggregated by race and ethnicity.

### **SYLLABUS REVIEW IS NOT ABOUT REMOVING POLICIES AND RULES FROM YOUR SYLLABUS**

Policies and rules play an important role in supporting the structure of your institution and classroom. Instead of focusing solely on policies and rules, syllabus review is intended to help you look more holistically at your syllabus and the beliefs and values it communicates to your students. Do classroom policies and rules overshadow other syllabi content, like support services and resources? What tone or beliefs are communicated to students in the way policies and rules are written? If you were a student reading the policies and rules, what impression would you have of the instructor and class in general?

## REFERENCES AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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## APPENDIX

# THE SYLLABUS: A TOOL THAT SHAPES STUDENTS' ACADEMIC EXPERIENCES

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For some faculty members, the syllabus is a guide that outlines what learners should expect in a course and clarifies what is expected of them. For students, the syllabus helps them figure out what they need to do to ensure they'll pass the course. However, in many ways the syllabus conveys so much more than rules and course expectations, and as such serves a larger purpose that can shape the students' academic experiences and foster their success. In traditional syllabi that focus on rules and course expectations, instructors outline basic course requirements. However, with well-crafted syllabi, faculty design learning experiences that positively shape and alter how students perceive their instructors and seek assistance for academic challenges.

In this resource, we outline the traditional purpose of the syllabus, use findings from empirical and peer-reviewed articles to answer questions that are often asked about syllabi, and offer examples of language for syllabi that support or hinder learners' experiences.

### THE STANDARD PURPOSE OF THE SYLLABUS

#### For students:

- Provides learners with the expectations and required components of a course (Harnish & Bridges, 2011).
- Clarifies course expectations and goals along with the grading system used to assess learners' performance (Canada, 2013; Dowd & Bensimon, 2015; Slattery & Carlson, 2005).
- Sets the classroom's tone and motivates learners to set goals that are high, yet achievable (Slattery & Carlson, 2005).

#### For instructors:

- Welcomes students to the class (Habanek, 2005).

- Serves as a planning tool that helps organize the work students must complete during a course (Calhoun & Becker, 1995; Slattery & Carlson, 2005).
- Helps faculty meet the course goals during the semester (Calhoun & Becker, 1995; Slattery & Carlson, 2005).

**For both:**

- Often viewed as a contract between students and faculty, syllabi inform students about what to expect in a course and outline how they should interact with faculty (Calhoun & Becker, 1995; Dowd & Bensimon, 2015; Sulik & Keyes, 2014; Habanek, 2005).

**QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SYLLABUS: ANSWERS FROM PEER-REVIEWED ARTICLES AND EMPIRICAL RESEARCH**

Students usually receive the course syllabus on the first day of class; however, with the availability of online courses and electronic distribution of syllabi prior to the first day of class, this first point of contact between students and faculty may occur before the two meet face-to-face.

Therefore, how the syllabus is written informs learners' decisions to complete or withdraw from a course (Smith & Razzouk, 1993), shapes the way they view the course and interact with faculty (Habanek, 2005; Harnish et al., 2011), and informs their decisions to seek assistance when academic difficulties arise (Perrine, Lisle, & Tucker, 1995).

Findings from a review of studies and articles focused on syllabi and their influence on learners' academic experiences answer four questions that are often asked about course syllabi:

- Do students use the syllabus beyond the first day of class?
- How can the language in the syllabus affect students?
- In what ways can syllabi provide help when students have academic difficulty?
- Why are the content and style of syllabi important, particularly for students of color?

### **Do students use the syllabus beyond the first day of class?**

- Faculty perceive that students don't use the course syllabus beyond the early weeks of class, or ignore it altogether; however, this perception is not accurate (Calhoon & Becker, 2008).
- While students often focus on certain aspects of the syllabus over others (e.g., test or quiz dates and grading policies versus academic dishonesty policies and textbook information) (Becker & Calhoon, 1999; Marcis & Carr, 2003, 2004), they keep and refer to course syllabi periodically during the semester (Calhoon & Becker, 2008).
- Concerns about students' use of course syllabi can be addressed by referring to syllabus policies as needed (e.g., directing students to the document one week prior to an assignment due date) (Calhoon & Becker, 2008).

