

# KSO Syllabus Guide

**Welcome to the Kent State Online Syllabus Guide!** We hope this will be a helpful tool as you prepare your syllabus. This guide will provide an overview of common syllabus components and provide examples of encouraging and welcoming language.

As you navigate through, consider your own course/department and any information that you may be required to include or how you may need to adjust and add or remove sections.

**For additional support** while creating your syllabus, we welcome you to [submit a ticket](#), and a member of our online learning team will contact you within 24-48 business hours!

Below are several components that are commonly included in an online course syllabus. In each section, you will find an **explanation** of what is commonly included in that section as well as student-friendly, supportive **example** language that you can use as a starting place while making it your own.

## Component 1: Introduction

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### Explanation

This section includes the “basics” of your course – number, name, section, semester, dates, and format. It can be helpful to utilize student-friendly terminology to provide clarity. For example, if your course is asynchronous, you might state, “100% online, no set meeting times”.

### Example

OCDE 10003 Online Teaching Orientation and Refresher

Section 001

Spring 2024

January 16 – May 12, 2024

100% Online, No Set Meeting Times

## Component 2: Instructor Name and Contact Information

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### Explanation

This section provides students with your name and basic contact information. Be sure to include the contact information that you prefer they use. Also included is a space to insert student hours. Traditionally termed “Office Hours,” this is your opportunity to welcome students to join you to discuss course-related matters in a low-pressure environment. The University-recommended tool for live virtual meetings is Microsoft Teams. Include the link to your Student Hours within the syllabus and/or on your course homepage.

### Example

Lydia Rogouski, M.S. Ed. (she/her/hers)

Kent State Online

Office Phone: 330-672-4284

Email: lrogousk@kent.edu

**Student Hours:** Tuesdays 10-11 AM - *Follow this link to join!*

Weekly student hours are a dedicated session where I am available to answer your questions, discuss course content, and offer support. Please join me for Student Hours via the Microsoft Teams link above or from our course homepage. If you have a scheduling conflict that prevents you from attending regular student hours, please email me to schedule an alternate time. Talking with students is a highlight of my job, and I look forward to speaking with you!

## **Component 3: Welcome**

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### **Explanation**

This section is an opportunity for you to introduce yourself, convey your enthusiasm, and welcome students to the course! Include a brief explanation of why you look forward to teaching this course, your professional/educational background, and a small bit about yourself personally that may allow students to begin connecting with you.

### **Example**

Greetings! My name is Lydia Rogouski, and you can feel free to call me Lydia. I have been teaching online for 12 years, and I look forward to teaching this course! It allows me to connect with other online instructors and build a community of support at the University.

I look forward to drawing from my experience in the field as an online instructor and instructional designer. I started out as an 8<sup>th</sup> grade language arts teacher before moving into higher education where I have taught introductory English and writing courses, both in person and online. During my time at Kent State, I spent 7 years as an instructional designer, partnering with faculty to design and support online courses before transitioning into my current role, where I focus on professional development for online teachers.

In my spare time, I spend time with my husband and our two young children. We love to travel and go on adventures as our time allows. We also have two cavapoos who complete our family. I hope we will find some connection points and get to know each other better over the next several weeks!

## **Component 4: Course Information**

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### **Explanation**

This space serves as a place to include the course description from the Kent State University catalog, a note about any program or University requirements this course fulfills, such as Kent CORE and prerequisite courses or knowledge, and important dates related to registration, adding, and dropping the course.

### **Example**

#### **Course Description**

This course is designed around essential online teaching topics and practices and supports faculty from all levels of teaching experience and environments. Participants will negotiate online learning from the learner's perspective while exploring pertinent topics such as teaching presence, student accessibility, classroom management, collaborative group learning, assessment, using Canvas, incorporating videos and screencasts, using web-based video conferencing, and more. The orientation features meaningful,

practical, and engaging content as well as opportunities for Applied Practice. It is designed to promote hands-on learning with experimentation, participation, and the creation of takeaways for use in the online classroom. This course is designed for faculty, instructors, graduate assistants, or anyone who may teach online.

### **Prerequisites**

There are no prerequisites for completing this course.

### **Registration Deadlines**

Please refer to the [Registrar Dates by Term](#) website with important information for our Section Start Date, Section End Date, Last Day to Add, Last Day to Drop, and Last Day to Withdraw.

