

A Message from the Academic Senate

Dear Faculty,

We have spent years asking the question, “Are our students college ready?,” but as we become a student-centered institution, we need to make systemic changes. On behalf of the Academic Senate, we would like to ask a new question: “Is our college student ready?” In answering this, one of the first places we need to direct our attention in becoming a student-centered college is to our syllabi. In essence, we need to start asking, “Are our courses ready for our students?” and “Are our syllabi creating a partnership with students?”

This guide is meant to assist all of us in asking some key questions about our syllabi and help us to stay up to date with the latest research and practices that have been shown to be effective in welcoming our students to the college and to our courses.

Do our syllabi:

- Include welcoming and supportive language?
- Convey excitement about the course and enthusiasm about your discipline?
- Appreciate racial, ethnic, cultural, and other diversities?
- Make clear a commitment to supporting students
 - In achieving the course objectives and learning of the course?
 - In accommodating them if they have a disability or encounter a life barrier?
 - In connecting them to services if they should face housing or food insecurities or other challenges?
 - In lessening anxiety and stress?

According to the *Teaching Men of Color* training, students of color need four points of positive contact in order to feel supported at the college.¹ In addition to having positive faculty contacts, research has shown that students need to feel engaged, connected, nurtured, valued, directed, and focused in order to be successful.² This means that you, as an MSJC faculty member, play a key role at the college.

In contrast to traditional learning theories, Adult Learning Theory (andragogy) proposes that our students are primarily connecting their own life experience to how they perceive and retain your course content. Adult students want to determine their own plan for education and solve

¹ The senate highly recommends this excellent course and J. Luke Wood and Frank Harris' work. Please email Jeanene Ames if you would like to sign up. It is free! Here is some background information:

<https://coralearning.org/product/teaching-men-of-color-in-the-community-college/>

² <https://rpgroup.org/Our-Projects/Student-Support-Re-defined/SuccessFactorsFramework>

problems in their current life situations. This stresses the value of problem-centered instruction (active learning) in contrast to traditional instructional methods.

This concept is valuable to consider even while writing our syllabi because we can begin to give students agency and control over their learning with some very simple steps. For instance, providing a calendar for the semester with assignments allows the student to plan ahead and conceptualize the course requirements. This would include dates, instructions, and samples of work. We can also provide links and recommendations for services that allow the student to elect for academic or emotional support.

By changing these small things, we are recognizing the andragogical shift from directing the student to allowing the student to self direct. It is no longer the “sage on the stage,” but instead the “guide on the side.” Our desire is to empower and engage students to pursue the learning that will be lasting and impactful once they leave.

Coming onto a college campus for the first time is like stepping into another country for many of our students, who are first-generation college students who have very little context for academia, a culture in which we have fluency yet our students are beginners. We need to keep this in mind as we guide our students through the first days of their college experience.

Our syllabi need to communicate our expectations without creating anxiety and stress in our students as they learn to navigate our college and our classrooms. We can create cooperative and safe partnerships with our students in our syllabi toward the goal of finding their and our highest potential. This is the first step in “Transforming Learners. Transforming Communities. Transforming Lives.” The MSJC vision is ahead of us and within reach.

Sincerely, and in gratitude,

The Mt. San Jacinto Site Councils and Executive Academic Senate

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Syllabus & Resource Checklist

Mt. San Jacinto College is a mid-sized community college serving the needs of an extremely diverse community in the largest network of colleges in the world. We are proud to be a federally designated **Hispanic Serving Institution** (HSI), with over 51% of students identifying as Latinx. Founded in 1963, the college has grown to serving over 21,000 students across a large service area. Given MSJC's strength in diversity, we encourage you to "equitize" your syllabus in as many ways as possible.

The course syllabus provides vital information to encourage students in their academic endeavors and supports the learning process and classroom norms. The syllabus is an official welcome to the course, and in some cases, to the college. Effective practice shows that a warm and welcoming tone in your syllabus can reduce anxiety among our students, many of whom are first generation college goers, while allowing faculty to articulate the high standards expected in the classroom. Please consider language that is encouraging, clear, and precise and that first generation and/or new students may need some explanations that may not be immediately obvious to those of us who have a career in academia.

The following guidance is intended to help you start your class with a syllabus that will serve both you and your students.

