Syllabus Requirements

On June 13, 2007, President Powers approved a section of the Educational Policy Committee Proposal to Improve Course Availability for Undergraduates (D 3835-3837) requiring that faculty provide students a course syllabus by the first meeting day of all classes.

The syllabus must contain the following items:

- Course name and number
- Faculty member name
- Faculty member office location and office hours
- TA name, office location and office hours if course has a TA
- Overview of course, including course prerequisites, and the subject matter of each lecture or discussion
- Grading policy, including whether attendance is used in determining the class grade, and whether plus/minus grades will be assigned for the final grade
- A brief descriptive overview of all major course requirements and assignments, along with the dates of exams and assignments that count for 20 percent or more of the class grade
- Final exam date and time
- A list of required and recommended materials, such as textbooks, supplies, and packets
- Course web site, if applicable
- The statement: “The University of Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259, 471-6441 TTY.”

The RTF Department suggests that you also include the following statements about Scholastic Dishonesty, University Honor Code, University Mail Policy, Blackboard Use, Moody Writing Support Program, Undergraduate Writing Center, Religious Holidays, Classroom Evacuation Procedures, and Grading Procedures, as well as the policy information that is specific to production courses (bottom of page).

The University of Texas Honor Code

The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the University is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

Scholastic Dishonesty

The University defines academic dishonesty as cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to avoid participating honestly in the learning process. Scholastic dishonesty also includes, but is not limited to, providing false or misleading information to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment, and submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructor. By accepting this syllabus, you have agreed to these guidelines and must adhere to them. Scholastic dishonesty damages both the student’s learning experience and readiness for the future demands of a work-career. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. For more information on scholastic dishonesty, please visit the Student Judicial services Web site at http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs

Moody Writing Support Program

The Moody College Writing Support Program, located in BMC 3.322, offers one-on-one assistance without charge to students seeking to improve their professional writing in all fields of communication. They have specialists in Journalism, RTF, CSD, CMS, and PR and Advertising. In addition, they offer workshops to strengthen core writing skills in each field and to inspire students to strive for excellence. Students may book half-hour appointments on our website or drop in for assistance during all stages of the writing process.

University Writing Center

The University Writing Center, located in the FAC 211, offers individualized assistance to students who want to improve their writing skills. There is no charge, and students may come in on a drop-in or appointment basis. Phone: 471-6222.

Services For Students With Disabilities

The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259, 471-4641 TTY.

Religious Holidays

Religious holy days sometimes conflict with class and examination schedules. If you miss a work assignment or other project due to the observance of a religious holy day you will be given an opportunity to complete the work missed within a reasonable time after the absence. It is the policy of the University of Texas at Austin that you must notify each of your instructors at least fourteen days prior to the classes scheduled on dates you will be absent to observe a religious holy day.
University Electronic Mail Notification Policy

All students should become familiar with the University’s official e-mail student notification policy. It is the student's responsibility to keep the University informed as to changes in his or her e-mail address. Students are expected to check e-mail on a frequent and regular basis in order to stay current with University-related communications, recognizing that certain communications may be time-critical. It is recommended that e-mail be checked daily, but at a minimum, twice per week. The complete text of this policy and instructions for updating your e-mail address are available at http://www.utexas.edu/its/policies/emailnotify.html. (Optional: In this course e-mail will be used as a means of communication with students. You will be responsible for checking your e-mail regularly for class work and announcements.)

Classroom Evacuation Procedures

Occupants of buildings on The University of Texas at Austin campus are required to evacuate buildings when a fire alarm is activated. Alarm activation or announcement requires exiting and assembling outside.

Familiarize yourself with all exit doors of each classroom and building you may occupy. Remember that the nearest exit door may not be the one you used when entering the building.

Students requiring assistance in evacuation shall inform their instructor in writing during the first week of class.

In the event of an evacuation, follow the instruction of faculty or class instructors.

Do not re-enter a building unless given instructions by the following: Austin Fire Department, The University of Texas at Austin Police Department, or Fire Prevention Services office.

Behavior Concerns Advice Line
BCAL: 232-5050

Grading Procedures

Faculty members are free to develop their own methods of evaluating the performance of students in their classes, but they are required to make the methods of evaluation to be used known in writing before the end of the fourth class day each semester and the second class day each summer term. Responsibility for assuring adequate methods of evaluation rests with departmental faculties and is subject to administrative review. In courses with multiple sections, departments should provide for necessary coordination. Materials used in evaluating a student's performance must be collected by the instructor at or before the regularly scheduled final examination. The final examination is a common method of final evaluation in courses.

Letter grades are used to record the instructor’s evaluation of students' performance in a course. The following grades are used: A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, C-, D+, D, D-, and F. It is your choice whether you want to use +/- grades, or whole letter grades. Your choice must be stated on the syllabus. There is no University scale for +/- grades (you determine what grade earns an A- versus an A, for example.) Members of the faculty are not authorized, without the academic dean’s approval, to withhold a final grade or to defer reporting a final grade at the end of the semester other than by the use of the symbol X. If a grade is withheld without the dean’s approval, the grade may not be added to the official records later without the written approval of the academic dean. After a grade has been reported to the registrar, it may not be changed unless an error was made by the instructor.