### **How can the language in the syllabus affect students?**

- Unlike an instructor's class comments that may or may not "stick" with learners, the syllabus is a physical document that students can access over the course of the semester. Therefore, it's important that faculty carefully choose language that encourages and motivates students.
- Language in syllabi often shape students' first impressions of instructors and help learners determine faculty's attitude toward teaching and learning (Harnish & Bridges, 2011).
- When students believe language in the syllabus is friendly, they view instructors as warm and approachable and believe they are highly motivated to teach (Harnish & Bridges, 2011).
- Syllabus tone sets the mood for the class, and can range from pleasant and welcoming to formal and disciplinary or even condescending and demeaning (Slattery & Carlson, 2005).
- Language that is pleasant and welcoming can:
  - encourage and motivate learners; this is particularly important in courses where students face academic difficulty.

- help readers recall information more easily than when they believe the language is unfriendly or punitive (Littlefield, 1991, as cited in Slattery & Carlson, 2005).
- Harsh language in the syllabus can be intimidating and discouraging for some students (Ishiyama & Hartlaub, 2002; Singham, 2005) and as such, hinders their success.

**In what ways can syllabi provide help when students have academic difficulty?**

- When students know assistance is available to address their academic struggles, their concerns and anxiety about their difficulties are alleviated (Slattery & Carlson, 2005).
- Explicit statements in syllabi that invite students to resolve academic struggles by speaking with faculty after class hours encourage learners to seek support for trouble with coursework and are more effective than verbal offers of assistance from instructors (Perrine, Lisle, & Tucker, 1995).
- When syllabi contain punitive language, students are less inclined to approach an instructor for academic assistance (Ishiyama & Hartlaub, 2002).

**Why are the content and style of syllabi important, particularly for racially minoritized students?**

- Socio-historical discrimination of Blacks and Latinx in education resulted in their unjust exclusion from educational opportunities (Ledesma & Fránquiz, 2015; Martin, 2000; Moses & Cobb, 2001). As college access increases for these students (Bowen & Bok, 1998; Lewis & Middleton, 2003; Solórzano, Acevedo-Gil, & Santos, 2013), they continue to learn the social mores in higher education settings.
- These students and other non-traditional college students (Rendón, 1994) benefit from “full-disclosure of the terms of success” (Collins,

1997<sup>1</sup>, p. 2). In this process, faculty demystify the academy's ambiguous and confusing processes, give students access to the language of the institution, and improve their chances for success (Collins, 1997).

- Examples of items that are usually unclear in syllabi: Details about effective work and study habits, definitions of terms such as “office hours,” and locations of important places such as the bookstore and tutoring center.
- Content and style choices tell students whether or not instructors expect them to be successful, and clarify how they can achieve this success (Collins, 1997; Slattery & Carlson, 2005).
- Syllabi styles and practices that are effective and ineffective include:
  - Effective
    - Being warm and welcoming by including diversity-focused statements that invite students to interact with faculty (Slattery & Carlson, 2005).
    - Affirming students' beliefs that instructors expect them to succeed (Dowd & Bensimon, 2015; Slattery & Carlson, 2005).
  - Less effective (Rubin, 1985)
    - “Listers”: specify the books and chapters that students must read each week, with no rationale about why they were selected.
    - “Scolders”: provide brief course content and extensive details about the different types of infractions that can result in loss of points and other forms of punishment.
    - Students perceive the less effective styles and practices as mistrustful; they prompt learners to believe that the instructor does not expect them to succeed (Collins, 1997).



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<sup>1</sup> Terry Collins (1997), a first-generation college student, is a retired professor from the University of Minnesota.



## EXAMPLES OF WELCOMING AND UNWELCOMING SYLLABUS LANGUAGE

Amid the discussions about syllabi that are welcoming or effective and unwelcoming and less effective, we thought it would be useful to include examples of both types, to serve as a guide during the process of redesigning course syllabi.

