

Constructing the **AGNES SCOTT COLLEGE** Course Syllabus

Primarily designed to inform students of requirements and outcomes expected of them in a course, a syllabus also expresses an agreement between professor and student. Students will ordinarily hold professors to the content of the syllabus throughout the course, and professors can hold students to the policies and standards established in the syllabus. In addition, college policy and procedure on important issues like compliance with Title IX and ADA are key pieces of information to be communicated on a syllabus. A syllabus also informs other colleges and universities of the content of a course so that they may determine if it is equivalent to a similar one offered at their university.¹ For Agnes Scott policies, please refer to the Academic Program and Policies sections of the [Agnes Scott College Catalog for 2019-2020](#). Also, see the [Student Handbook \(p.13\)](#) for information on our Honor System.

Every course syllabus should contain:

1. Key course data:
 - a. course number, title, section and credit hours; semester and year; location, days and hours of class meeting, course co-requisites and prerequisites;
 - b. clear expectations of readiness/skills needed;
 - c. instructor's name, office location, office hours, telephone number and email;
 - d. a workload statement indicating preparation hours outside of class; our classes are typically 4- credit hours, but “seat time” is usually less than 4 hours per week—so a clear indication of additional “course time” should be included, such as “Students should expect to work on classroom assignments and/or study for a minimum of 9 hours a week outside of class time for each 4-credit course.” The additional hour is added to meet the SACS credit hour requirements. This statement is important for accreditation purposes as well as for communicating expectations.
 - e. instructions on scheduling appointments and how you should be contacted.
2. Clear statement of the purpose/rationale of the course:
 - a. introduction to the subject and its disciplinary orientation;
 - b. explanation of how the course fits into the department and college curriculum, including whether the course satisfies a particular requirement;
3. Clearly stated course goals and learning objectives (by topic or meeting):
 - a. 3-5 major learning objectives you expect students to achieve;
 - b. specific skills and/or competencies you wish to develop in students;
 - c. explanation of how assignments relate to course objectives.
4. Course requirements and penalties:
 - a. attendance policy, including tardiness, and specific penalty policy for each;
 - b. honor code/academic ethics/plagiarism statements and penalty; pledging papers; (**see Appendix A for examples of syllabus statements on plagiarism; see Appendix C for the honor code statement endorsed by the faculty at their May 11, 2012 faculty meeting**);
 - c. test policies and procedures, including make-up and take-home tests;
 - d. procedures for submitting work—Moodle or Canvas? In-class hard copy?
 - e. final examination policies and procedures;
 - f. deadlines for assignments and policy/penalties for submitting assignments late;
 - g. laboratory requirements if applicable;

¹ Please note the following policy concerning syllabi in the Faculty Handbook: “At the beginning of a semester, each instructor shall provide in electronic format copies of the syllabi for every course she/he is teaching to the office of faculty services. Faculty services staff will maintain an electronic inventory of all syllabi. [These can be sent electronically to mdumas-patterson@agnesscott.edu].

- h. acceptable and unacceptable classroom behavior (i.e., eating in class, cell phones in class, rules for discussion, respect for others, etc.);
 - i. outside assignments;
 - j. extra credit policies;
 - k. Required submission of course evaluation at the end of the semester (students will receive an e-mail near the end of the semester asking them to submit an online evaluation of the course; see **Appendix B** for examples of statements used by faculty members on the course syllabus to indicate the expectation of students to complete course evaluations).
5. Required textbooks (including author and publication information) and course materials, optional textbooks, and library reserve list. Please provide a link to the Follett bookstore (<https://www.bkstr.com/agnesscottstore/home>) so that pricing information and options are available to students.
 6. A Title IX statement: On your syllabus, please include the following: *“Agnes Scott is here to help if you have experienced any form of sexual harassment or violence, dating or domestic violence, or stalking. Please talk to any faculty or staff member with whom you feel comfortable. Faculty and staff members want to support you and have been trained to help. They also will inform the Title IX office so that you can learn about the options available to you. If you do not want college administrators to know what you have experienced, you may talk to the chaplain, as well as nurses or counselors in the Wellness Center in complete confidentiality. They will not tell anyone what you share with them unless you give your express permission.”*
 7. Inclusion: Agnes Scott is a diverse and inclusive community, and it’s helpful to remind students of what that means in the classroom. Include something like: *“This course adheres to the principles of diversity and inclusion integral to the Agnes Scott community. We respect people from all backgrounds and affirm people’s decisions about gender expression and identity. Please feel free to correct me if your preferred name or gender pronoun are different from that listed on the class roster.”*
 8. The grading/evaluation system:
 - a. grading scale;²
 - b. grading areas used (projects, midterm, final, papers, presentations) and relative weight (percentage or points) of each;
 - c. grading policies: do you use an absolute scale?³
 9. Course outline and schedule:
 - a. sequence of topics and dates topics will be covered;
 - b. test dates and due dates for projects and presentations;
 - c. holidays and dates when class will not meet (See [Academic Calendar](#));
 - d. important registration and academic dates.⁴

