

## Course Design/Creating Syllabi

### **I. Course Context**

- A. Place in curriculum,
  - 1) prerequisites
  - 2) follow-on courses
  - 3) co-requisites
- B. Prior year's content
- C. Textbook
- D. Professors list of major topics (by name not textbook chapter)
- E. Math, computer, other skills students have or need

### **II. Course Content**

- A. Outline of course with words not book chapters and sections
- B. Skills that will be developed across the semester (more general skills in moving from novice to expert thinking at appropriate point in this progression, not just content (such as use symmetric, multivariable calculus, programming tools, simulations, etc)

### **III. Schedule/calendar**

- A. University calendar
- B. Exams: in class?, out of class?, reviews? Number?
- C. How many lecturers? What length?
- D. What else will take class time?
- E. What kind of assignments will be given and how often?

### **IV. Master Plan for Course**

- A. Content Grid:
  - 1) Topics,
  - 2) Course skills to be taught,
  - 3) Spread the general skills out so that some are in each content area. This makes the course flow feel more even, avoids spending half the semester on first few chapters and then quick through rest of chapters and gives your course a much more even feel from the student's perspective. That usually makes for happier students and less worry on your part as to how the pacing is going.
- B. Detailed schedule on calendar: Put your tentative plan for the whole semester on a calendar, lecture by lecture. This may require adjusting the time spent on some sections to fit everything in. Make sure that there is at least one lecture every two or three weeks that is the schedule "shock absorber" can be shortened or lengthened depending on how the pace is going. This is your roadmap that you can refer to across the semester and will save time in not having to rethink this repeatedly. This will also reduce worry when research needs your attention, you know exactly what to focus on for a given lecture.
- C. For students: Don't give the students the whole semesters plan in advance as you may need to adapt it. Either give less detail than day by day, or only give a few weeks at a time. Then you won't appear to be making major changes with every adjustment. Do give the students some information. (Perhaps post a top level plan (roughly when chapters will be covered,) and a two week at a time detailed plan on blackboard).
- D. Take notes or adjust your calendar as you go so that you leave yourself a clear path for the next time you teach the course.
- E. Think about tests. You don't have to write them yet, but think about format and general content so that you make sure you cover what you will test. More on writing tests in another workshop.