Required & Recommended Syllabi Statements

2024-2025

Please review the statements below for inclusion in your syllabi. Statements specific to blended and online courses can be found below. .

- **REMINDER #1**: Do not simply copy and paste these statements into your syllabi but, rather, adapt them to meet the specific context in which you teach and to reflect your teaching philosophy. When multiple examples are provided, *pick one,* and also, *delete any bracketed text*.

  Please see the statements below as basic templates that you should *personalize* to best connect with your students and reflect the particular dynamics of your class(es). (For more about this, see [“A Syllabus Worth Reading”](#) from Kevin Gannon's book *Radical Hope: A Teaching Manifesto*.)

- **REMINDER #2** –Include a statement that addresses the use of AI.
  Given how rapidly AI-generators and their discipline-specific uses continue to evolve, there is no institutional policy regarding student use of AI, ChatGPT, and other such resources; rather, any use of AI that violates your stated policy would follow the same process as other instances of academic dishonesty. Thus, you should be as explicit as possible about your approach to AI in your syllabi, in assignment prompts, and on Sakai, and should take time to discuss these expectations in class with students.

  You are strongly encouraged to remind students that all work submitted or presented as part of course assignments or requirements must be their own original work unless otherwise expressly permitted; this acknowledgement extends to the use of AI, and students are expected to cite use of AI-generated text as they would scholarly texts, webpages, and other sources that inform their work. In short, you are encouraged to develop and share with students, as clearly and transparently as possible, your approach to the use or non-use of AI in your courses. This [flowchart](#) provides helpful guidance on how to craft a policy that transparently and clearly communicates your stance on AI in the class.

  Below, instructors will find four examples of statements addressing the use of AI in their courses that can be adapted for their courses and included as part of their Academic Integrity statements/policies. You can also peruse the document [“Classroom Policies for AI Generative Tools”](#) for inspiration. For instance, statement #6 effectively reflects an inclusive and approachable statement.

If you would like to share examples of syllabi statements that work well for your course and communicate an inclusive philosophy — or have suggestions for how to make the policies

below even more student-centered — please contact Jen Smith, Dean of Inclusive Excellence (jennifer.smith@plu.edu).

Required Syllabus Statement

Religious Accommodations [See [Washington state law](#) passed in 2019]

I will make every effort to provide reasonable accommodations for all students who, because of religious observances, may have conflicts with scheduled exams, assignments, or required attendance in courses. Please review the course schedule at the beginning of the semester to determine any such potential conflicts and let me know about the need for religious accommodations. If you could do so at least three weeks in advance of the date when the conflict occurs, that would be ideal. While I am happy to provide such accommodations, I understand that asking a faculty member for assistance can be intimidating; if that's the case, you can contact PLU's University Pastor Jen Rude (rudejl@plu.edu or 253-535-7465) for support in making this request.

[Note for faculty: This [Diversity Calendar 2024-2025](#) may also be helpful as you schedule exams and assignment deadlines.]

Recommended Syllabus Statements

Student Hours

[Note for faculty: The Faculty Handbook (Section III, Part VII, Section 3, B) sets for the rationale and expectation for Office Hours/Student Hours as follows:

1. One of the hallmarks of a PLU education is faculty-student interaction. Faculty members are available to students in a variety of ways: faculty maintain fixed in-person office hours, meet with students outside of these fixed hours, and interact with students via email and other electronic communication. Successful faculty are available to students, but also set limits in order to maintain a balance in their own work responsibilities.

2. Faculty are expected to spend at least five hours per week interacting with students outside of class. At least three of these hours should be fixed in-person office hours scheduled to accommodate a wide range of student schedules. The remaining hours may be flexible and include additional in-person office hours, meetings with students outside of these fixed hours, and email and other forms of electronic communication. Fixed in-person office hours should be posted and arrangements for scheduling appointments should be communicated to students at the start of a term. As far as possible, fixed in-person office hours should not be held during chapel period.]