## **Component 5: Learning Goals**

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### **Explanation**

In your own words, what can students expect to learn in this course? Begin this section with an informal description of the “big picture” and how this course can connect to their life, career, and/or major.

Are there any particularly difficult learning goals that you expect to be a challenge? Note them and reassure students that you are here to support them along the way.

Then, list the measurable program and/or course learning outcomes in student-friendly language. If you find that you will need to write your own course learning outcomes, you may wish to access these helpful tips!

### **Example**

The main goal of this course is to introduce you to the fundamentals of online teaching, point out differences from the traditional in-person experience, and help you prepare to engage students in the online environment.

As you begin or continue teaching at Kent State, we hope that you will find this information helpful and find small ways that you can apply these lessons to your teaching practice.

If you find a topic particularly challenging or thought-provoking, please don't hesitate to reach out! I am here to support you along the way, and we will tackle each challenge together!

### **Course Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Identify opportunities and strategies that support online learners.
2. Describe how the online environment impacts the instructor experience.
3. Prepare to successfully facilitate an online course.
4. Plan for the unique challenges of teaching in the online classroom.
5. Facilitate the creation of an online learning community.
6. Create and maintain presence in the online classroom.

7. Identify multiple ways to provide timely, quality feedback to students.
8. Utilize tools and technologies to develop presence, foster engagement, and enhance learning.

## Component 6: Course Materials

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### Explanation

What specific materials will students need to complete this course? Be sure to include names and descriptions of each, such as textbooks or software programs. This is an opportunity to share helpful information on how students might obtain these materials, including applicable cover images and links. If students will access books or materials through Ares, Flash Books, Publisher sites, direct links, or documents, be sure to state that as well.

### Example

We will use the following textbook in this course:

- Title
- Author
- Year/Edition
- ISBN
- Link for Ordering/Access
- Brief description of how students will use this text.

Additional reading material will be available in our course via the Library Course Reserves link in the left navigation menu.

## Component 7: Canvas

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### Explanation

This section shares information about Canvas, the official learning management system (LMS) of Kent State University. Here you can explain that they will use Canvas to complete their fully online course. Keep in mind that your course may be a student's first experience with an online course, so it is helpful to include log-in information and ways that they can learn about Canvas or receive help if needed. If your course has in-person opportunities, you can alter this language to include that information.

### Example

Our course will take place entirely online, and all course materials and activities will be available to you in Canvas, the official learning management system of Kent State University.

You can access Canvas by clicking the icon in the top right corner of FlashLine or via the direct URL: <https://canvas.kent.edu>. When using the URL, you will be prompted to enter your FlashLine username and password.

If this is your first experience taking a course in Canvas or if you want to learn more about a particular feature of Canvas, you might consider exploring the following options:

- [Canvas in a Flash for Students](#). A self-paced training course that you can review as often as needed and is a convenient way to learn more about general topics in Canvas.
- **Canvas Help**. The Help option in the bottom left corner of Canvas provides links to the Canvas Guides, where you can search by topic.

**IT (Information Technology) Support.** For live 24/7 Canvas assistance, choose Chat with Canvas Support (Student) from the Canvas Help menu.

## Component 8: Other Technology Considerations

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### Explanation

Students in online courses may be expected to use various technologies to support their learning and complete assignments. Do your students need to familiarize themselves with new technological processes such as creating Office 365 documents or making videos? In this section, include any technology programs or skills that students need to succeed in your course and information about how to obtain them or seek assistance if needed. It is also helpful to normalize technology struggles and ensure students that support is available.

### Example

As you work on our course this semester, there are a few additional technology recommendations that will help you have the most successful experience. Full details and links for obtaining software mentioned below are available on the [Getting Started Website Technology page](#).

### Recommendations

- A laptop or desktop computer with a current operating system such as Windows 11 or macOS 12 or later
- An up-to-date web browser that is compatible with Canvas: Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome, Safari, or Microsoft Edge
- Antivirus protection such as Windows Defender or Sophos
- Adobe Acrobat Reader

**Please note** that many aspects of our course are mobile and Chromebook-friendly. However, there may be times when you will need to download software, such as Kaltura Capture mentioned below, in which case you will need access to a laptop or desktop computer.

### Useful Software

It is recommended that you obtain or have access to the following software for use while completing course activities:

- Microsoft Office 365, specifically Word and PowerPoint. As a student at Kent State University, [you can obtain Office 365 at no charge to you](#).
- [Kaltura](#) is a video hosting platform available to all students at Kent State. We will use Kaltura to record videos for a group project in this course.