	 Welcoming	 Unwelcoming
Office Hours	<p><b>Office Hours:</b> 233 Jones Hall MWF 10:00-10:50 AM; TR 9:30-10:30 AM jsmith@hotmail.com</p> <p>I welcome you to contact me outside of class and student hours. You may email me, call my office, or contact the department and leave a message.</p>	<p><b>Office Hours:</b> 233 Jones Hall MWF 10:00-10:50 AM; TR 9:30-10:30 AM jsmith@hotmail.com</p> <p>If you need to contact me outside of office hours, you may email me, call my office, or contact the department and leave a message.</p>
Course Goals	<p>Some of the specific skills I hope you will obtain in this course are listed below. Being a critical consumer of information about mental processes and behavior is important; all these activities will help you become one, and it is my hope that you will use the skills in your daily life.</p>	<p>Some of the specific skills you should obtain in this course are listed below. Because you are not yet a critical consumer of information about mental processes and behavior, all these activities will help you become one, and if you are motivated enough, use the skills in your daily life.</p>
Attendance	<p>You should attend every class, but extenuating circumstances arise that can make this difficult. If you cannot attend a class, please let me know. If circumstances make you miss more than three classes during the semester, you may be overextended. I ask that you come see me to discuss your options.</p>	<p>I expect you to attend every class. If you cannot attend a class, please let me know. If circumstances make you miss more than three classes during the semester, I will drop you from the class roster in accordance with the college's attendance policy.</p>
Class Participation	<p>All of us in the class—you, me, your peers—have a responsibility to create an environment in which we can all learn from each other. I expect everyone to participate in class so that we can all benefit from the insights and experiences each person brings.</p>	<p>Come prepared to actively participate in this course. This is the best way to engage you in learning the material (and it makes the lectures more interesting).</p>
Adapted from Harnish et al. (2011)		

## CONCLUSION

The course syllabus can be perceived solely as a means for sharing information about the course and rules for academic success. However, syllabi are an important form of communication with students, and can foster or impede their academic progress and success. As we consider practices that can be used to improve educational outcomes, particularly for students of color, effective redesign of the syllabus is one action to consider. With this physical document, we can shape the ways students view their instructors, the course and its material, their actions when they face academic difficulties, and their overall course experience.