You must submit a syllabus for every course by the third week of classes each term by uploading it into the canvas module, "Syllabi Collection" (SYLcollect).

You are required to follow the Course Outline of Record for your class. More on this can be found here: [link to Michelle's statement](#).

Organization: The syllabus should be divided into two sections, one section addressing policy information and the second section addressing course information.

Part I: Body (Course Information)

Introduction

The syllabus should contain the following information in this section:

- Mt. San Jacinto College (on the first page)
- Basic course information including:
 - Course number
 - Section number
- [Course description](#) - Access description by clicking “Courses” under the search box in Curricunet.
- [Course objectives](#)
- Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)
- Room number
- Meeting day(s) and time(s)

Note:

- Course description information is located in the course outline of record or college catalog. Please use the link above to view the course outline of record and CLO's.
- Please use the link above, and only this link, to access your CLOs.
- Do not utilize CLOs from eLumen, CurricUNET, Canvas or instructor/department websites.

Personal Information

1. **Information about you:** students like to know about you, your educational journey, and your interests (research or otherwise).
2. **Name:** guide students as to how you would like them to address you (Dr., first name, etc.) and be sure to take time to learn students' names. A top “equitizing” process knowing students by their first names.
3. **E-mail/social media connections:** help students be able to communicate with you by offering ways for contact and be sure to list your MSJC email.
4. **Office number:** be as clear as possible about how students can find you.
5. **Student Hours:** (for full-time faculty; times when you are available to students.)

Materials

List complete information addressing any texts, assigned materials, and resources recommended and required reading). Speak with your department chair or OER Liaison, Carrie Consalvi (cconsalvi@msjc.edu), for Open Educational Resources

(OER) and/or Zero Cost Textbooks (ZTC) recommendations.

Note: If the materials list is excessive, it may be appropriate to have a separate sheet for course materials.

Grading

- Grading information should address the following:
- Grade system: point, letter, %, etc.
- Late work
- Make-up work
- Exams and quizzes
- Class participation
- Options for students:
 - Drop Deadline: Let students know when the last day to drop is, and discuss the merits of staying in the course versus taking a “W.”
 - Use of Incomplete: An incomplete is always an option for students, so please discuss with students who are dropping late in the course. Students have 6 weeks to complete coursework toward a grade, which in many cases is better than a substandard grade or withdrawal.
 - Section Change Forms: In some cases, it may be possible to accommodate students by facilitating a section change from a face-to-face to an online or hybrid course section, or into a different section of the same course. This should be considered but facilitated with the help of the department chair.

Note: while it is appropriate to base grades on class participation, it is not appropriate to use attendance as a grading criterion; however, you may drop a student if they miss the equivalent of two weeks of the course consecutively. Please attempt to communicate with students are not attending your course before taking any actions.

See the Instructor Initiated Drop Policy for more information: [Instructor Drop Policy](#)

Faculty must list all of their assignments in the schedule (see section II).

Expectations, Norms, & Resources

Classroom Expectations and Norms: how to interact in class, be a successful student (study skills, affective domain, etc.), get involved in college culture. Essentially, this is an opportunity to help students experience a sense of belonging not only in your class but at our college.

Netiquette (for Online, Hybrid, or Canvas Discussions): rubric for grading Canvas discussions and expected discussion etiquette.

[Regular Effective Contact](#) (online only): policy describing faculty interaction with students including frequency, expectations, absences, and type of contact.

[Plagiarism and Cheating](#): copyright policy, process and consequences for addressing cheating or plagiarism, consequences for source use outside authorized source list, inappropriate use of technology, etc.

Note: refer to the [Standards of Student Conduct \(AP 5500\)](#), [Student Discipline Procedures](#) (AP 5520), and/or the [Acceptable Use Policy](#). Standardized language on plagiarism and cheating is also available in the course catalog.

[Academic Support](#): Support services in writing, mathematics, the sciences, research methods, and many other disciplines, are provided free of charge for students through each campus Learning Resources Centers or Career and Technical Tutoring Centers. Inquire at each center regarding hours of operations and specific subjects for which tutors are available. In addition, some subject area specialist tutors are available for courses through specific departments who have labs on campus. Ask your instructor if specialized tutors are available for your individual course. Additional Services: [Veteran Resources](#), [Disabled Student Services](#), [EOPS](#), [Puente Project](#), [Peer Research Assistants](#), [more](#).