### Technology Challenges

It is common to experience technology mishaps while taking an online course. When you find yourself facing a challenge with technology, here are a few suggestions that may help:

- Take 30 minutes to explore, search for resources, ask a friend, step away, reboot, etc.
- Contact the [IT Help Desk](#) by submitting a ticket, chatting online, or calling.

You are always welcome to reach out to me. Please know that I will do my best, but I may need to refer you to other resources if I am unfamiliar with the issue.

## Component 9: Communication

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### Explanation

In this section, take a moment to share the options that students have for communicating with you in this course and the response times that they can expect. Do you send announcements from Canvas? Should they email you directly to your KSU account, or do you prefer the Canvas Inbox? Do you have an office phone, or do you distribute a different number for phone calls? Do you accept text messages? How often do you check and reply to communications throughout the week or on the weekends? It can be helpful to include related information such as how to adjust Canvas notification settings. As you write your communication plan, be sure to convey a tone that welcomes communication from your students.

### Example

Communication in online courses is especially important, and I welcome you to reach out to me anytime. Below are several options for communicating with me and other students in this course.

### Student Hours

Weekly student hours are a dedicated time that I am available to answer your questions, discuss course content, and offer support. Please join me for Student Hours via the Microsoft Teams link found in our syllabus and on the course homepage. If you would like to meet with me but have a scheduling conflict that prevents you from attending regular student hours, please email me to schedule an alternate time. Talking with students is a highlight of my job, and I look forward to speaking with you!

### Course Announcements

Often there will be information that I will need to share with everyone in our class. Most commonly, I will send this information out through Announcements. You can view announcements from the link in our course navigation, and the three most recent ones will appear at the top of our course homepage. If you have [enabled personal notifications for Announcements](#), you will receive an email copy as well.

### General Course Questions

Course discussion forums may be helpful with basic questions about course materials/assignments or technology snafus.

- **Open Question Forum.** A space where you can pose general questions that apply to the whole class or that someone else in the class might be able to answer. For example, “Does anyone have the link where I download Kaltura Capture?”

- **Fix This Please Forum.** A space where you can let me know that a link is broken, a document will not load, there is a spelling error, or otherwise silly mistake that we can expect to pop up in an online course.

As you communicate with me and your fellow classmates, remember that written communication can be easily misinterpreted. Be mindful of tone, thoughtful about word choice, and avoid all caps, bold type, and underlining, which may be misinterpreted as yelling. When in doubt, a smiley face can provide helpful reassurance. :-)

## Individual Questions

For personal matters or questions that you prefer to talk about individually, I invite you to send me a message through the Canvas Inbox. This allows us to keep our messages organized inside of Canvas, separate from the multitude of emails that we all receive.

The Inbox is in the left global navigation of Canvas, and you can send and receive messages directly from there. You may also choose to [receive notifications to your KSU email account](#) and reply directly from there.

## Response Times

In general, you can expect to receive a response from me within 24 hours. I check messages twice daily throughout the work week (Monday – Friday). On the weekends, I check messages once per day. Please note that there may be times when circumstances prevent me from responding quickly, and I will do my best to communicate with the whole class when response times may be delayed.

## Urgent Questions

If you have an urgent matter or question, feel free to call or send a text message to (phone number), and I will answer or respond as soon as possible.

## Use of University Email

Please note that while we have several options for communication available in our course, you may receive emails from other departments at the University, and you are responsible for all information sent to you via your University-assigned email account. See the [Administrative Policy Regarding Electronic Communications for Students](#) for more information.

# Component 10: Course Activities and Assessments

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## Explanation

This section provides an overview of assignments, discussions, quizzes, projects, exams, etc. While all of the specific details of each activity will be included in Canvas, it can be helpful to share basic information for each type of assignment, how many of each they can expect, major topics that they might cover, and any general expectations such as citation styles. Mention where they can find out specific information and due dates, and what they should do if they have concerns about completing any assignments on time.

## Example

In this course, you will be presented with a few different types of assignments: (insert types here such as quizzes, discussions, assignments, and a group project). Below I have included basic descriptions of each assignment. Specific guidelines and rubrics will be included in our course, and due dates for each assignment are available in the separate course schedule document.