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# APPENDIX

## SAMPLE EQUITY-MINDED SYLLABUS

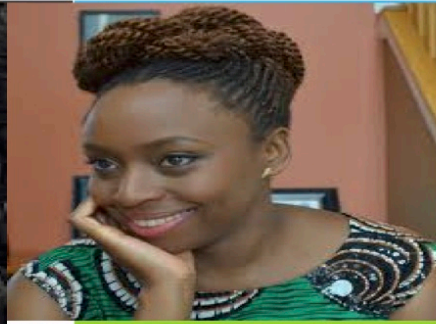
BY JENNIFER ORTIZ, LOS ANGELES TRADE TECHNICAL COLLEGE

<p>Fall 2017</p>  <p>College Reading and Composition 1</p> <p>English 101 Sec. 27280</p> <p>Unit(s): 3 Lecture 3 Hours Transferability: ( UC:CSU )</p>	 <p><b>"Dominator culture has tried to keep us all afraid, to make us choose safety instead of risk, sameness instead of diversity. Moving through that fear, finding out what connects us, revelling in our differences; this is the process that brings us closer, that gives us a world of shared values, of meaningful community."</b></p> <p><b>Bell Hooks</b></p>
<p><b>Table of Contents Organized by page numbers</b></p>	<p><b>Meets Monday/Wednesday 3:00-4:50 and 3hrs Online TE 208</b></p>
<p>1: Greeting, Contact Info., Office Hours</p> <p>2. Pre. Reqs., SLO's</p> <p>3. What Materials do I need? How do I log onto CANVAS? How will my grade be determined?</p> <p>4. Explanation of assignments, How will I submit my essays?</p> <p>5 and 6. What support is available to help me reach my goals?</p> <p>7. Policy on Academic Honesty, Make Up Exams, Late Policy and Attendance</p> <p>8 Few final words</p> <p>9, 10, 11. Assignment Schedule</p>	<p>Welcome to LATTTC's English Department:</p> <p>I am looking forward to working with each of you this semester. I've taught this course several times and I am always impressed by the quality work my students produce. I am confident that you will also create a strong collection of writings at the end of the semester. Remember, writing is a process and it takes work but being registered for this class is a good step towards becoming a better writer.</p> <p>Mindset: research shows that students with a growth mindset are more likely to reach their academic goals. We will read more about this for our first essay of the semester, but essentially a person with a growth mindset believes they can learn (even when it's difficult) and that the key to learning is putting in effort. I will do my best to encourage a growth mindset in our class, and I hope you will do the same.</p> <p><b>Student Hours:</b> <b>Monday 9-10:10</b> <b>Tuesday 8:30-10:10</b> <b>Wednesday 9-10:10</b> <b>Thursday 8:30-10:10 or by appointment</b></p>



**“A woman who writes has power, and a woman with power is feared.” -Gloria Anzaldúa**

www.thegirlgod.com



**“The Problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete; they make one story become the only story.”  
—Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie**

## So, what will I learn?

This is the catalog description for this class, which sums up what this class focuses on:

In English 101, students extend their knowledge of the principles and structure of academic writing beyond the level of English 28 through the practice of writing essays and the analysis of non-fiction and select short and full-length fiction. The course includes an introduction to persuasive discourse, research skills, critical reading and thinking, and argumentation. Various compositions and extensive research assignments are required. English 101 fulfills the writing requirement for the Associate of Arts degree and fulfills the transfer requirement to a four-year college.

### Pre-Requisites, Co-Requisites, and/or advisories for the course

Placement Exam
English 101

These are the Student Learning Outcomes for this class:

Upon successful completion of the required coursework, the student will be able to:

- 1.) Comprehend structure and themes of works of fiction and non-fiction, from short essays to full-length novels
- 2.) Conduct academic research
- 3.) Integrate sources using MLA format
- 4.) Demonstrate critical thinking and analytical skill



“The future belongs to those who prepare for it today”  
Malcolm X

### How will my grade be determined?

- Reading Summaries  
10 @ 5= 50
- Discussion Posts  
12 @ 15 = 180
- Synthesis Quiz  
4 @ 15 = 60
- Quizzes  
4 @ 5 = 20
- Assessment 40
- Essay 1 40
- Midterm 60
- Essay 2 80
- Essay 3 100
- Final 100
- Total = 730
- Extra Credit will be available

### What Materials Will I Need?

Times are hard and textbooks are expensive. Good news is I have uploaded **most** of your reading materials and all handouts onto our **CANVAS PAGE** (Can I get an applause?)

You will need ONE novel:

*Citizen: An American Lyric* By Claudia Rankine

**ISBN-10:** 1555976905

### You will need a stapler and highlighter

Having access to a College Dictionary and *Roget’s Thesaurus* (or electronic English /thesaurus) **will be very helpful**

### Quick Tip:

Time: The expectation for all of your classes is that you will work for two hours outside of class for every hour spent in class. This out-of-class work can be by studying, reading, writing, going to tutoring or office hours, or doing homework assignments, depending on the requirements of the class. To help you manage this workload, you should use a calendar to track your responsibilities (class, work, and home). I can also help you plan a schedule to maximize the time you have, especially if you are very busy with work or family responsibilities.

Gender Pronoun: Please let me know your gender pronoun preference.

