**GUIDELINES FOR SYLLABI** rev Aug 2023

The Roanoke College *Faculty Handbook* (3.2) indicates that at the beginning of each course, students will be given a written statement (syllabus/class policy statement) that explains each of the following:

1. **Specific Learning Outcomes**
2. **Materials Students are Expected to Buy, Read, or Use**
3. **Attendance Policy**
4. **Grading Policy**
5. **Testing Policy**
6. **Policy on Make-Up Tests**
7. **Policy on Expected Number of Hours of Work per Week**
8. **Academic Integrity**
9. **Office Hours and Location**

Notes and sample policies for many of these items appear below. Feel free to adopt or alter these policies as you see fit. A copy of this entire document is available at <https://www.roanoke.edu/inside/a-z_index/academic_affairs/faculty_information>

At the bottom of this document are sample statements concerning academic support services. You are encouraged to include this information in your syllabus. Also at the end of the document are sample statements concerning diversity and preferred name/pronouns. You are not required to include such a statement but encouraged to consider them.

As you work on your syllabi for the fall semester, you might consider the following slide deck from a presentation titled “Toward Cruelty-Free Syllabi” from Matthew Cheney at Plymouth State University. You might consider adapting your syllabi to talk less about penalties and procedures and more about encouraging conversations:

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1r45gn0vdnCAlM_aQrX_6NnC0yHiN_GLCBDWG0tjteSI/edit#slide=id.p>

Here are the notes and sample policies referenced above.

1. **Specific Learning Outcomes**

If you need guidance on writing learning outcomes, see the separate document, “Guidelines for Writing Learning Outcomes,” which is available at the link above. Generally speaking, the intended learning outcomes for your course should reflect the skills and knowledge you expect students to have gained by the end of your course; for courses required for a major, course-specific learning outcomes should advance program-level learning outcomes.

1. **Materials Students are Expected to Buy, Read, or Use**

Please include at least author, title, and edition for required books. If you have it, the ISBN number is helpful; students should also be able to see this information through our textbook site online at <https://roanoke.textbookx.com/> and purchase through them or through other vendors or sites. Even if you don’t have any required materials (all available online, for example), please submit this information through the online bookstore.

**3. General Attendance Policy**

Faculty members set their own attendance policy. Policies should be clear, consistent, and fair. In past years, we asked faculty to put a COVID-specific policy on their syllabi; now, we encourage all faculty to talk about absences due to illness (and, if applicable, how that applies to your policy).

Note that while you set your attendance policy, all faculty must still keep track of attendance in all courses in some way; if a student receives an F in your course, as part of submitting a grade of F, you also need to submit the date the student last attended class. This is part of our Title IV regulations for our students to be allowed to receive federal aid.

You may wish, regardless of whatever policy you adopt, to add a statement on your syllabus that says even though absences may not be penalized, instructors are still required to keep attendance records and that you are required to report “last date of attendance” for any student earning an F in the course. Students who receive all Fs in a term, the College must document that a student attended past the 60% point of the semester.

***Example 1*:** Class attendance is a very important aspect of a student's success in this course. The student is expected to attend every class and is accountable for missed content and assignments.

***Example 2:*** (Thanks to Mary Henold) Attendance will be taken at the beginning of every class meeting.  If you arrive late, it is your responsibility to make sure you are not marked absent in my grade book. Your fourth and each additional absence will result in a 2-point reduction in your final course grade. Please do not contact me with excuses about absences.  You get three freebies so that I don’t have to distinguish between excused and unexcused absences.  College athletes will be afforded wiggle room; please come see me immediately if you are an athlete.  If you should have an emergency that requires you to miss a large chunk of the course, please notify me ASAP.

**Example 3:** Your attendance and participation are critical to your own learning as well as that of your classmates. You have one free miss. No excuse is needed but save the free miss for when you are truly ill. Your second absence will result in a 2-point reduction of your overall course grade. Your third absence will result in an additional 3-point reduction of your course grade and a warning email to you, your advisor, and the Registrar stating that missing a fourth class will result in you being immediately dropped from this course. If you make the unfortunate choice to miss a fourth class, you will be notified via email that you have been dropped. If your grade at that point is an F, you will fail the course. The notation on your transcript will be DF, dropped failing, which has the same effect on your GPA as any other F.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** If you intend to **drop** students from a course in the event of excessive absences or missed requirements, ***you must*** spell out the specific details of your policy, and you must follow the drop policy requirements—especially concerning written warnings—as given in the *Faculty Handbook* 3.3.4. See Example 3 above, which spells out the requirements for notifying the student, advisor, and Registrar.

