Syllabus Tips

• Consider your course syllabus as a contract with your students.
• Getting students to understand the syllabus is key to a good semester.
  o Clearly state your rules and requirements.
  o Explain them further at the beginning of the course.
  o Students will then be much more likely to follow rules and meet requirements.
• Invest some time introducing students to academic rules and reinforcing study skills.
• Today’s college student experiences the world far differently than earlier generations, and things that were self-evident to that earlier generation must be explained in detail, especially policies, procedures, assignments, notes, requirements, etc.
• Consider a learner-centered syllabus.
  o Shift the focus from what you are going to teach to a concern for how they are going to learn and develop intellectually.
    ▪ Define their responsibilities
    ▪ Define your role and responsibilities
    ▪ Establish goals and expected outcomes
    ▪ Establish expected communication patterns
• Consider posting all of your syllabus and assignment information on either a personal web page on the University web or in eCompanion.
  o Give them the URL every class period, at least for the first few weeks.
• If you are somewhat new to writing syllabi, have an experienced colleague review it for you.