### Active participation will be rewarded!

### How do I log on to CANVAS?

To be successful in the class you will need to log into CANVAS on a daily basis for additional readings, assignments, and handouts. This is mandatory and you will not be successful in this class unless you are checking the site regularly. Here is the link that walks you through how to log on:

<http://college.lattc.edu/academictech/files/2015/11/LAT-TC-GettingStarted-Students-v2.pdf>

**Username = Student ID Number (example: 88123456)**

**Password = 88MMDD of our birthday (the 4 numbers that represent the month and day of your birth. Example: 880601)**

Student Help Desk:

office: MA-07A | email: [online@student.lattc.edu](mailto:online@student.lattc.edu) |

voice mail number (213) 763-3988



Words are the only bread we can really share.

Luis Alberto Urrea

Quote-Addict

What types of assignments will I have in this class?

### HOW WILL I SUBMIT MY ESSAYS?

#### Canvas

#### Talking to the text (4T):

In this class, we will practice an active reading strategy known as "Talking to Text" (4T). It involves actively engaging with the assigned readings to better understand them.

I require you upload all of your essays onto the turnitin.com link.

#### Reading Quizzes:

After I verify your 4T notes, we will discuss the assigned readings. Sometimes at the beginning of class you will be quizzed on these readings. The quizzes are open book, open notes but closed for neighbors.

You will have timed essays (essays that you write under a time limitation) and longer essays that you will have several weeks to complete.

#### Synthesis Quizzes:

There will be four synthesis quizzes. These are much like the reading quiz but tougher, since you will be asked to identify and analyze connections between different essays. You will be given more time to complete them and you will be able to use your books and any notes.

Please feel free to ask how to upload your essays. You can also contact the following department if you need help:

#### Student Help Desk:

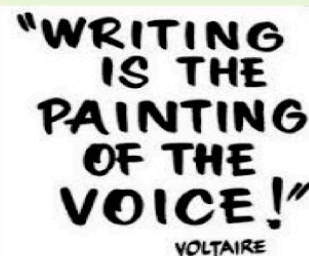
office:  
MA-07A |

email:  
online@student.lattc.edu |


voice mail number:  
(213) 763-3988

#### Forum Discussions:

Every week I will post questions. You will investigate it on the internet, and report your findings back to the forum by the due date listed on your syllabus. Then also respond to three different postings. All of these activities are graded.







“If I waited till I  
felt like writing,  
I'd never write at all.  
– Anne Tyler

## **What support is available to help me meet my goals?**

LA Trade Tech College is committed to provide students with additional services to ensure student success. **Bridges to Success** serves “as a one-stop resource center bridging the community and campus by providing quality, student-centered services that connect students and community agencies with existing campus programs. Our goal is to reduce barriers to success and increase the ability of students to confidently access college and community resources.”

Your one-stop shop where you can locate additional services:

### **Bridges to Success**

[LATTC Mariposa Hall \(MA\)](#), 1st Floor Room #105

**Call us:** (213) 763-5560

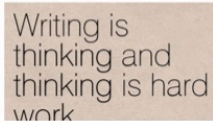
**Email:** [Bridges@lattc.edu](mailto:Bridges@lattc.edu), (you will receive a response within 24 hours)

<http://college.lattc.edu/bridges/>

We also provide academic support through **Academic Connections**. Their mission is to provide “academic and student support services to all LATTC students. To ensure optimal student learning outcomes, career and personal success, as well as life-long learning strategies, students receive individualized, instructor-led, and computer-aided instruction designed to prepare them for a variety of academic and workplace opportunities. Specific services include: Computer Applications and Office Technology, GED Preparation, Learning Skills, Basic English and Math Skills, Noncredit ESL, ESL Civics, Computer Literacy, Certificates in College and Workplace Readiness, and General Tutoring.” You may locate these services at: Mariposa HallMA-109 Phone: 213-763-3754 or 213-763-3738

<http://college.lattc.edu/academicconnections/academic-connections/about/>

**Quick Tip: Before you decide you are unable to stay in this class I encourage you to meet with me. We might be able to resolve your concerns.**



