



## Course Syllabus and Educational Goals

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*Learning how to "read" a course syllabus for the way in which a course will facilitate student understanding of the educational goals of your course is a valuable skill for all students to acquire. The presence (and absence) of relevant information in the syllabus will help students evaluate **how**, as well as **what**, they will learn in the course. Three (3) things to look for are: 1) **Course Goals** as educational signposts; 2) **Course Objectives** which describe how you will achieve the goals; and 3) **Assessments** which measure how well your performance of the assignments accomplishes the course goals.*

*Read the syllabus below to see how it lays out these three fundamental means to learning.*

### *Course description*

Usually the entry in the Course Announcement Bulletin which describes the *content* of the course - the topic and subject material to be covered during the semester ahead.

### *Syllabus Contents*

pp. 1-2	<i>The Course</i>
	<b>a. Course Goals</b>
	<b>b. Course Objectives - How to achieve the Course Goals</b>
	<b>c. Assessment of Student Performance &amp; the Course</b>
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p. 4	<i>Assignments</i>
p. 5	<i>Assessment Purpose, Rubrics &amp; Policies</i>



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### ***Course Goals***

The goal of this course is for you to ... [become an educated practitioner in X field at some level. Faculty should define here what they expect you to be learning in this course and how that learning reflects the standards and criteria of the discipline within which they profess.]

Clearly stated goals and objectives are the foundation on which a course outline should be constructed. Goals are broad statements identifying the general educational outcomes a graduate of the course will be able to display. Objectives are the concrete means (usually the course assignments) by which these will be realized. One of the goals of a course in History, for example, might be to examine the role of religion/ religious belief as a social value in Early Modern Europe. An objective might be to study a contemporary mosque, church or synagogue to learn how the religious architecture reflects the value systems of the congregation which constructed it.

[NB. For more detailed information on the ways in which a syllabus can be used to *explicitly* establish the educational foundation of a course, see the Sheridan Center Handbook *Constructing a Syllabus Handbook* (1997) by Michael Woolcock, Ph. D. See also the interactive Syllabus web workshop on the Center's web site.]

### ***Course Objectives - How YOU will achieve the Course Goals through the Assignments***

1. Read and analyze data/source material critically. Assignments to help you do this include readings, class discussions, the Weekly Paper, field trips, three essays and class presentation.
2. Identify questions raised by historical source materials. The Weekly Paper will give you a chance to practice this skill.
3. Develop a coherent interpretation based on evidence. The three Essays provide an opportunity for you to develop this skill.
4. Present your interpretations clearly and effectively in discussion, writing and oral presentation. Class discussions, essays and the final Class Presentation will help you practice and improve these skills.

### ***Assignments*** [NB. adapt as necessary]

1. Readings in primary and secondary sources
2. Handouts: maps, chronologies, etc.
3. A Weekly Paper on the readings
4. Class lectures and discussions
5. Field Trips for first-hand experience with relevant artifacts
6. Essays (3) - two are related to your Weekly Paper; the third is a short research essay.
7. Class Presentation - to explain the results of your research to the class

### ***Assessment of Student Performance of Assignments***

Assessment of student performance is based on the extent to which students have achieved the course objectives through the assignments. The *Course Rubrics* - details of grading and late policies -are on page 5 of this syllabus.

### ***Assessment of the Course***

Assessment of the course by students will be based on how well each student feels the course structure and objectives helped them achieve the course goals. Students will be asked to reflect upon how to improve the course as an environment for learning.