Even more important – if you do intend to drop students from a course for missing too many classes, you need to do this is a fair, consistent, and clear way for all students in your course. If the policy is not fair or not applied consistently, the Assistant Vice President for Academic Operations may have to decline the request to drop a student.

1. **Grading Policy**

This would normally include how various course requirements are weighted and what grading scale will be used. Note that there is no standard grading scale at Roanoke College. Be specific. “Late work will be penalized,” is not specific. Again, try to make your policies student-forward and clear so that it can be applied fairly.

The College does not impose a standard grading scale, but the most commonly used scale is: A 100-93, A- 92.9-90.0, B+ 89.9-87.0, B 86.9-83, B- 82.9-80.0, and so on.

1. **Testing Policy**

These requirements were penned in the early 80s. The intent of this requirement was probably for faculty to include information on the number of tests, papers, projects and the basic format of each.

Courses require final examinations. We exempt INQ 110, 120, and 300 from the final exam requirement. Some departmental senior seminars also have exemptions. Check with your department chair if you think this might be true for one of your courses.

Requests to substitute some other form of evaluation for a final exam **must be approved** by both the department chair and the Registrar. Rather than contacting both, please simply ask your department chair for permission; department chairs, please send a full list of requests from your department members to the Assistant Vice President for Academic Operations and they will coordinate with the Registrar.

Final examinations are scheduled at the times designated by the Registrar's Office. Special arrangements to schedule the final examination at a different time must be approved by both the department chair and the Registrar.

Note that when some other form of evaluation for the final exam is going to be used, it should be held during the final exam time unless special arrangements as noted above are made and approved by the department chair and the Registrar.

Also, do not set any deadlines for work in your course to be due during the final exam week *except* during your own time. For example, if your final exam block is Thursday afternoon in the fall, you should not have something due that same week for Monday morning (students have other exams to prepare for). Work that you want submitted before your final exam needs to be due the last day of class or earlier.

1. **Policy on Make-Up Tests**

Your syllabus should also include your policy on late submission of work (whether allowed, within what time frame, and with what penalty).

1. **Policy on Expected Number of Hours of Work per Week**

Per the Academic Catalog, “for each one-unit course, students are expected to complete 12 hours of work inside and outside of class each week. Courses valued at less than one unit expect a proportionate number of hours of work.” A sample statement for a syllabus might include the following: “This course expects you to spend at least 12 hours of work each week inside and outside of class.”

1. **Academic Integrity**

Every syllabus must include a statement describing how the college’s academic integrity policy (see [www.roanoke.edu/academicintegrity](http://www.roanoke.edu/academicintegrity)) applies to the class. Many professors make a general statement that indicates the importance of academic honesty and the requirement of knowing and following the policy in our brochure. In addition, you are encouraged to include the following topics, as appropriate:

1. Plagiarism: If there are graded writing assignments, addressing plagiarism and how to avoid it is essential. It is also a good idea to discuss plagiarism during class or provide a separate handout about proper citation and references.
2. Collaboration: Whether or under what conditions collaboration among students is permitted—for any graded assignment—should be clarified. These restrictions are sometimes difficult for students to understand. **Please be as precise as possible in explaining to students what kind of collaboration is allowable and what not on the syllabus and/or assignment sheets.** You might also consider taking the time to explain to students why you might allow collaboration for some class activities, but not for others.
3. Electronic Devices: An increasing number of professors are including a statement about electronic devices. You may wish to address whether any electronic devices may be used in class, in preparing assignments, or during tests. You might consider adopting a policy of requiring all students to deposit their phones in a basket prior to any quizzes or tests.
4. Online testing: Courses that include quizzes or tests administered via Inquire are urged to explicitly address this in the AI policy. Instructors are encouraged to make online quizzes and tests open notes and open book since it is nearly impossible to know if a student consults these. Be explicit if you forbid consulting other electronic sources or any person. Be explicit in forbidding the use of Chegg, Course Hero, and similar “homework help” sites during tests. (In our system, “using during a testing period … any notes or other prepared materials which a student is not permitted to consult” is already a violation under cheating.) You may also forbid students from uploading any of your quiz or test questions to these sites.