Below are two examples you can use to communicate your availability to students.

Example #1
This time is set aside for you. You are not "bugging" or interrupting me when you pop in or set up a time to meet with me during these hours. Rather, you are making good use of a resource! You should feel free to use this time as you need — ask me a question, review notes, brainstorm ideas, consider future plans, etc. I'm also happy to meet in small groups. [*Insert details about your student hours and how students can find you, i.e. only online, both, in-person, by appointment or drop-in, etc.*]

Example #2
Each of you enters this classroom with different skills, strengths, and experiences. I open my office to you as an extension of the classroom, including scheduled virtual meetings and individualized tutoring. There is no shame or embarrassment in asking for help, although it is common to feel anxious when approaching one's teacher. To enter my office and ask for help is an act of bravery. To enter and chat about nothing in particular often leads to new insight. Both are valuable. Both show that you trust me. I promise to respect you and earn that trust through compassionate listening and understanding. [Adapted from Adam Heidebrink-Bruno's post in Hybrid Pedagogy – Syllabus as Manifesto: A Critical Approach to Classroom Culture]

Academic Integrity (general)

Example #1
Intellectual development requires honesty, responsibility, and doing your own work. Taking ideas or words from others without citation is a breach of trust and will result in a failing grade on the paper or assignment and possibly other disciplinary actions. If you are unsure about what plagiarism is, please feel free to ask me. You may also consult the section on Academic Integrity in the Student Code of Conduct.

Example #2
An essential dimension of Pacific Lutheran University's mission is to provide for the intellectual, social, physical, emotional, and spiritual development of students. Faculty, students, and administrators share responsibility for accomplishing these goals. Academic integrity is honesty concerning all aspects of academic performance. In this class, what this means is [X].

Example #3
PLU's expectation is that students will not cheat or plagiarize and that they will not condone these behaviors or assist others who plagiarize. Academic misconduct not only jeopardizes the career of the individual student involved but also undermines the scholastic achievements of all PLU students and fails to reflect the mission of this institution. Students are responsible to do their own work, thereby ensuring the integrity of their academic records. The most common forms of dishonesty are cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes, but is not limited to submitting material that is not yours as part of your course performance, such as copying from another student's exam, allowing another student to copy from your exam. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to directly quoting the words of others without using quotation marks or

indented format to identify them. Because plagiarism involves a misrepresentation of principles and processes fundamental to the integrity of the university, matters of plagiarism are taken very seriously. If you are unsure about something that you want to do or the proper use of materials, please ask me for clarification.

Statements on the Use of AI (These can be integrated into one of the Academic Integrity statements above; they are adapted from similar statements created by Moravian University)

Example #1 (AI usage as a violation of the Student Code of Conduct)
Unless specifically permitted in advance, any use of AI will be considered a breach of academic honesty. Suspected cases of plagiarism, cheating, or other misuse of AI tools will be submitted to the Academic Performance & Integrity Committee, with potential consequences to follow.

Example #2 (AI as learning support, idea generation)
You are encouraged to use ChatGPT and other AI tools to support your learning, understanding, and creative processes during the course. However, AI tools should be utilized responsibly and ethically, adhering to the academic principles of academic honesty and originality.

Example #3 (AI use for assistance, like a tutor)
AI tools can assist in providing explanations and suggestions, but they should not be used for direct answers to graded assignments, quizzes, or examinations. You should not submit AI-generated content as your own work, as I consider this to be a form of cheating or plagiarism. You are always invited to meet with me for clarification on course content as a first option, as information provided by the AI can be inaccurate or incomplete.

Example #4 (Permitted use of AI)
While ChatGPT [or other AI] is a recommended tool for this course, you are free to explore other reliable AI resources that align with the course objectives. If you opt for AI tools other than the recommended ones, you must ensure that they meet the ethical and academic standards as discussed in class.

