

**Guideline for Syllabi
Committee on General Education
Rhode Island College**

As the basic introduction to a course, the syllabus is an important teaching tool. It conveys to the student fundamental information about the content of the course, grading, expectations, and much else. We are not proposing a complete guide to syllabus construction. Too many parts are discipline and instructor specific. We do expect that syllabi for Connections courses in the general education program contain the following elements, expressed either in our language or yours.

1. A statement of the course's place in general education: why the College is asking the student to take this course. You might begin with the catalog language:

Courses in the Connections category are upper-level courses on topics that emphasize comparative perspectives, such as across disciplines, across time, and across cultures.

Your syllabus should then spell out what the specific comparative perspectives of your course are (e.g., "this course examines religious practices in both the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries" or "this course analyzes three distinct cultures' gift-giving practices" or "this courses uses the tools of both Gender Studies and Anthropology to investigate newspaper advice columns").

2. A statement of the learning outcomes that students will meet in the course and how they will be addressed. That is, what assignments or activities will further the student's mastery of these outcomes. The outcomes expected for Connections courses are:

Written Communication Students will understand the different purposes of writing and employ the conventions of writing in their major fields. Students will produce writing that is well organized, supported by evidence, demonstrates correct usage of grammar and terminology, and is appropriate to the academic context.

Critical and Creative Thinking Students will be able to analyze and interpret information from multiple perspectives, question assumptions and conclusions, and understand the impact of biases, including their own, on thinking and learning.

Research Fluency Students will demonstrate the ability to access, understand, evaluate, and ethically use information to address a wide range of goals or problems.

Oral Communication Students will learn to speak in a clearly expressed, purposeful, and carefully organized way that engages and connects with their audience.

Collaborative Work Students will learn to interact appropriately as part of a team to design and implement a strategy to achieve a team goal and to evaluate the process.

The descriptions that follow the key words can be adapted to the individual course.

Resources for best practice in syllabus construction can be found at the Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning website. www.ric.edu/fctl/