It's important to be clear with your students about what “open notes and open book” means – for example, if a group of students in your class create a common study guide for an upcoming test, are they allowed to use that common study guide during the test?  If so, short answer and essay responses may be similar or exactly the same for these students, depending on the question.  Asking more open-ended questions that ask students to synthesize information can alleviate this well. Please consider adding more information to your syllabus as well as assignment and test guidelines.

***Example 1:*** Your learning and integrity are at the core of your RC education. For this reason, you must follow the rules outline in the College’s AI policies. See <https://www.roanoke.edu/inside/a-z_index/academic_affairs/academic_integrity>. When completing the online quizzes, you may consult course readings and your own class notes, but not those of others or any individuals, websites, apps, or similar.

For the two papers, I strongly encourage you to ask others to read and provide feedback. Ask others if your paper is clear, if the thesis is strong and well-supported, or if they see grammar or similar mistakes. Everyone’s writing is improved by such feedback. BUT do not let others write for you or correct your errors. That would undermine your learning and integrity, and is a violation of Academic Integrity in this course. (Other courses may have different rules on collaboration.)

All source material must be properly cited using the MLA conventions and use paraphrases or quotations when appropriate. Drafts must include citations. Note that paraphrasing is more than re-arranging a few words. I am happy to help, but also encourage you to use the Writing Center at all stages of your paper writing.

***Example 2*:** (Thanks to Gary Hollis) Students are expected to follow the integrity policy detailed in the handbook *Academic Integrity at Roanoke College*.  Additionally, if you are ever uncertain as to how the College’s policy pertains to any assignment or exam in this course, please ask me for clarification.  The bottom line is that all work that a student submits for a grade must be ***solely*** the work of that student unless the instructor has given explicit permission for students to work together.

***Example 3:*** (Thanks to Giuliana Chapman) Your work is your own.  You must not share it with anyone else nor should you borrow someone’s work and claim it as your own. If you copy (in whole or in part) someone else’s work (and here the ‘someone else’ could range from another student to the statistical matching algorithm behind Google Translate), that constitutes a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy.  I would like for you to be willing and able to discuss outside of class the material that you are learning this semester.  There is a difference, however, between telling someone the answer and showing them how to find it or generate it on their own.  Therefore, all discussions about coursework should be limited to general concepts, not specific instructions of what to write, say, or do to complete an assignment.

I encourage collaborative work in the classroom.  In a language class, we will be working on many, many pairs and group activities in class.  During these activities I encourage you to help, fine-tune, and learn from each other’s contributions.  However, you are expected to individually complete all written and/or recorded graded assignments and to turn in work that is wholly your own.

Telling a lie in an academic situation is a violation of Academic Integrity.  For example, if you were to lie about why you missed a test or why an assignment was late, that constitutes a violation of Academic Integrity.  Violations of the integrity standards will not be tolerated and will be reported without exception.

Lastly, it is important to understand that it is our responsibility as engaged and free-thinking members of a learning community to take stewardship of the values a liberal arts education promotes.  The Academic Integrity Policy affords each of us the opportunity to do this in a way that protects the contributions of each community member.  This is why we care about it and this is why we expect that our students, professors, and administrators uphold it both in spirit and in practice.

***Example 4*: (**Thanks to Kathy O’Neill) I subscribe to the academic integrity policies as outlined in *Academic Integrity at Roanoke College*.  Students are expected to be familiar with these policies.  As in real life, failure to learn the rules is not an excuse.  Please contact me if you have any questions.  Be aware that I am contractually obligated to report students if I suspect that they have engaged in academic dishonesty.

During in-class activities, it is fine – and even encouraged -- to discuss and learn from one another.  However, unless specifically stated otherwise, you are expected to **individually** complete all steps of the activity and to turn in your own work.  All written assignments (unless specifically stated otherwise) are to be completed **individually.** Misrepresentation of your contribution to a group effort will be considered a violation of the academic integrity policy.  Copying and pasting directly from a web site and claiming it as your own work is the same as copying and pasting directly from a book – both are violations of the academic integrity policy and will be treated accordingly.