Title IX

Example #1 – As your instructor, and within the context of this course, there may be opportunities for you to share information related to your past or current experiences. This may take place during our classroom discussions or in written work and one-on-one meetings. While I will seek to keep information you share private to the greatest extent possible, you should be aware that all PLU employees, including me, are required to report any disclosures of sex discrimination, sexual harassment, or sexual misconduct to PLU's Title IX Office. The report will not automatically generate a conduct response, but you will receive outreach from that office offering support and further discussion. If you do not wish for the university to have knowledge, there are confidential staff on campus who are not required to report. For confidential support, you can reach out to PLU's Counseling, Health, and Wellbeing Services https://www.plu.edu/wsr/); Pastor Jen Rude in Campus Ministry (rudejl@plu.edu or 253-535-7465); and Magdalena Stickel, PLU's Confidential Advocate (mks@plu.edu or 253-535-8204).

Example #2 – As an institution of higher education that receives federal funds , PLU is required to be compliant with Title IX, which states that "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity". Therefore, all PLU employees – including me – are designated "mandatory reporters", which means they must report any knowledge of confirmed or suspected activity that could constitute sex discrimination, sexual harassment, or sexual misconduct to PLU's Title IX Office. However, there are confidential resources, who are not required to report, on campus where you can receive support : PLU's Counseling, Health, and Wellbeing Services https://www.plu.edu/wsr/); Pastor Jen Rude in Campus Ministry (rudejl@plu.edu or 253-535-7465); and Magdalena Stickel, PLU's Confidential Advocate (mks@plu.edu or 253-535-8204).

Respectful Learning Environment

PLU holds as foundational the integrity and well-being of every person in the community. I am committed to providing a living, learning, and working environment that is fair, consistent, caring, and supportive of intellectual and personal growth. Further, the university is committed to protecting the rights of its community members to engage in dialogue and express ideas in an environment that is free from harassment, discrimination, and exploitation. This academic freedom does not, however, entail the freedom to threaten, stalk, intimidate, harass, or abuse.

Students are therefore expected to treat every individual with respect. PLU prohibits any activities that cause or threaten physical or mental harm, suffering or exhaustion, that demean the dignity of any individual, and/or that interfere with one's academic progress, living environment, or employment responsibilities.

Combo of Respectful Learning Environment & Accessibility (couched as a general statement about successful learning in the course)

Above all, I care about your success and want to do all I can to help you learn. I believe in universal learning, which means I am committed to all of our learning spaces — course material, the Sakai forum [or other online tool], and other places we engage with one another — being inclusive and equitable. This means I expect that we do our work together with mutual respect, collegiality, and the willingness to consider others' perspectives fairly and generously. If there is anything I can do to help you in your learning, please let me know; you may also contact the Office of Accessibility and Accommodation at 253-535-7073 or oaa@plu.edu, and we can collaborate on any arrangements to assist you in successful learning. [Adapted from Grand View University statement]

Commitment to Inclusion

It is my intent that students from all 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 across all dimensions,

including gender, sexuality, disability, age, socio-economic status, ethnicity, race, and culture. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. If there is anything I can do to help you in your learning, please let me know; you may also contact the Office of Accessibility and Accommodation at 253-535-7073 or oaa@plu.edu, and we can collaborate on any arrangements to assist you in successful learning. In addition, if any of our class meetings conflict with your religious events, please let me know so that I can make arrangements for you. [Adapted from the University of Iowa College of Education]

Content Warning

Students are advised that difficult or sensitive issues may be represented or discussed in this class. While care will always be taken not to cause distress and to create a welcoming learning environment for everyone, there may be occasions where you will confront images or texts, or where you hear discussions that are uncomfortable for you. I will not issue trigger warnings with respect to potentially challenging or distressing content, for several reasons. I do not presume in advance to know what content or discussions may cause you distress; trauma is a deeply complex and personal experience. Instead, I will provide context for materials that feature content generally found to be challenging and make it clear why I am showing particular images or we are reading particular texts. If you ever feel unable to continue to participate in a particular class, you may leave at any point and will not be challenged. I will follow up to address any concerns and provide additional resources for support. You are also, of course, welcome to share any concerns about the course content you may have at any time during the term, and I promise to listen openly and respectfully. [Adapted from a statement created by Dr. Marsha Henry, London School of Economics and Political Science]