Writing is  
thinking and  
thinking is hard  
work



**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**  
**Statement:**

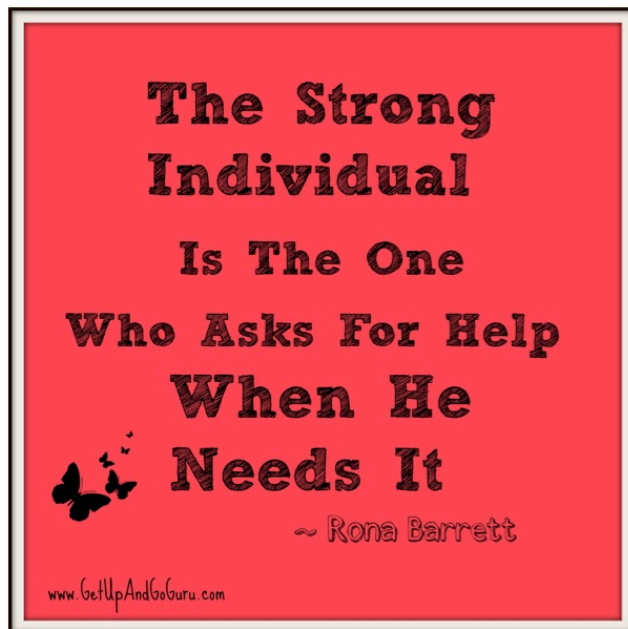
**“Students with disabilities who need any assistance or accommodations should contact the instructor.”**

Disabilities are not a reflection of who you are, but of how your brain works. Maybe eventually we won't even call them “disabilities” anymore. Understanding how you learn is the first step to success. While I was in school I used their support services several times. I actually regret waiting so long to ask for help! If you *know* or *think* that you have any learning or physical disabilities, please contact the Disabled Student Programs and Services Office MA 100.

**Email [DPSLATTTC@LATTTC.EDU](mailto:DPSLATTTC@LATTTC.EDU)**  
**Phone 213-763-3773.**

The DSPS will then notify me of needed accommodations, such as additional testing time, note taker, etc.

Quick Tip: This course will honor multiple intelligences. We will talk about what this means more in class.



## **Policy on Academic Honesty**

“Violations of academic integrity of any type by a student provide grounds for disciplinary action by the instructor or college. Violations of Academic Integrity include, but are not limited to, the following actions: cheating on an exam, plagiarism, working together on an assignment, paper or project when the instructor has specifically stated students should not do so, submitting the same term paper to more than one instructor, or allowing another individual to assume one’s identity for the purpose of enhancing one’s grade. For more information on the Standards of Student Conduct refer to the college catalog available in hardcopy and online at [www.lattc.edu](http://www.lattc.edu).”

If you are unsure whether you are plagiarizing click on the link below for more information!

<http://www.plagiarism.org/plagiarism-101/what-is-plagiarism/>

**We’re almost done just a few more things...**

## **What are some policies I’ll be expected to follow?**

### **Make up exam:**

No make-up exams will be given unless documentation is provided substantiating a dire emergency. You are expected to notify me and make arrangements for a make up exam. You will not be reminded. No assignments will be dropped or ignored. If you decide to drop the course, this is your responsibility. I will not automatically drop you if you stop coming to class.

### **Late Policy:**

ALL ASSIGNMENTS are due on the due date and the beginning of class. **They must be turned in by the start of class on the due date.**