***Example 5: (***Thanks to Bob Schultz) As members of a learning community, we enjoy important intellectual freedoms and are answerable to equally important academic responsibilities. Doing our own work and properly acknowledging the work of others are bedrock values in a community of scholars. When you arrived at Roanoke College you pledged to uphold these values and to abide by the practices and policies described in the brochure “Academic Integrity at Roanoke College.” It is your responsibility to read this brochure carefully and to understand it well.

In a course such as this one, which involves independent scholarship and writing, it is especially important to cite and discuss your sources as a part of our intellectual exchange. And, as a matter of honesty, it is imperative that you understand what plagiarism is and avoid even unintended violations. Review carefully the section on plagiarism in the academic integrity brochure. If you have any questions, speak with me or bring up your questions in class.

Finally, here is our policy regarding electronic devices: Cell phones must be turned off prior to entering the classroom. Laptops may be used for note-taking during regular class sessions, if this seems useful to you, but you may not access the internet or to an email server unless specifically told to do so. The use of laptops or any other electronic device during an exam is strictly prohibited. Any use of such devices during a quiz or exam will be considered a breach of academic integrity.

New Special “Examples” for statements about Artificial Intelligence (for example, ChatGPT) and Academic Integrity (borrowed from Northwestern’s adaptation of language from Boston College <https://cteresources.bc.edu/documentation/artificial-intelligence-in-teaching-and-learning/#update-your-syllabus>):

**Example 1:** Since a central goal of this subject is to help you become independent and critical thinkers, you are discouraged from using AI tools to create [SPECIFY: TEXT | CODE |EQUATIONS | VIDEO | AUDIO | IMAGES] in your work (assignments, activities, responses, etc). Any work submitted using AI tools will be treated as though it was plagiarized.

If any part of this is confusing or uncertain, please reach out to me for a conversation before submitting your work.

**Example 2:** Since a central goal of this subject is to help you become independent and critical thinkers, you are discouraged from the extensive use of generative AI tools to create (SPECIFY: TEXT | CODE | EQUATIONS | VIDEO | AUDIO | IMAGES) as part of your work. If you do use AI-generated content in your assignments, you must clearly indicate what work is yours and what part is generated by the AI. In such cases, no more than XX% of your work should be generated by AI. Any AI-generated work not cited and/or used for more than XX% of your assignment will be treated as though it were plagiarized.

If any part of this is confusing or uncertain, please reach out to me for a conversation before submitting your work.

**Example 3**: There are situations when the use of generative AI may be appropriate and educational. If you believe that your use of generative AI is appropriate for a given assignment, please contact me (via email, or in person at least (X) days before the due date) to explain your rationale for its use.

(Adapted from the Yale Poorvu Center’s AI Guidance; Please note – that for equity and inclusion-related reasons, you should be extremely clear that you are open and willing to discuss the use of generative AI with all students. You should also be transparent about your criteria for deciding justified use. A case-by-case approach may disproportionately negatively impact firstgeneration/low-income (FG/LI) students and/or students from other traditionally marginalized backgrounds in higher education. These students may be less willing to reach out to instructors for special accommodations, and may, overall, be less

comfortable approaching faculty. This may be due in part to fears of reinforcing negative stereotypes (stereotype threat) and/or because FG/LI students may not know that conversations with faculty are an expected part of higher education (i.e., they have less academic cultural capital than non-FG/LI students). In addition, without clearly articulated criteria for your decisions, students may feel that your decisions regarding AI use are unfair or biased.)

1. **Office Hours and Location**

Besides hours and office location, you will also want to include your e-mail address and any other avenues of electronic communication you wish to encourage. Office hours may be held via Zoom or similar apps. Some faculty use an online calendar such as Calendly or YouCanBook.Me to help students have a simple way to sign up for specific times. A relatively new, free, option available to us is Microsoft Bookings which you can access from any online Microsoft 365 app, such as Outlook online.

**College Services Statements (not required):**

**The Writing Center @ Roanoke College**, located on the Lower Level of Fintel Library (Room 15), offers free tutorials focused on writing projects and oral presentations for students working in any field. Writers and presenters at all levels of competence may visit the Writing Center at any point in their process—including brainstorming, drafting, organizing, editing, or polishing presentation skills—to talk with trained peer tutors in informal, one-on-one sessions. The Writing Center is open Sunday through Thursday from 4 to 9 PM. Simply stop in, or schedule an appointment at [www.roanoke.edu/writingcenter](http://www.roanoke.edu/writingcenter). Questions? Email writingcenter@roanoke.edu or call 540-375-4949.