Health & Attendance

Please do not come to an in-person class/lab/lesson if you are feeling ill, particularly if you are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19. Nothing we do in our class is worth risking your health, my health, or the health of your peers. You will still need to complete the assignments/projects/etc. necessary to meet our learning objectives, of course. [*Here you might insert your recommendations/expectations for how missed work can be accomplished, for example, identifying a "class buddy" early in the term should either need announcements or class notes shared, or noting that due to the nature of your class certain experiences cannot be "made up".*] Should your health or other circumstances change, negatively impacting your ability to succeed in our class, please notify me as soon as possible so that we can work together to connect you to support and work through possible options.

Weather Conditions

You may want to confirm whether class is meeting if you have any concerns about weather conditions that would make travel to campus unsafe. You can call the University's hotline after 6 a.m. (253-535-7100) or access the PLU website (www.plu.edu) to see if campus has been closed. As soon as I know if campus has been closed due to weather, I will communicate this to the class using Sakai announcements. Please do not risk your health or safety if weather conditions make traveling dangerous.

Statements Specific to Blended or Online Courses

Attendance & Participation

Should you be absent, you will need to understand the work that was done during the synchronous online experience or in-person class session and complete any work that is assigned. [*Here you might insert your recommendations/expectations for how missed work can be accomplished, for example, identifying a "class buddy" early in the term should either need announcements or class notes shared, or noting that due to the nature of your class certain experiences cannot be "made up".*]

Should your health or other circumstances change, negatively impacting your ability to succeed in our class, please notify me as soon as possible so that we can work together to connect you to support resources and work through possible options.

Guidelines For Synchronous Class Sessions

I have outlined a few guidelines below that will enable us to co-create a supportive community and learning environment during our synchronous class sessions:

- I expect your cameras to be turned on during our synchronous sessions. Being able to see each other is helpful to creating connections, a sense of mutuality, engaging in discussions, and building trust -- all of which contribute to an effective and engaging teaching and learning experience for everyone.
- If you would be more comfortable using a virtual background, you can follow [these simple instructions](#) to do so. There are already several PLU-themed backgrounds loaded into PLU Zoom accounts. Simply go to Preferences (after you've logged into Zoom via PLU), select Backgrounds and filters, and then choose from a number of preloaded backgrounds. (Please note that not all computers or devices are able to run virtual backgrounds.)
- Of course, if you have limited internet bandwidth, no camera, or you're unable to find an environment without a lot of visual distractions, I understand that you cannot use video. If this is the case, please send me a private message to let me know the situation.
- Your Zoom profile should include a photo and name so that we can connect more effectively should you need to turn off your camera. You can learn how to customize your Zoom profile [here](#).
- Like during our class sessions on campus, I look forward to your full attention during our synchronous sessions. We all should be prepared to respond to discussions, chat, surveys, or to engage in activities because each of us plays an important and necessary role in contributing to a robust learning environment.
- Finally, I welcome suggestions and ideas for additional guidelines that will help us collectively create an engaging learning experience for everyone this term.

Course Recordings & Privacy

[Note: For use if you have chosen to record synchronous sessions.]

I have chosen to record online synchronous class sessions. The purpose of this is to provide access to material for students who are unable to be present. In addition, these recordings can be a resource for all students who would like to review the material we covered during the session. Recordings will be stored within our Sakai site [or Google folder] and will only be available to view only by me and your classmates. I will delete them at the end of the semester. If you have any concerns about being recorded, please share them with me, and we'll work something out. [You might also include a question in a pre-semester survey about students' comfort with being recorded. Adapted from Lynch School of Education and Human Development, Boston College]

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