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**Course Schedule**

Class meetings designed to help you are a combination of lectures by the instructor and discussion by the entire class. Lectures provide a context for analyzing the primary source materials/data assigned in the course. Discussions provide you with the opportunity to ask questions, to express your analysis of the source materials, to develop theses about the materials, and to compare your interpretations, analyses and arguments with those of other students. Your weekly written analysis of the assigned readings (Weekly Paper) will help you prepare for class meetings. Field trips are an integral part of the course.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic:</b>	<b>Assignment due:</b>
Th.	Introductory Lecture and Field trip #1	<b>Orientation Questionnaire</b> in class
Tues.	<i>Lecture / Discussion</i>	<b>Weekly Paper #1 due</b> <b>Syllabus Questionnaire due</b>
Th.	<i>Lecture / discussion</i>	readings
Tues.	<i>Lecture / discussion</i>	<b>Weekly Paper #2 due</b>
Th.	<i>Lecture / discussion</i>	readings
Tues.	<i>Lecture / discussion</i>	<b>Weekly Paper #3 due</b>
Thurs.	<i>Lecture / discussion</i>	readings
Tues.	<i>Lecture / discussion</i>	<b>Weekly Paper #4 due</b>
Thurs.	<i>Lecture / discussion</i>	readings
Tues.	<i>Lecture / discussion</i>	<b>Weekly Paper #5 due</b>
Thurs.	<i>Lecture / discussion</i>	readings
Tues.	Field trip - local architectural site	<b>ESSAY #1</b>
Thurs.	<i>Lecture / discussion</i>	readings
Tues.	<i>Lecture / discussion</i>	<b>Weekly Paper #6 due</b>
Th.	<i>Lecture / discussion</i>	readings
Tues.	<i>Lecture / discussion</i>	<b>Submit choices for ESSAY #2</b> <b>Weekly Paper #7 due</b>
Thurs.	<i>Lecture / discussion</i>	readings
Tues.	Field Trip: artifacts in a museum	<b>Weekly Paper #8 due</b>
Thurs.	<i>Lecture / discussion</i>	readings
Tues.	<i>film in class</i>	<b>ESSAY #2 due</b>
Thurs.	<i>Lecture / discussion</i>	readings
Tues.	<i>Lecture / discussion</i>	<b>Weekly Paper #9 due</b>
Tues.	Review Session	<b>Summary Weekly Paper #3</b>
Thurs.	Class Presentation	<b>Class Presentation</b>



## ASSIGNMENTS

### I/II. Required Readings & Weekly Paper (20%)

The readings assigned are selected to give you a sense of how YOU, as [an historian], can approach the process of interpreting the past. The writing assignments are designed to provide you with an opportunity to reflect upon what you have read and to use the process of writing to develop your understanding of the past.

**Weekly Paper:** Each student is expected to write a Weekly Paper (at least two pages) throughout the semester based on their "Close Reading" of the assigned texts and artifacts. The methodology to be used is as follows:

Help you learn to "close-read" text documents as if they were objects through the following methodology:

- *Text/Artifact* (description): begin each entry with a *description* of the reading(s) based on your observations: for example, *identify* the assigned material: primary, secondary, artifact.
- *Content*: Explain what the reading(s) or artifact is about.
- *Context*: Identify and explain the context for this reading(s) (historical, literary, artistic, etc.).
- *Meaning*: this is your opportunity to respond to the assigned reading or artifact with your interpretation of what you think it means and its significance for the topic/ course.

The entries should be hand or computer-written on loose-leaf sheets of paper and handed in each Tuesday. They will be handed back on Thursday. Each is intended to help you think through the significance of the readings **before** class discussions.

The Weekly Papers and Paper #1 & 2 together represent **50%** of your grade for this course because they reflect most accurately what YOU have invested in and understood from this course throughout the entire semester, rather than just on a final exam or research paper. The Weekly Paper forms the basis for **Paper #1** (due mid-semester) and **Summary Paper #2** (due at the penultimate class meeting).

### III. Class Participation & Conduct (10%)

All members of class are expected to participate in discussions, presentations, and debates. By doing the assigned reading and keeping up with the Sampler Course Journal submission each week, this will facilitate your learning experience in this course. Please come to class on time and remain in class throughout the period: late arrival and leaving the room during class (except in the case of a serious emergency) are disruptive to the concentration of the instructor and your fellow students.

### IV. Paper #1: Weekly Paper analysis - Due mid-semester in class (c. 1000 words, 4 pages) (15%)

This paper is based on your Weekly Papers to date. You must re-read all your papers and write an essay describing your understanding about the significance of the readings and field trips for your understanding of the course. Re-reading your journal entries will give you an opportunity to assess your ability to do "close-reading" and to analyze the significance of your own responses.

