

It's on the Syllabus

Make it memorable



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We all use them. We all want - nay - *need* our students to read them, keep them close to their hearts. So why are syllabi so often such forgettable documents? They don't have to be.

GO OVER IT TOGETHER

Any pharmacists with their salt will go over with their patients, thoroughly, all the ins and outs of taking a new prescription. Just as a prescription has related information letting you know the intention, methods, and common side effects, so should a syllabus help students understand the goal of the course, the way you'll be teaching it, and what you're expecting of them. The best way to be sure you're communicating your own syllabus clearly is to walk through it with your students. And since we know that walking through a document with students is no guarantee they'll remember it, why not...

QUESTION THEIR RETENTION

How often are you asked a question, the answer to which is clearly stated in the syllabus? A lot, probably. And you will continue to be asked - make no mistake - but it could be helpful for student retention if, after reviewing the syllabus, you question their retention via a quiz or class discussion.



"Wait - we're supposed to REMEMBER all of this?"

Whether your course is online or face-to-face, remember that both the syllabus and course description are *course documents*, just as the required reading from the texts. Just as you wouldn't assign chapter 5 without discussing it or establishing any follow-up, don't leave the syllabus unaddressed - you probably don't want to leave it too open to interpretation.

ALLOW IT TO LIVE

Not all students, or groups of students, are created equally. Some semesters you may have a group of students who need to spend more than the one week you've allotted for a particular lesson, and it's helpful to have designed your course (and syllabus) to allow for that flexibility. It's not so much that you want your students to have the entirety of the syllabus memorized; rather, you want to be sure they understand its purpose, and how to navigate it.

TELL THE STORY OF YOUR COURSE

Your course is a story, and your syllabus is one of the ways you'll be introducing students to that story, and inviting them to participate in it. And sure there are a thousand other Intro to Chemistry courses out there, for example, but yours is different. Let your students know what makes this course special.

REFER TO IT OFTEN

And be sure your students do, too. You don't memorize a map before you head out on a trip, never referring to it again, so don't abandon your syllabus and other course navigation tools and materials. Help avoid surprises.



No one wants this.

KEEP LEARNING

Find out more about effective syllabi here:

- <http://elearning.uaf.edu/go/tt-syllabi>