Disability Statement: Mt. San Jacinto College abides by the American with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 that prohibits federal and state agencies or programs from discriminating against qualified individuals with disabilities. Students in this course who have a documented disability, that limits a major life activity which may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations should meet with a counselor in [Disabled Students Programs and Services](#) (DSP&S) as soon as possible.

Assistance with Housing or Food: The college has resources available to help you. The college has an active Food 4 Thought program that hosts pop-up food pantries, and counselors can also assist you in signing up for CalFresh and other services. The college has showers available for students that open at 6 a.m., and we can refer you to other county services when you have needs. Please visit these areas of our website, or ask me for more information: <https://msjc.edu/eops/eops-services.html> & <https://msjc.edu/student-services/>

Mental Health & Wellness: Health Centers are open and available on both the San Jacinto and Menifee Valley Campuses. Health consultations, wellness education, mental health counseling, and referrals are available to you free of charge. Hours vary by campus, but the centers are generally open 8-5:30 M-Th and 8-12 F. More details are available here: <https://msjc.edu/healthcenter/>

Online & Hybrid Information

Templates for Online and Hybrid courses are available in Canvas. Please follow this link to enroll in Delta Services: bit.ly/DELTAservices

Part II: The Schedule

List every class meeting for each week. Dates should correspond with assignments and required activities so students may plan in advance. Include descriptions of the following:

- Topics covered
- Homework and assignments
- Anticipated assignments and test due dates
- Grade weight of the assignments if not already mentioned in the policy section.
- A statement that the schedule may be changed or modified.
- A statement that the final is a requirement of the course and the final will be administered at the scheduled time and day.

Note: The final schedule should be followed as close as possible and only modified for individual students under exceptional circumstances. To change the final requires administrative approval.

Part III: Submission

All Syllabi are now collected in Canvas! To submit your completed syllabi, visit the syllabi Collection course in Canvas and follow the on-screen instructions. Syllabi need to be submitted within the first three weeks of the semester.

[Submit Syllabi](#)

Syllabus Checklist

Before submitting your syllabus, in Canvas please review the document to ensure all required elements are present for the body and schedule. Faculty evaluations will review the syllabus for your courses. Please consider adding some of the recommended elements as well.

Required Elements for the Body of Your Syllabi

1. _____ Course Number and Section Number
2. _____ College (MSJC) and Semester with Year
3. _____ Course Title and Description
4. _____ Personal Information that Contains Name, College Email Address, Office Phone Number, Campus, and Location
5. _____ Office or Student Hours
5. _____ Course Objectives
6. _____ Current Course Learning Outcomes
7. _____ Course Materials and Needed Software or Equipment
8. _____ Grading Practice that Identifies all Types of Assignments with a Brief Description and Point/Percentage Value
9. _____ Grading Scale
10. _____ Tips for Success
11. _____ Late and Make-up Work
12. _____ Dropping the Course
13. _____ Communication
14. _____ Plagiarism and Cheating
15. _____ Statements Explaining Access to Academic and Disability Support
16. _____ Regular Effective Contact Policy for Online and Hybrid Courses

Required Elements for the Schedule in Your Syllabi

1. _____ Date of Each Class Meeting
2. _____ All Assignments, Activities, and Readings
3. _____ Topics or Themes for Weekly Class Meetings
4. _____ Date and Time of Required Final Exam

Strongly Recommended Elements for Your Syllabi

1. _____ Tips for Success
2. _____ Classroom Etiquette of Netiquette for Online/Hybrid Courses
3. _____ Estimated Time for Feedback or Completion of Grading for Each Assignment Category (For example. Quizzes and discussion assignments will be graded within a week of completion. However, essay exams will require two to three weeks at a minimum.)

4. _____ Equity Statement (See MSJC Equity Pledge) and Land Acknowledgment (Visit: <https://native-land.ca/>)
5. _____ Identify, List, and Describe Additional Services at the College
6. _____ Procedure for Student Grievances (Should direct students to the faculty member first before the department chair and ultimately, the appropriate dean.)
7. _____ Incomplete Policy
8. _____ Use DELTA Templates (accessible) (bit.ly/DELTAservices)