A picture containing drawing

Description automatically generated

Table of Contents

[Defining Remote and Online Instruction 1](#_Toc38979961)

[Creating Effective Learning Objectives 3](#_Toc38979962)

[Appendix: What is a Syllabus? 4](#_Toc38979963)

[Appendix: Course Policies 6](#_Toc38979964)

[Appendix: Attendance Policy 7](#_Toc38979965)

[Appendix: Late Work Policy 7](#_Toc38979966)

# Defining Remote and Online Instruction

Please review the Defining Remote and Online Instruction video before completing this handout.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Emergency Remote Instruction**   * Courses planned for face-to-face moved unexpectedly online due to crisis * Uses improvisation and available resources to help students complete courses * Not intentionally selected mode of delivery for students or faculty | **Online Instruction**   * Designed to be delivered online from the outset * Uses best practices from extensive research literature in peer-reviewed journals and distance-learning conferences * Selected intentionally by students who understand the technical requirements |
| Thinking about these differences, what changes might you need to make in your course to deliver effective emergency remote instruction? | |

**Considering Situational Factors Affecting Students During**   
**Emergency Remote Instruction**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Do all of your students this summer... | * Have regular access to a computer? * Have consistent access to a stable internet * connection? * Live and work in the same time zone? * Require accommodations that were not necessary in the face-to-face course? * Have immediate family care duties? * Have a support system for their personal and educational well-being? * Feel safe in their home environment? |

If you answered “No” to any of these items, what changes might you need to make in your course and course expectations?

# Creating Effective Learning Objectives

**Effective Learning Objectives are**

* **Student-centered**: focused on what your students will learn (instead of the content you/the course will cover)
* **Action-oriented**: focused on the skills students will gain, and what they will be able to do (instead of the things they will “know”)
* **Measurable**: easy to identify how you would check whether a student has mastered the relevant skill
* **Precise**: clear what type of knowledge you are aiming for
  + Avoid use of vague action verbs & prompts, like “Understand X”, “Obtain a working knowledge of X”, and “Gain insight into X”.
  + To clarify an objective, ask yourself: “What will a student do if s/he really *understands* or *appreciates* the point in question?

**Examples of Effective Learning Objectives**

* Solve problems using matrix techniques and algorithms. ​
* ​Locate and evaluate relevant scholarly and popular sources on a research topic using library resources​
* ​Analyze how gender, race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic class have shaped Americans’ lives in specific contexts​
* ​Solve a significant real-world problem for an industrial sponsor using engineering design​

**Examples of Poor Learning Objectives**

* Learn about the four subfields of anthropology: cultural, linguistic, biological and archaeology
* Understand cross-cultural similarities and differences from anthropological perspectives.
* Appreciate biocultural human evolution including the fossil record, human variation and multiple theories for migration out of Africa
* Know how societies have changed throughout prehistory including hunting and gathering and the Neolithic era
* Understand how language is related to and influences culture.
* Write a research paper about a topic you find interesting from class.

Re-read the course learning objectives listed on your syllabus, and make some notes about your thoughts on the following questions.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Yes No | Ideas for revising learning objectives |
| Are the learning objectives student-centered, action-oriented, and measurable? |  |  |
| Are there 3-8 learning objectives? |  |
| Are there learning objectives that seem more like descriptions of assessments and/or classroom activities? |  |
| Are there vague/ambiguous phrases in use (like understand and obtain a working knowledge of)? |  |

Breakout Discussions: Select one of the changes you identified during the first reflection (page 1 of this handout). How will you make this change to your course and still stay in alignment with your course learning objectives?

# Appendix: What is a Syllabus?

For a template, [visit this CTL link](http://ctl.gatech.edu/resources/syllabus).

A syllabus serves three main purposes: it is a contract between you and your students, it is a permanent record of your teaching (and your students' learning), and it is a tool to facilitate student learning.

**Syllabus as a contract**. As a contract, the syllabus states what you expect of your students during the semester. Establish clear policies regarding attendance, grading, make-up and late work, academic dishonesty, and accommodation of disabilities. Clearly articulated policies and expectations help students plan their work during the semester. In addition, explicit, written policies will help settle student grievances, if they arise.

**Syllabus as a record of teaching and learning**. Your syllabus documents your learning objectives, the topics covered in your course, and assessment measures. You should also include information like your course title, credit hours earned, prerequisites, required reading assignments, and grading procedures. Administrators often use syllabi for accreditation purposes, for program evaluation, and for faculty review.

**Syllabus as a learning tool**. A learning-centered syllabus motivates students, encourages them to take responsibility for their own learning, and promotes deeper, more meaningful engagement with course content. You can guide students’ learning behaviors in and out of class by including information about how to plan and prepare for class, how to study effectively, how to monitor one’s performance, and how to do well on exams. Providing models of acceptable work and suggestions about academic support resources help students use their time and energy well.