## **Discussions**

Each discussion in this course will allow you to apply module concepts to real-world scenarios. You will be presented with a prompt and asked to construct an initial reply based on specific questions referring to module learning materials as needed. After your initial reply, review the responses of others and respond to at least two of your classmates by asking a question or continuing the conversation in a meaningful way. Specific information, guidelines, and a rubric will be included with each discussion in our course. There will be a total of 5 discussions worth 30 points each, totaling 150 points for the course.

## **Module Quizzes**

At the end of each module, you will be presented with a Knowledge Check Quiz. These quizzes will allow you to practice foundational concepts from the module that will be helpful as you complete larger assignments. You may take these quizzes up to three times each, and your highest score will be recorded. There will be a total of 15 quizzes, and each quiz will be worth 10 points, totaling 150 points for the course.

## **Assignments**

There will be two individual assignments in this course.

- Assignment 1: Topic and brief (2-3 sentences) description.
- Assignment 2: Topic and brief (2-3 sentences) description.

More information, specific guidelines, and rubrics for each assignment will be presented in our course. Each assignment will be worth 200 points, totaling 400 points for the course.

## **Group Project**

Group projects allow us to practice working as a member of a team, a skill that is valuable and highly sought after in the workforce. For this group assignment, you will connect with a team of (# of students) to complete (brief description of task). This assignment will take place during (portion of the semester), and you will complete the assignment in various steps, bringing together a final presentation as the culminating piece of your project. The group project will be worth a total of 300 points. Specific guidelines and a rubric will be included in our course. Group projects can be challenging, but I will be available for support along the way!

## **Component 11: Grading and Feedback**

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### **Explanation**

How will students be graded in your course? Include any applicable grading philosophies, a breakdown of points for each assignment and/or weighted percentages, and your course grading scale so that it is clear how grades will be calculated. It can be helpful to create a visual representation of this, such as a table or chart.

In addition to grades, how do you share feedback with your students? Perhaps it is as comments in Grades, Rubrics, individual messages, or whole class announcements. If you use discussions, perhaps you provide a summary post at the end of each week. What is the return time for grading and feedback on various types of assignments?

## Example

### Calculating Your Grade

In this course, grades will be calculated by the total number of points earned out of the total number of points possible. The table below presents an overview of points per assessment and total points by type in our course.

<b>Activity/Assessment Type &amp; Quantity</b>	<b>Points Per Activity/Assessment</b>	<b>Total Points Per Category</b>
Introductory Discussion (1)	5	5
Module Quizzes (7)	10	70
Applied Practice Activities (7)	25	175

### Grading Scale

Letter grades will be assigned based on the following grading scale.

Percentage of Earned Points	Earned Points	Grade
94% - 100%	940-1000	A
90% - less than 94%	900-929	A-
87% - less than 90%	870-899	B+
84% - less than 87%	840-869	B
80% - less than 84%	800-839	B-
77% - less than 80%	770-799	C+
74% - less than 77%	740-769	C
70% - less than 74%	700-739	C-
67% - less than 70%	670-699	D+
64% - less than 67%	640-669	D
Under 64%	639 and under	F

## Feedback

I will do my best to provide feedback that is timely and constructive, allowing you to celebrate successes, continue learning, and improve when necessary. I will offer feedback in a few different ways:

- **Canvas Grades.** In Grades, I will share individualized comments, complete/incomplete scores, and annotations (on documents) that you can review. From here, you can add comments to ask questions or demonstrate new learning.
- **Discussion Posts.** I plan to participate in the course discussions by asking guiding questions and sharing helpful resources.
- **Announcements.** Sometimes it may be helpful for me to share additional information with the whole class, provide examples, further readings, clarifications, and celebrate successes.

## Late Work

- I acknowledge that challenges may arise that impact our ability to submit assignments on time or prevent us from fully committing our bandwidth to an assignment. As such, all deadlines are accompanied by a 24-hour grace period, no questions asked.
- If you are going to miss a deadline by more than 24 hours, contact me via email or the Canvas Inbox prior to the due date of the assignment. If I hear from you ahead of the assignment deadline, we can work together on a reasonable solution based on your situation.
- If I haven't heard from you before the due date, assignments submitted up to 3 days late may receive a 10% grade deduction. Work submitted after that may not be accepted.
- Staying in touch helps ensure you don't fall behind and can make the most of the course.

## Component 12: University Support

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### Explanation

The University has several support resources for students who face common challenges such as academics, disabilities, basic needs, and mental health. Consider including these support resources in your syllabus.

### Example

It is common to face various academic and personal challenges as you complete your courses. The following are helpful support resources provided by Kent State.