² Grades are assigned the following quality points at Agnes Scott: A = 4 quality points per semester hour, A- = 3.67, B+ = 3.33, B = 3, B- = 2.67, C+ = 2.33, C = 2, C- = 1.67, D+ = 1.33, D = 1, D- = .67, and F = 0.

³ Note the following *Faculty Handbook* policy: Faculty determine grading policies for their courses. Grading policies must be made available to students at the beginning of each semester. In the absence of any other scale announced by an instructor or department, the grading scale given below will apply for converting numerical grades into final letter grades.

93 to 100 A	73 to less than 77 C
90 to less than 93 A-	70 to less than 73 C-
87 to less than 90 B+	67 to less than 70 D+
83 to less than 87 B	63 to less than 67 D
80 to less than 83 B-	60 to less than 63 D-
77 to less than 80 C+	Less than 60 F

⁴ Key dates for syllabus: January 17—last day to add or drop using AscAgnes; January 24—last day to add a fall class or change to audit; February 3—last day to drop without a W; April 2—last day to drop with a W or change to pass/fail.

10. A statement inviting students with disabilities to meet with them in a confidential environment to discuss making arrangements for accommodations (see example below). There are several reasons why this syllabus statement is critical:
- it both normalizes the accommodation process and helps to create a positive and welcoming environment for students with disabilities;
 - it creates a collaborative vehicle for making legally mandated accommodations;
 - it serves as a reminder to students who need the accommodations that these arrangements need to be made.

At Agnes Scott College incoming students are informed that if they need disability accommodations, they need to register with the Office of Academic Advising and meet with Rashad Morgan, Director of Accessible Education. Once they have done so, an accommodation checklist will be sent to each professor whose course the student is enrolled in. Thus you might include in your syllabus a version of the following statement:

Agnes Scott College seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in this class, please contact Rashad Morgan in the Office of Academic Advising (X6174) to complete the registration process. Once registered, please contact me so we can discuss the specific accommodations needed for this course.



A syllabus may also include:

- An introduction to the discipline, its mode of inquiry, its relationship to or use in other disciplines.
- Instructional strategies to be employed (discussion groups, simulations, case studies, role-plays) and how these relate to learning the discipline.
- An explanation of study procedures or lab procedures to be utilized.
- A list of links to student resources:
 - [Office of Academic Advising](#)
 - [Summit Advisors](#)
 - Information about [The Center for Writing and Speaking](#)
 - Information about [McCain Library](#)
 - Link to [Wellness Center](#)
 - Link to [Catalog](#)
 - [Academic Calendar](#)
 - Link to [Registrar](#)
 - [Student Handbook](#)

Appendix A: Examples of Statements Regarding Plagiarism Taken from the Syllabi of Agnes Scott College Faculty

From Christine Cozzens (Charles A. Dana Professor of English and Director of the Center for Writing and Speaking; please note that this statement is used in English 110, a foundational writing course for first-year students):

THE HONOR CODE AND PLAGIARISM. Intellectual communities are founded on principles of honesty and fair use. Teaching, learning, and the advancement of knowledge all depend on these principles. One of the most important things you will learn as an Agnes Scott student is how to use the writings of others in combination with your own ideas and research to create thoughtful papers that make contributions to the world of knowledge with full credit to all the minds that have participated.

For many reasons, including the explosion of information available on the Internet, plagiarism is on the rise in colleges and universities across the country. In recent years it has become easier to find and copy or download papers or parts of papers and easier to find sources of papers or other works that are for sale. Of course it has also become easier for such crimes to be detected. Most of you will not be tempted to pass off others' work as your own, yet it is also possible to inadvertently use others' work in an improper way. One of the goals of this course is to teach you how to avoid making such mistakes and how to use sources properly and effectively in your written work.