*Note: All papers submitted must be written on a computer or typewriter; they must have your name and the date of submission against the top right margin of the first page and each subsequent page should be numbered; they must have reasonable margins (not more than 1.5" on the left and 1" on the right); and you must use standard citation format (Ballard, p.X) Do not submit a title page.*

### V. Essay #2 (Research): Due before Thanksgiving in class (1500 words, 5 pp.) (25%)

This paper will be an opportunity for you to take a selected primary source and do further research on its [relationship to the topic of this course...]. Detailed Guidelines for the research process will be given out by mid-semester.

### VI. Summary Weekly Paper: Penultimate Class (15%)

The in-class exam is designed to give you a chance to review and reflect upon the central questions posed by this course. There will be a section of short identifications and one essay. The identifications will demonstrate your understanding of factual information, whether from texts or artifacts. The essay will show your ability to interpret what you have learned.

### VII. Class Presentation of Research Essay #2 (15%)

last class(s)

Students will make a short Presentation to the class on the results of their research project. Guidelines for how to prepare for and give a Class Presentation will be handed out in advance.



### ASSESSMENT: PURPOSE, RUBRICS & POLICIES

The course assignments (readings & course journal, class participation, papers, and final exam) are intended to help each student achieve the course goals and objectives. Final Grades, your Weekly Paper, Summary Weekly Paper and Final Hour Exam will be returned to you in your campus post office box at the end of the semester.

#### Grading Rubrics - Assessment Criteria

Assessment of student performance (a grade) is intended to provide you with constructive and critical feedback on how you demonstrate your understanding of the course and the extent to which you have achieved the course objectives:

1. Read, observe and analyze primary and secondary source material critically.
2. Identify questions raised by historical source materials.
3. Develop a coherent historical interpretation based on evidence.
4. Present a coherent historical argument in discussion, in writing and through oral presentation.

<b>Class Participation</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>twice weekly</b>
<b>Weekly Paper</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>weekly (9)</b>
<b>Paper #1 [Weekly Paper analysis]</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>mid-semester</b>
<b>Paper #2 [Research]</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>before Thanksgiving</b>
<b>Summary Weekly paper</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>penultimate class</b>
<b>Presentation of Paper #2</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>last class(s)</b>

#### Grades

1. Class attendance is required. If a student fails to attend five (5) classes without a legitimate excuse, they will receive a failing grade for the course, regardless of other work submitted.

2. Papers will be graded on a standard letter scale with pluses and minuses. Here is what the letters mean:

**A:** I find your analysis, explanation and use of evidence clear and coherent, not just to me but to a non-expert. Clear expository prose is most effective when you imagine that you are trying to explain what you are thinking to a friend who knows nothing about the subject at all. In an **A** paper, you will have provided examples as evidence to support your argument/opinions and have identified the sources for that evidence (e.g., where you found it - whether in the assigned texts or elsewhere). **A** work is carefully proof-read for errors and shows signs of having been revised or reflected on with care.

**B:** In a **B** paper, I have generally been able to follow your analysis and argument, but also have become confused over what you are really trying to say or am unclear about where you have gotten your evidence. If I put a question mark (?) in the margin, you will know that you are not being clear in your expression of an idea, have not provided adequate support (evidence) for your ideas, or have not stated where your evidence comes from.

**C:** A **C** grade indicates that your writing was very unclear or incoherent to me, that there was insufficient evidence to support your ideas, or you did not attribute your sources adequately. If you receive a **C**, you should make every effort to make an appointment to see me to discuss how to improve your work.

**D:** Work which receives a **D** indicates that your writing was completely unclear or incoherent, that there was no evidence to support your ideas, or you did not attribute your sources. If you receive a **D**, you should make an appointment to see me to discuss how to improve your work.

#### Late Policy \* PLAN AHEAD \*

- a) All assignments are due **in class on the date listed in the syllabus**. All other arrangements must be confirmed with the instructor at least *one (1) week* in advance.
- b) All late papers will be marked down a grade (A to A-) per day. Plan ahead and late papers will be avoided.
- c) Computer disasters: all students are expected to prepare printed drafts of papers and to revise them in advance of submission. If you have a computer glitch, you may submit the corrected draft, pending replacement with the final version.
- d) Students with legitimately diagnosed learning disabilities should speak with the instructor to make arrangements.