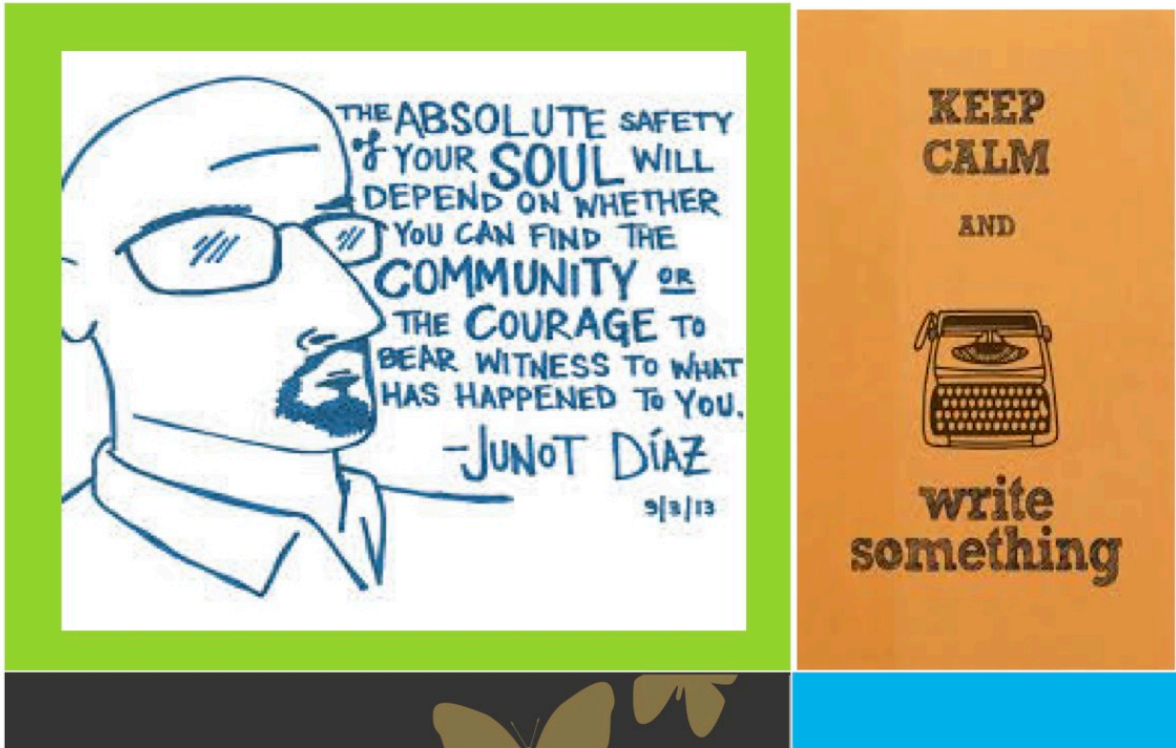
1 late paper is accepted per student, per term, not to exceed two class periods. One letter grade is subtracted for each class period late.

### **I do not accept late work.**

If you will be absent from class, you may email your take home assignment (responses and journals) before the start of class for credit. If I do not receive them before this time, you will receive no credit for the response/journal.

### **Attendance:**

Class participation is mandatory to this course. I will expect you to have completed all your assignments and be prepared to participate in class discussions. If you miss four (4) assignments a semester, I will drop you from the class, or you will receive a W if the drop deadline has passed. In case of emergencies, such as a death in the family or medical issues, please let me know and you will be excused. If I see no course activity for two weeks, I reserve the right to drop you.



### A few more tips!

Here's my contact information just in case you forgot:

[ortizji@lattc.edu](mailto:ortizji@lattc.edu)  
213-763-5585  
AH/TE 5<sup>th</sup> Floor



Come to class on time, every time, and plan to stay the entire time. We will take breaks, so don't worry! Make sure you use the break to use the restroom, make phone calls, text, or eat, and avoid those activities during class time. Do not leave the class during instruction or group activities except for emergencies.

Please turn your ringer off and remove ear buds when you come into class.

Be respectful to those who are talking by listening attentively. When others are talking, it is inappropriate to text, talk with a neighbor, or leave the class.

Come to every class ready to work. Bring your textbooks, a notebook, the syllabus, paper, and a pen or pencil every day. Have your homework completed by the start of class.

This class will abide by LA Trade Tech College Code of Conduct. You can find this on the LA Trade Tech College Website.

