

# Syllabus and Student Success

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**MARQUETTE**  
UNIVERSITY

Center for Teaching & Learning  
*Supporting Academic Creativity*

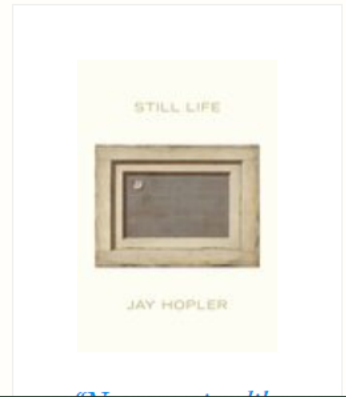
# I WOULD RATHER DO ANYTHING ELSE THAN WRITE THE SYLLABUS FOR YOUR CLASS

by ROBIN LEE MOZER

Dear Students Who I Have Not Yet Met,

I would rather do anything else than write the Syllabus for your class.

I would rather go through the checkout line in Target during freshman move-in weekend or allow myself to get cornered at the department holiday party by that one awkward faculty member who doesn't understand personal space, or drive to Prince Rupert, Canada, and then ferry to the capital of Alaska while listening to Gary Puckett and the Union Gap on repeat than write the Syllabus for your class.



# Check-in

- ▶ How are things going?
- ▶ Are you ready?
- ▶ Quick Q&A

# The basics

- ▶ Length
- ▶ Versions
- ▶ Critical Information

# Anticipate...

- ▶ Course-specific information that students most often want to know about on the first day of class are likely to be:
  - ▶ Topics that will be covered
  - ▶ Number and types of tests and assignments
  - ▶ Grading system
  - ▶ Textbook and readings
  - ▶ Policies pertaining to attendance
  - ▶ Late work
  - ▶ Makeup work
  - ▶ Purpose of the course
  - ▶ Nature of class sessions
  - ▶ Level of preparation or background necessary to succeed in the course

▶ Clearly state your policies regarding:

- ▶ Class attendance
- ▶ Turning in late work
- ▶ Missing homework
- ▶ Tests or exams
- ▶ Make-ups
- ▶ Extra credit
- ▶ Requesting extensions
- ▶ Reporting illnesses
- ▶ Cheating and plagiarism

**D2L**

The background features a complex geometric design with overlapping triangles and polygons in various shades of purple and blue. The colors range from deep, dark purples to lighter, more vibrant blues and purples. The shapes are layered, creating a sense of depth and movement. The overall aesthetic is modern and abstract.

▶ Inclusion



# Syllabus

- ▶ Representation in materials
- ▶ Clarity in language
- ▶ Define terms (office hours, rubric, critical thinking)
- ▶ Ensure understanding and mechanism to ensure clarity

# Respect for all students:

- ▶ It is our intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class will be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit.

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To ensure that our time together is enriching, students will abide by the terms of this agreement. Anyone in our intellectual community can suggest an addition. The group will decide to accept, reject or revise it.

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This class will be free of hate speech regarding sexual orientation, gender expression, race, and socioeconomic status or background. Inflammatory remarks will not go unchecked and will not be tolerated.

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Each member of this class is responsible for fostering an environment in which people and their ideas are respected.

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For the same reasons, students will strive to make remarks that are informed by our material and the history that surrounds it.

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The N word won't be used in this class by a person of any race, even if it consistently appears in our texts.

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The same goes for the F word regardless of a person's perceived sexual orientation or gender expression.

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And this is simply not a space in which we call people trash.



# Syllabus Checklist

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I acknowledge and appreciate the experiences, contributions and individual needs of students' lives as related to disability, race, socio-economic status, gender, language, ethnicity, geographical isolation, sexuality, work commitments and family responsibilities.

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Sexist, racist, homophobic, and socio-economic/class humor is avoided in the content. Any such content that is used intentionally in the course is well contextualized.

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The course follows guidelines for [universal design](#).

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Inclusive language is used to ensure stereotyping is not present. Students are welcomed to self-identify pronouns.



- ▶ Barriers that prevent students from diverse backgrounds from learning have been identified.
- ▶ Opportunities are given for the experiences, voices, work and learning of all students to be shared.
- ▶ Power differentials between genders, races, classes and people with disabilities are recognized and minimized.
- ▶ Students work with others and mixed groups for diversity. High expectations are set for professional and inclusive conduct.
- ▶ Teaching methods and learning activities are varied to promote and support different preferences.



- ▶ Expression of diverse perspectives and interpretations is encouraged.
- ▶ Themes of diversity, openness and cultural relativity have been integrated into course material and activities.
- ▶ Instructional strategies do not place students from diverse backgrounds at a disadvantage. This includes student accessibility (physical and digital).
- ▶ Texts/articles/readings provide differing cultural/gender/race perspectives.



- ▶ Alternate and diverse options for assessing student learning have been included.
- ▶ Consideration has been given to any "hidden curriculum", including your own personal views, assumptions and expectations, and the physical and social environment where learning will take place.
- ▶ Opportunities for students to discuss personal learning/assessment issues are provided, i.e. assessment/examination arrangements (language background/disability issues), course material in alternative formats, work commitments and family responsibilities



# Assignments

- ▶ Review of assignments (are they the right ones, are the objectives clear)
- ▶ Even if they're locked in you can review HOW you will deliver
- ▶ Why you doing something – help them make the connection
- ▶ Student choice (differentiating delivery of knowledge)
- ▶ 4 tests vs 2



► **Keep the syllabus flexible.**

Anticipate variations in the syllabus by indicating the topics to be covered week by week rather than session by session. Also consider issuing a revised schedule midway through the term to account for students' heightened interest in certain topics.

► **AND...maybe something fun and new comes up that provides an alternative learning opportunity!**

# Syllabus guidelines and sample language

[Syllabus Language for Attendance](#)

[Religious Holidays](#)

► Where do YOU show up?



# Hot Takes

Day One?

One Syllabus or Ten?

News Items

Design

Accessibility

Student Experience



Q&A