**Reflecting on the Syllabus**



**Introduction**

A syllabus can provide a lot of information beyond course schedules, grading schemes and course policies. For example, it can help you anticipate how a course may be related to your personal interests, life experiences or what skills you will gain. By reviewing the syllabus, you can also identify course topics you might find challenging, seek support for upcoming assignments, and manage your time for the term.

**Learning Outcomes:**

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

* Think strategically about the information in your syllabus to identify relationships between course topics and your interests.
* Predict aspects of the course you may find challenging and take steps to address them.
* Take a more active role in your academic and professional development by identifying how you might use your new insights.

Carefully read the syllabus for this course and respond to the questions in this activity.

**What?**

In the “What” section you will notice aspects of your experience, form opinions, and identify an initial emotional response to an issue or experience. You will make connections between the experience or issue with your own skills, knowledge, and/or prior experiences.

### ****Reflection Questions****

How would you describe the purpose of this course in your own words?

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Scan the course reading list.

Which, if any, of these readings sound most interesting to you and why?

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What aspect of the grading structure concerns you the most and why?  
Think about date conflicts with your other courses, the format or structure of the assignments, the number of assignments/tests or weighting of them etc.

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**So What?**

In the “So What” section, you will develop new insights about yourself, and your future aspirations based on course experiences.

**Reflection Questions:**

What skills and/or knowledge are you hoping to gain from taking this course?

Why is this important to you?

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What course elements or topics are you looking forward to the most? Why?

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Which of the course learning objectives are most relevant to your interests and/or motivations for taking this course? Why?

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**Now What?**

In the *Now What* section, you will integrate new knowledge and think about how to use your new insights to create plans or take (immediate) next steps to put their new insights into action.

**Reflection Questions:**

What aspects of this course feel most **and** least familiar or comfortable for you. For example, the course topics, required readings, assignment expectations (e.g., citation formats, methodologies etc.)

In what ways can the professor or Teaching Assistant (TA) support you in these areas?

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Are there any aspects of the syllabus that you don’t understand? **(Don’t worry – other students will feel the same way too!)**Think of a question(s) for your professor or TA and challenge yourself to ask it during class, tutorial, or office hours.

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What aspect of the course assignments do you feel least confident about? How can you prepare yourself to succeed in these areas?

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### Tips for Success:

Identify and list resources for support and training that can help you feel more confident before you reach the difficult parts of this course. [SAVY: Student Virtual Assistant](https://svaapp.uit.yorku.ca/web/en?lp=3) can help you with this.

## **If you have a documented disability**

If you have a documented disability, be sure to submit your accommodation form to your professor or TA as soon as possible. Visit [Student Accessibility Services (SAS)](https://accessibility.students.yorku.ca/) for support and information.

## **If you don’t have a documented disability**

If you don’t have a documented disability but are facing challenges of any kind that may interfere with your success in the course, please discuss this with your professor or TA. They may have helpful suggestions for you. Consider exploring the following support services for students and remember, you are not alone.

* [Students Counselling, Health, and Wellbeing](https://currentstudents.yorku.ca/scd-student-support%C2%A0)
* [Mental Health and Wellness](https://mhw.info.yorku.ca/resources/resources-at-york/students/%C2%A0)
* [Centre for Human Rights, Equity, and Inclusion](https://rights.info.yorku.ca/%C2%A0)
* [Office of Student Community Relations](https://oscr.students.yorku.ca/)

### Identify and list people who could help you succeed in this course.

In addition to your TA or professor, you may want to consider the myriad learning supports and resources on campus available to help you become a more successful and resourceful student including:

* a [Peer Academic Coach](https://www.yorku.ca/scld/learning-skills/)
* a [Peer Career Educator](https://careers.yorku.ca/students-and-new-grads/services-events/dropby)
* [Learning Skills Services](https://www.yorku.ca/scld/learning-skills/)
* your program student association
* your [faculty's Academic Advisor](https://advising.students.yorku.ca/locations)
* [Learning Commons](https://learningcommons.yorku.ca/)

After exploring these links, choose at least one resource you will make use of and indicate when you plan to do so. If you need to register for a service advance be sure to give yourself enough time to sign up and secure a spot.

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