Quick guide for new faculty: preparing a Weinberg College syllabus

Some items are University policy, others are governed by Weinberg College Faculty legislation, and the rest are a selection of best practices.

COURSE CONTENT
Do not plan to fit a 14-week semester's worth of content into one ten-week quarter. Our students typically take 4 courses at a time, just as they would on a semester calendar. So, the amount of work they can complete for one class in a typical week is the same as the work they could complete under a semester schedule.

COURSE COSTS
In your planning, please be mindful of the cost of materials to our students. University Library staff can assist you with setting up course reserve materials, and also answer questions you may have about copyright in relation to sharing documents digitally (such as on the Canvas course management system). Your required materials list in the CAESAR class description should include detailed information like ISBNs and estimated costs. Additional ideas can be found on the Affordable Instructional Resources page:
https://air.northwestern.edu/index.html

OBJECTIVES
Your learning objectives must be included on the syllabus. For tips on formulation of learning objectives, see:
https://www.weinberg.northwestern.edu/faculty/teaching-research-service/teaching-curriculum/new-courses/learning-objectives.html.

CONTACT INFORMATION
In addition to standard office hours information, include information about how students can reach you to set up an appointment or ask a quick question outside of those hours.

CALENDAR
For any quarter, important dates relevant to planning your syllabus can be found on the University Calendar posted on the website of the Office of the Registrar:
https://www.registrar.northwestern.edu/calendars/index.html. Please pay particular attention to the course drop and withdrawal deadlines.

RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS
Faculty should make an effort to avoid scheduling exams or other mandatory events on religious holidays. The Office of Religious & Spiritual Life maintains a list of the holidays of various faiths here:
https://www.northwestern.edu/religious-life/explore-our-programs/religious-holidays.html

READING PERIOD
Faculty teaching Weinberg College courses cannot require students to submit work during Weinberg College Reading Period, and no exams, tests, or quizzes may be given. Whether class meetings take place is up to the instructor, though typical practice is to not meet except for review sessions. Note that students in your class may also be enrolled in other, non-Weinberg classes that do not adhere to Reading Period, so you will not be able to require any special class meetings outside of regularly scheduled class hours. Reading Period is

sometimes, but not always, a full week. For more information about Reading Period, see:
https://www.weinberg.northwestern.edu/undergraduate/courses-registration-grades/reading-period.html

FINAL EXAMS
All courses are automatically assigned a two-hour slot during Final Exam Week as part of the Registrar's Office class scheduling process. It is the responsibility of the student to double-check the exam schedule at the time of registration to avoid conflicts. Additionally, faculty should indicate the exam day and time on the syllabus. If a final paper is assigned in lieu of an exam and the instructor chooses to make the paper due earlier in exam week (as early as the first day of exams is permissible), that must be clearly indicated in the syllabus and announced on the first day. Final Exam schedules can be found at this link:
https://www.registrar.northwestern.edu/calendars/final-exam-schedules/index.html

COURSE DROP DEADLINE
Every student has the option of dropping a class, with no special permissions, up until the published deadline (usually the sixth Friday of the term). Plan your assignments such that students receive feedback about their performance on at least one significant test or paper before that deadline. More information about policies and procedures pertaining to **dropping**, **adding,** or **withdrawing** from courses can be found at this link:
https://www.weinberg.northwestern.edu/undergraduate/courses-registration-grades/adding-dropping.html

GRADES
Your syllabus must clearly indicate the basis for grading, including the relative weighting of different assignments and tests in the computation of the grade; this helps to prevent grade disputes from arising and eases resolution when a student does formally dispute a grade. Note that faculty submit grades electronically through CAESAR, and those grades are typically due before 3PM on the Monday following Finals Week. Entering missing grades after this deadline is onerous! As you plan your syllabus please ensure that you (and any teaching assistants) will have adequate time to evaluate student work to meet this deadline.

STUDENT SUPPORT
In November 2018, the Faculty Senate approved a resolution recommending the following be added to course syllabi: "Students can find useful resources for safety and security, academic support, and mental and physical health and well-being at the NUhelp website and app." The full URL is https://www.northwestern.edu/nuhelp/

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
The University has some suggested language (see Other Statements, below). Note that instructors who plan to use software that checks student work against other sources must include a statement that alerts students their work may be checked in this way. Additionally, you may want to include, "Suspected violations of academic integrity will be reported to the Weinberg College Dean's Office." It is also a good practice to include any specific information pertaining to your particular course content.

OTHER STATEMENTS
The Office of the Registrar has gathered other recommended syllabus statements about **academic integrity** policy, **accessibility** (disability accommodation), **Generative AI** when use required for a class, **prohibition of recording** of class sessions by students, and other policies here:
https://www.registrar.northwestern.edu/faculty-staff/syllabi.html