Student Safety (All faculty)

As a University faculty member, you are responsible for pointing out your classrooms' building emergency evacuation routes and for reviewing emergency procedures with students at the beginning of each semester. Please review the following documents and include in syllabus.

Emergency Preparedness.pdf
Emergency Terms.pdf

Copyright and Fair Use: For Production Classes Only

You may find the need to use copyrighted material this semester: music, photographs, movie clips, or any other expression. For many of your uses, you need to find the copyright holder and negotiate a license. You own the copyright to the work you produce in this class. As a copyright holder yourself, you understand the importance of copyright ownership. It is your responsibility to secure music and archival footage licenses as well as artwork, location and personal releases. You will find release templates on the RTF website.

For some uses, however, neither you nor anyone else needs to license copyrighted material. This is because copyright law exists to encourage and support creativity. Copyright law recognizes that creativity doesn’t arise in a vacuum. As creators, we all stand on the shoulders of giants. New works of art (such as films, books, poems, paintings) all make use of what has gone before. Thus, copyright law not only protects authors with a copyright that lets them decide who can use their works, but also offers exemptions from the author’s control. For filmmakers, the most important exemption is the doctrine of fair use. You can rely on fair use, where appropriate, in the film and video projects you undertake for this course. If you are making a documentary film, consult the influential Documentary Filmmakers Statement of Best Practices in Fair Use (PDF) which was created by a group of national filmmaker organizations, has been endorsed by the University Film and Video Association, and is now relied on by film festivals, insurers, cablecasters, distributors and public broadcasters. Fair use also applies in the fiction film environment, but not
necessarily to the same extent or in the same way. As always, the central question is whether the new use is "transformative" -- i.e., whether it adds significant value by modifying or recontextualizing the original.

Use of UT Trademarks and Landmarks in Films and Photographs

You may not film identifiable UT landmarks, signage, logos, and uniforms without prior permission. Examples of UT Landmarks include the Tower and the Stadium. Email trademarks@utexas.edu to request approval and include the following in your request:

- Course title, course number, and name of the class instructor.
- Stills or links to clips of the landmarks, signage, logos or uniforms you propose to film.
- Information about future plans for the film (e.g. possible submission to film festivals).

It normally takes 3-5 days to receive a reply. If approval is not granted, please see Bert Herigstad in the RTF office or call him at 512-471-4071 to discuss other options.

Note regarding “in-class” exercises and non-screened class assignments:

- Most areas around campus are OK to film.
- Incidental shots of campus landmarks may be OK so long as they are used for educational purposes only, i.e., class assignments, and are not publicly screened.

RTF Safety Policy (For Production Classes Only)

Special safety precautions for your crew, actors and others in the area are required if you are undertaking any hazardous activities while filming, including but not limited to ANY driving or horseback/livestock shots, shooting in or around water or heights, or if you are using stunts, flames, pyrotechnics, squibs or simulated weapons. Please note that unlicensed handguns and other real weapons are never permitted in RTF studios or on location shoots. In addition, you must follow all federal, state and local laws and the rules of any venue or location at which you are filming regarding hazardous activities, including University of Texas at Austin rules if filming is done on campus.

Student filmmakers must submit a detailed safety plan to their course instructor and the RTF Technical Facilities Manager if a script or project involves driving or horseback/livestock shots, shooting in or around water or heights, stunts, flames, pyrotechnics, squibs, weapons or any other hazardous activities (this requirement applies to all shoots, including documentary projects, but please see the special guidelines for documentary driving shots below). It is the responsibility of the student to hire experts in the field and budget at least $600/day for expert consultation and on-set supervision if, in the judgment of the class instructor and the Technical Facilities Manager, such expert consultation or supervision is necessary. In addition, any utilization of pyrotechnics on the University of Texas at Austin campus requires prior review and approval through the Fire Prevention Services office by the University Fire Marshal or their designee.

Students should understand that driving while filming will be permitted only in strictly limited circumstances, such as on a private road or drive. In most circumstances, students who wish to undertake driving shots will be required to arrange for a police escort and a city permit. Monitors inside the vehicle will NOT be allowed while filming in a vehicle. Filming from the back of trucks is not considered safe and is not permitted under any circumstances.

Documentary filming of an interview while the interview subject is driving is only permitted if the cameraperson is secured in a seat belt and is not directing the driver of the car in any way, besides engaging in a conversation in which the driver/interviewee has been informed not to look at the camera or the interviewer at all during the interview. In addition, any filming from a vehicle, for drive-by B-roll, must be done by a cameraperson secured in a seat belt, where the driver is not being directed in any way by the director, so that they are driving as they normally would. As noted above, any documentary student planning on filming in any vehicle must submit a safety plan to their course instructor and the RTF Technical Facilities Manager.

Students who fail to comply with this policy will receive a failing grade in this class and will be barred from future access to RTF production and post-production equipment and facilities.