Nothing is more important in a college course than adherence to the Honor System. You have all signed the Honor Pledge, and its principles should govern all of your work for this course as for any other. If you directly (direct quotations) or indirectly (paraphrases, other borrowings) borrow ideas from others—whether those ideas appear in books, articles, or online, or develop during conversations—you must give proper and full credit to the original sources.

Please pledge individual papers and exams as a reminder for all of us that you are committed to upholding the Honor System. To make sure everyone understands how this system and its principles provide the foundation for all course work, we will spend a substantial portion of class time—including a required class session on September 11—discussing academic and intellectual honesty and conducting a thorough examination of the proper use of sources in informal and formal writing.

At any time during the semester, I will be happy to answer questions you may have about the Honor System, academic and intellectual honesty, the proper use of sources, or any related topic.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the use of someone else's ideas or words without giving them credit. This can mean using someone's ideas without proper acknowledgement in papers you are writing for class, copying a sentence directly from a book or journal without citing the source, or turning in the same paper or assignment for different classes without the professors' knowledge. In the United States, there are specific requirements for documenting sources and ideas. You can learn about these standards by consulting your professors or by visiting the Writing Center. Plagiarism is a serious offense and the penalty ranges from warnings to probation or

suspension.

Many professors do not mind if students work together and discuss their ideas, but students are expected to prepare assignments and write papers independently unless otherwise instructed. If you are not sure of your professor's preference where group work is concerned, check with her/him to be certain.

Appendix B: Samples of course evaluation statements for syllabi

The following statements have been used by faculty members on the course syllabus to indicate the expectation of students to complete course evaluations.

Course Evaluations:

At the end of the semester you will receive an email asking you to submit an evaluation of the course. Please give feedback! Your input is very important to the college as a whole and to me as a teacher. I take your comments very seriously.

Course Evaluations: Near the end of the semester you will be notified by e-mail and provided with a link to follow to complete course evaluations on line outside of class. I want you to know that your feedback on the course is extremely valuable to me, the department, and the administration. In particular, I take your comments very seriously and use them to improve the course the next time I teach it. Please do fill out a course evaluation when you receive the emailed link at the end of the semester.

Course Evaluations:

Course evaluations are completed by students online rather than in class. It is an expectation of this course that you will complete the course evaluation. These evaluations are very important to me and I look forward to student comments every semester to see the ways in which I can improve the course. PLEASE help me by completing the evaluation thoughtfully!

STUDENT EVALUATIONS

Course evaluations are completed online. Near the end of the semester, you will receive an email message that will provide a link to follow in order to complete the evaluation online, outside of class. Student evaluations provide feedback that is valuable to the instructor, and I hope that all members of the class will complete this form.

Appendix C: Academic Honesty Statement from the Committee on Academic Standards and Admission (CASA)

ACADEMIC HONESTY

The Agnes Scott College honor code embodies an ideal of character, conduct, and citizenship, and is an important part of the College's mission and core identity. This applies especially to academic honesty and integrity. Passing off someone else's work as your own represents intellectual fraud and theft, and violates the core values of our academic community. To be honorable, you should understand not only what counts as academic

dishonesty, but also how to avoid engaging in these practices. You should:

- review each course syllabus for the professor's expectations regarding course work and class attendance.
- attribute all ideas taken from other sources; this shows respect for other scholars. Plagiarism can include portraying another's work or ideas as your own, buying a paper online and turning it in as if it were your own work, or not citing or improperly citing references on a reference page or within the text of a paper.
- not falsify or create data and resources or alter a graded work without the prior consent of your professor. This includes making up a reference for a works cited page or making up statistics or facts for academic work.
- not allow another party to do your work/exam, or submit the same or similar work in more than one course without permission from the course instructors. Cheating also includes taking an exam for another person, looking on another person's exam for answers, using exams from previous classes without permission, or bringing and using unauthorized notes or resources (i.e., electronic, written, or otherwise) during an exam.
- not facilitate cheating, which can happen when you help another student complete a take home exam, give answers to an exam, talk about an exam with a student who has not taken it, or collaborate with others on work that is supposed to be completed independently.
- be truthful about the submission of work, which includes the time of submission and the place of submission (e.g., email, online, in a mailbox, to an office, etc.)

You should understand that penalties resulting from dishonest conduct range from failure of the assignment to expulsion from the college. You should speak with your professors if you need clarification about any of these policies.

Modified Pledge

Students pledge that they have completed assignments honestly by attaching the following statement to each test, quiz, paper, overnight assignment, in-class essay, or other work:

I pledge that I have neither given nor received any unauthorized aid on this assignment. (Signed) _____