**Why Does the Tone I Use is My Syllabus Matter?**

The tone of your syllabus determines how students perceive your course, your teaching style, and personality. A syllabus written in a friendly, informal tone can make you seem approachable, your course engaging, and your classroom welcoming. Friendly tone also communicates that you want students to do well in your class. Some characteristics of a positive tone include

* Addressing students **directly**, using **personal and encouraging/friendly language**.   
  *I welcome you to contact me outside of class and student hours.*
* Including a brief statement of your **teaching philosophy**.   
  *I base many of my teaching principles on the theories behind a learning-centered class. So that you will better understand these principles, I have listed them below. [...]*
* Providing **rationale** for your course policies.   
  *I expect you to attend this course regularly. There is much that happens during class time that adds to your educational experience beyond what you can learn from just reading and writing in solitude.*
* Describing your course in an **engaging and accessible** way.   
  *What makes us tick? What happens when that ticking goes wrong? How can we help? In fact, who should help — family, society, medical doctors, clinicians? What theories best inform clinical practice? Clinical psychology is the field of study in which we attempt to answer these questions. […]*
* Showing **enthusiasm** for teaching the course.   
  *My work as a teacher is a crucial part of my contribution to my profession, to the university, and to society. As such, the privilege to teach continues to be an enormous source of personal reward and inspiration for me.*

**How Do I Get My Students to Read the Syllabus?**

The syllabus can only serve as a contract between you and your students, and as a learning tool, if students read it and refer to it over the course of the semester. Here are some strategies to make sure that students read your syllabus:

* Give students **time on the first day of class to read** their syllabus, then answer any questions that arise.
* Design a classroom activity to **encourage students to reflect** on course policies, expectations, and their own learning habits. This activity can be done individually in writing or as a small group discussion. Possible questions to ask your students include: Which assignments are the most important? Which assignments will be the most demanding for you and why? Why do I require regular attendance? How will you plan your preparation for this class?
* Continue to **refer to your syllabus throughout the semester**. Use course schedule to explain to students how one class relates to another, remind students about how to prepare for and participate in class, highlight learning objectives that you hope to accomplish in a given class or that you think students should have already accomplished. In this way, you can model how students can use the syllabus to stay on track and monitor their learning.
* Ask students to **acknowledge in writing** that they have read your syllabus, understand course policies, and agree to abide by them.
* Give **a syllabus quiz** at the beginning of the semester (during the first or second class). To make the activity less formal, consider organizing the quiz as a team competition.

# Appendix: Course Policies

Please review the Course Policies video before completing this handout.

Before revising your course policies, take a moment to reflect on the situational factors that may impact your students’ performance this summer. When you begin the semester, consider using the [CTL Start-of-Semester Survey on Remote Teaching](https://lor.instructure.com/resources/feb3891340dc4c6b83a7a4ddfaaa0102) to gather early feedback on these factors.

**Considering Situational Factors Affecting Students During**   
**Emergency Remote Instruction**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Do all of your students this summer... | * Have regular access to a computer? * Have consistent access to a stable internet connection? * Live and work in the same time zone? * Require accommodations that were not necessary in the face-to-face course? * Have immediately family care duties? * Have a support system for their personal and educational wellbeing? * Feel safe in their home environment? |

Which of your current course policies might be affected by the factors above?

If you answered “No” to any of these items, how can you adapt your course policies and expectations to accommodate these students? Revisit this table as you review the Attendance and Late Work sections below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Policy** | **Adaptation** |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

# Appendix: Attendance Policy

Whether attendance and/or participation are required and/or graded in your class is up to you – and your position on this is an important course design consideration. However, there are several questions worth thinking about as you make that decision, and as you articulate your policy for your syllabus.

**Questions to Consider:**

* How will attendance contribute to my students’ achievement of our **learning objectives**?
* What is the maturity level/experience of my students, and what does that say about my need to **support**/force them to make **good choices**?
* If a student skips every class but achieves an A in the course, will you be satisfied that they took part in the **full learning experience**?
* How will student absences **affect other students**?
* What **resources** do I have at my disposal for tracking and/or grading attendance and/or participation?
* Is it enough for a student to **attend** a class, or do I want them to demonstrate **active engagement** as well? Will that be part of their grade?
* If you are grading participation, will students be graded on the **quantity** of their contributions to class, or will the **quality** of their participation also be considered?
* Is my participation policy unfair to students who find **speaking in class difficult** or overwhelming (e.g., students who speak English as a second language, students who find public speaking difficult, etc.)? Are there **alternative options** I can provide for these types of students?
* Is there an expectation in your class that students **arrive on time**? If so, what are the **consequences for late arrival**?
* What online tools can I use to encourage **asynchronous** participation in this course (i.e. Piazza discussion, peer review, Canvas quizzes, etc.)?

# Appendix: Late Work Policy

Students need to know what your policy is on things like late assignments and missed exams. You should be as clear as possible about your rules and the consequences for your students, in order to help students focus their efforts appropriately, and to make it easy for you to be consistent throughout the course. Note also that at Georgia Tech some exceptions are made for “approved Institute activities” (e.g., field trips and athletic events, see <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/4>/ for more information).

**Questions to Consider:**

* Will late assignments be **accepted**? How will late submissions affect a student’s **grade**?
* Will **extensions** be granted? Under **what**sorts of**conditions**? How much **advance notice** will you require from students in order to approve an extension?
* Is your policy **fair** to students who make the necessary sacrifices to turn their work in on time?
* Are you confident that you will feel comfortable **following through** on your policy when students ask for exceptions to be made, and/or when they turn work in after a deadline?
* What counts as an acceptable “**extenuating circumstance**”, and how will that change the consequences for a student’s grade?
* Are you willing to **reschedule** midterm (and/or final1) **exams**? Under **what conditions**?