**Subject Tutoring**, located on the lower level of Fintel Library (Room 5), is open 4-9 PM, Sunday-Thursday. Subject Tutors are highly trained, current students who offer free, one-on-one (and small group) tutorials in over 80 courses taught at Roanoke College, including: Business, Economics, Mathematics, INQ 240, Modern Languages, Lab Sciences, and Social Sciences. Check out all available subjects and schedule 30- or 60-minute appointments at [www.roanoke.edu/tutoring](http://www.roanoke.edu/tutoring). If you have a question, feel free to stop by, or contact us at subject\_tutoring@roanoke.edu or 540-375-2590. See you soon!

**Accessible Education Services (AES)** is located in the Goode-Pasfield Center for Learning and Teaching in **Fintel Library**. AES provides reasonable accommodations to students with documented disabilities. To register for services, students must self-identify to AES, complete the registration process, and provide current documentation of a disability along with recommendations from the qualified specialist. Please contact Dustin Persinger, Assistant Director of Academic Services for Accessible Education, at 540-375-2247 or by e-mail at aes@roanoke.edu to schedule an appointment. If you have registered with AES in the past and would like to receive academic accommodations for this semester, please contact Dustin Persinger at your earliest convenience to schedule an appointment and/or obtain your accommodation letter for the current semester.

**Student Health & Counseling Services** supports students through in-person health appointments, in-person counseling, 24/7 telehealth (TimelyCare), Therapy Assistance Online, as well as resources related to general wellness, LGBTQ+, sexual assault, substance abuse, and suicide prevention. Unmet health needs can negatively impact your performance in this course. Student Health & Counseling Services can help. Please see <https://www.roanoke.edu/shcs> for more information and to access services.

**Diversity, Preferred Name/Pronoun, Respect, Inclusivity Statements (not required):**

Many sample statements related to diversity and inclusion can be found online. Faculty are welcome to use them or to create their own. See, for example, <https://docs.asee.org/public/LGBTQ/Diversity_Statement.pdf>, <https://ctl.yale.edu/DiversityStatements>, or <https://www.celt.iastate.edu/teaching/preparing-to-teach/how-to-create-an-effective-syllabus/recommended-iowa-state-university-syllabus-statements/>

Here are a few examples.

**Gender/Name/Identity/Gender Expression statements**

* I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

**Diversity, Mutual Respect, Inclusivity**

* I consider this classroom to be a place where you will be treated with respect, and I welcome individuals of all ages, backgrounds, beliefs, ethnicities, genders, gender identities, gender expressions, national origins, religious affiliations, sexual orientations, ability – and other visible and nonvisible differences. All members of this class are expected to contribute to a respectful, welcoming and inclusive environment for every other member of the class.
* You are expected to treat your instructor and all other participants in the course with courtesy and respect. Your comments to others should be factual, constructive, and free from harassing statements. You are encouraged to disagree with other students, but such disagreements need to be based upon facts and documentation (rather than prejudices and personalities). It is the instructor’s goal to promote an atmosphere of mutual respect in the classroom. Please contact the instructor if you have suggestions for improving the classroom environment. It is preferable if students discuss issues directly with the instructor, however, students may also leave a note in the instructor’s mailbox.
* It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups. In addition, if any of our class meetings conflict with your religious events, please let me know so that we can plan for you. (Source: University of Iowa College of Education)
* Students in this class are encouraged to speak up and participate during class meetings. Because the class will represent a diversity of individual beliefs, backgrounds, and experiences, every member of this class must show respect for every other member of this class. (Source: Adopted from California State University)

**Land Acknowledgement**

You would acknowledge the land at Roanoke College using the following statement:

* I acknowledge that we are on the traditional homelands of the Tutelo peoples. (Source: the website <https://native-land.ca/> to identify which traditional homelands you are occupying.)

**Basic needs.**
To learn effectively, you must have basic security: a roof over your head along with a reliable place to sleep and enough food to eat. If you’re having trouble with any of those things, please talk with me or the Dean of Students Office. Together we can work to meet those needs. (Source: Iowa State University)