**YOU DID IT!!!! Thanks for hanging on!**

Date	<b>Online Activities / Homework: All online work will be due on Friday 11:59 PM</b>
<p>Unit 1: Immigration and Education</p> <p><b>August 28</b>  <b>Week 1</b>  <b>Monday: Syllabus Review, 4T Notes</b>  <b>Instructions, intro to Freire</b></p> <p><b>Wednesday: Assessment</b></p>	<p>Discussion Post “Pedagogy of the Oppressed”  Reading Syllabus Quiz  <b>Assessment (due on Wednesday 8/31 in order to stay enrolled)</b></p>
<p><b>September 4</b></p> <p><b>Week 2</b>  <b>Monday: Labor Day-No class</b></p> <p><b>Wednesday:</b>  <b>Lecture: Freire</b>  <b>Review Prompt for Essay 1</b></p>	<p>Due: 4T’s Due Monday  Life in the Mississippi  Aria  Keeping Close to Home</p>
<p><b>September 11</b></p> <p><b>Week 3</b>  <b>Monday:</b>  <b>Review “Mapping</b></p> <p><b>Wednesday: Golden Lines and Intro Modeling</b></p>	<p>Discussion Post: Intro and Thesis for Essay 1</p>
<p><b>September 18</b>  <b>Week 4</b>  <b>Monday: Thesis Workshop</b></p> <p><b>Wednesday: Writer’s Workshop</b></p>	<p>Due Essay 1 Friday</p>
<p>Unit 2: Freedom and Human Rights</p> <p><b>September 25</b>  <b>Week 5</b>  <b>Monday: Rhetorical Triangle and tools</b>  <b>Eval Emma Watson</b>  <b>Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie</b></p> <p><b>Wednesday: Audience and Style –Malcolm X</b></p>	<p>4T’s Due Monday</p> <p>Discussion “The Ballot or The Bullet”</p>

<p><b>October 2</b> <b>Week 6</b></p> <p><b>Monday:</b> <b>Lecture on Intersectionality and Mapping</b> <b>“The Answer and the Question”</b></p> <p><b>Wednesday: TBA</b></p>	<p>Discussion Adichie and Watson</p>
<p><b>October 9</b> <b>Week 7</b></p> <p><b>Monday: Midterm</b> <b>Wednesday: TBA</b></p>	<p>Study for your midterm</p>
<p>Unit 3: Colonialism and Globalization</p> <p><b>October 16</b> <b>Week 8</b></p> <p><b>Monday: TBA</b></p> <p><b>Wednesday: TBA</b></p>	<p>Discussion “Colonialism and Globalization”</p> <p>4T’s “How the US Sparked...” “The Life of a Child Migrant”</p>
<p>Unit 4: Intersectionality and Identity</p> <p><b>October 23</b> <b>Week 9</b></p> <p><b>Monday: Intro to Micro Aggressions</b> <b>“Be careful what you say”</b></p> <p><b>Wednesday: Cofer and Anzaldua – impact of MA</b></p>	<p>Reading quiz on Intersectionality</p> <p>Readings “Myth of the Latin Woman” “How to Tame a Wild Tongue”</p>
<p><b>October 30</b> <b>Week 10</b></p> <p><b>Monday: Intro: Citizen, Chapel/Angelou</b> <b>Discussion</b></p> <p><b>Wednesday: Reading Poetry and Visual Art</b></p>	

<b>November 6</b> <b>Week 11</b> <b>Monday: Review Prompt for Final Essay</b> <b>Wednesday: How to choose focus (model)</b>	Discussion Post: Preparation for Claudia Rankine's <i>Citizen</i>
<b>November 13</b> <b>Week 12</b> <b>Monday: Model Intros and Thesis</b> <b>Wednesday: Model Body Paragraph</b>	Discussion Citizen Golden Lines
<b>November 20</b> <b>Week 13</b> <b>Monday: Intros/Thesis Workshop</b> <b>Wednesday: Evaluating Sources and analysis</b>	Synthesis Quiz
<b>November 27</b> <b>Week 14</b> <b>Monday: Quote/Research Matching</b> <b>Wednesday: TBA</b>	Discussion: Post four (4) sources with a brief analysis
<b>December 4</b> <b>Week 15</b> <b>Monday: Student Conferences</b> <b>Wednesday: Student Conferences</b>	Discussion: Annals of Race
<b>December 11</b> <b>Week 16</b> <b>Monday: In Class Final</b>	Research Essay Due Final Due



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