To learn more and access any of the resources below, visit the **Support Services** section of our [Getting Started Website](#). As always, be sure to consult your instructor for course-specific guidance.

### Academic Support

Kent State recognizes that many students face challenges, and we are committed to supporting your academic journey when you need help. Available support resources include Technology, Tutoring, Academic Coaching, Writing Commons, Academic Advising, University Libraries, Bookstore, Career Services, and more!

### Student Accessibility Services

Kent State University is committed to inclusive and accessible education experiences for all students. University Policy 3342-3-01.3 requires that students with disabilities be provided reasonable accommodations to ensure equal access to course content. Students with disabilities are encouraged to connect with Student Accessibility Services as early as possible to establish accommodations. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers based on a disability (including mental health, chronic medical conditions, or injuries), please let me know immediately.

### Basic Needs Support & Mental Well-Being

Kent State University is committed to supporting the overall well-being of our students. This support may take the form of assisting students with basic needs such as food and housing. We recognize that the absence of secure housing and access to food makes it difficult for students to achieve their best in

and out of the classroom. If you, or someone you know, are unable to afford groceries or lack a safe, secure, and reliable place to live, please visit the CARES Center basic needs resource website.

Mental health challenges may also make it difficult for students to reach their full potential. KSU's mental health and wellness resource page provides information on education and awareness, mental health services, and advocacy intervention. To learn more, please visit Kent State's mental health resources and support website.

## **Component 13: University Policies**

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### **Explanation**

Below is a list of University-approved or suggested syllabus statements that you may consider including on your syllabus. Concerning the "Request for Religious Accommodations," it is required by law that you include a statement explaining this new policy in your syllabus; within the examples below is suggested language by the Provost Office in response to House Bill 353, 5/16/2023.

### **Example**

The following are policies that apply to students at Kent State. For more information on any of the policies below, visit the **University Policies** of the [Getting Started Website](#).

### **Course Enrollment and Withdrawal**

University policy requires all students to be officially registered in each class they are attending. If you are not officially registered for a course by published deadlines, you should not be attending classes and will not receive credit or a grade for the course. Confirm your enrollment by checking your class schedule (using Student Tools in FlashLine) prior to the deadline indicated.

If registration errors are not corrected by this date and you continue to attend and participate in classes for which you are not officially enrolled, you are advised now that you will not receive a grade at the conclusion of the semester for any class in which you are not properly registered. Also, it is your responsibility to check the withdrawal dates for each semester.

Every class has its own schedule of deadlines and considerations. To view the add/drop schedule and other important dates for this class, go to Student > Resources > Courses and Registration in FlashLine. Choose View or Print Course Schedule and Purchase Textbooks. To see the deadlines for this course, click on the CRN. The add/drop schedule and important dates may also be found on the Drop or Add a Course link. Click on the green clock next to the course under Registration Deadlines.

### **Plagiarism and Academic Integrity**

Students enrolled in the university, at all its campuses, are to perform their academic work according to standards set by faculty members, departments, schools, and colleges of the university; and cheating and plagiarism constitute fraudulent misrepresentation for which no credit can be given and for which appropriate sanctions are warranted and will be applied.

### **Request for Religious Accommodations**

The University welcomes individuals from all different faiths, philosophies, religious traditions, and other systems of belief, and supports their respective practices. In compliance with University policy and the Ohio Revised Code, the University permits students to request class absences for up to three (3) days, per term, in order to participate in organized activities conducted under the auspices of a religious denomination, church, or other religious or spiritual organization. Students will not be penalized as a result of any of these excused absences.

The request for excusal must be made, in writing, no later than fourteen (14) days after the first day of instruction in a particular course and include the date(s) of each proposed absence or request for alternative religious accommodation. The request must clearly state that the proposed absence is to participate in religious activities. The request must also provide the particular accommodation(s) you desire.

You will be notified by me if your request for accommodation is approved, or, if it is approved with modification. I will work with you in an effort to arrange a mutually agreeable alternative arrangement. For more information regarding this Policy you may contact the Student Ombuds.

## **Component 14: Subject to Change Statement**

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### **Explanation**

Throughout the semester, you may need to make changes to your syllabus. It can be helpful to include a note about that possibility, and how students can expect to be notified of such a change.

### **Example**

The syllabus and course schedule may be subject to change, and any changes will be communicated via email or the course announcement tool. Be sure to check your email and course announcements regularly for the most up-to-date course information.