


An Educator's Guide to a 21st Century Syllabus



A syllabus is the most important document an instructor shares in a college class. It is a valuable resource for both you and your students and should be developed thoughtfully to ensure the information it contains is communicated effectively.

Take some time to compare today's college textbooks with those used a decade ago. You are likely to identify a significant increase in the use of visual elements that are used to create hierarchical levels between content and foster interconnections between chapters. All in all, content today continues to become more visual and, in turn, engages learners in multiple ways.

Has your syllabus adapted to contemporary shifts in communication styles? Would it communicate your course's crucial information more effectively if it did?

1 Text-Based Syllabus

This is an excerpt of a syllabus from one of my own classes many years ago. The syllabus was a total of ten pages and relied solely upon text-based elements to establish hierarchy throughout the content (font size, bold face and underlined type, indentations, etc.). A student referencing this document throughout the course would need to rely solely upon textual cues to locate information.

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"Art washes from the soul the dust of everyday life."
- Pablo Picasso

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I. Course Overview:
Hello and welcome to Art 10: Art Appreciation! This semester will be an exciting journey as you acquire the basic skills for interpreting, understanding and appreciating art. This class is intended for non-art majors and people with little or no experience of art. This semester you will explore the physical and psychological aspects of seeing; learn the formal elements of art; write a formal analysis of a work of art; consider why art is important to the world; identify your personal preferences for art; visit an art gallery and a museum; and examine a wide array of artistic mediums. You will also become better acquainted with your own personal beliefs and values, be challenged by new ideas and concepts, and develop your own unique voice as you contemplate the nature of art. All of this will be done through class discussions, group work, gallery and museum visits, writing, visual lectures, regular homework assignments and exams. Active and regular participation in this online class is vital to your success. Please note, the focus of this course is appreciating and interpreting art, **not** creating art. Also, while the history of art will be a component of many of our topics, this is **not** an art history course.

II. STUDENT/INSTRUCTOR OBLIGATIONS
By enrolling in this course, you agree to:

- Attend class regularly. You do not earn points for being in class. You learn when you are in class. If you aren't in class then you aren't learning. Absences lead to lower exam scores.
- If you have to miss a class, find out what you missed. Please get to know your fellow students and call/email each other when you miss a class. Share notes with each other; collaboration promotes learning. Complete required readings and homework assignments as scheduled.
- Be on time for class. Important announcements are made at the beginning of class. If you're late, check in to find out what you missed. Also, enter from the rear door, please.
- Participate! Let's keep this class fun and interesting. When I ask for your thoughts on a topic, please feel free to share what's on your mind. If you have



something to share about an art related current event, just let me know and we'll work it into one of our classes.

- If you can't stay awake for class then please do not come. Sleeping in class is... well, rude.
- Pay me a visit during my office hours if you have concerns or questions about class.
- Speak with me within one week of today if you have a learning disability.
- Respect the opinions of others during class discussions. Art
- Refrain from talking to fellow students during lectures.
- Turn cell phones OFF or to silent mode during class time.
- Be present for exams (there are NO make-up exams unless an emergency occurs).
- Inform me of extended absences while you are absent.
- Have a good attitude and smile!! We each choose our own attitude each day. Choose a good one and we'll all benefit. ☺

III. CONDUCT
I will do all I can to maintain a comfortable class environment for all of us. I want each of you to look forward to coming to this class. In an effort to do so, I have the right to dismiss any student from this class for misconduct. Actions that may lead to classroom dismissal include: regular talking between students during lecture (this room has excellent acoustics and if I can hear you then so can everyone else), interrupting the instructor and other students, making rude comments during discussions, using inappropriate language or gestures, and other actions deemed unacceptable by the instructor.

IV. COURSE MATERIALS:
Textbook - Required:
Henry Payne, *A World of Art*, Revised 4th Edition, Prentice-Hall with CD-ROM

- A copy of our text is on reserve at the circulation desk for student check-out (limited to a 2 hour checkout period, library use only, unless checked out after 3pm).
- Be sure your text comes with a CD.
- The book can be purchased at our campus bookstore. Used copies are available. Also try the used books area on amazon.com, half.com, and ecampus.com. Other ideas?

Course Pack - Required:

- The course pack for this class may be purchased at the campus bookstore. It includes all course handouts: study guides, homework assignments, and paper/project guidelines. The course pack is 3-hole punched and should be brought to class with you in a 3-ring binder every day.

3-Ring Binder (for course pack, lecture notes, and returned assignments/papers. Please keep all assignments after they've been graded.)

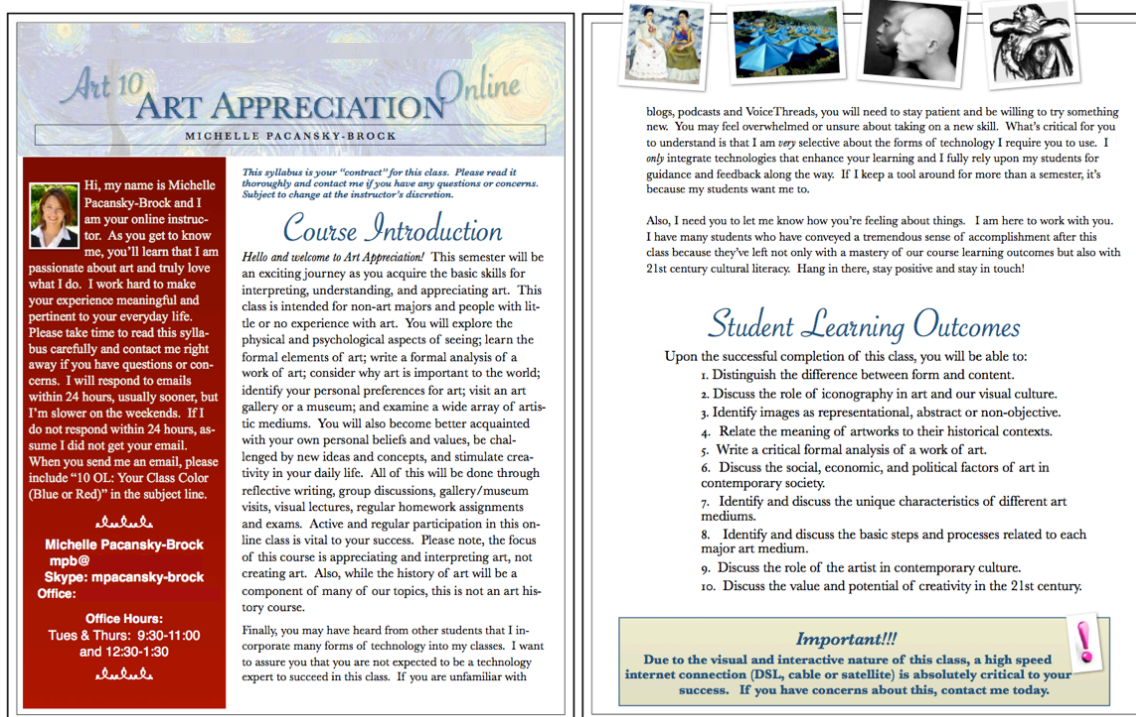


2 Visual Syllabus

When I began teaching online, I started to think about the content within my class as a hub connected within my students' informal social learning experiences. I envisioned my students fluidly shifting from Facebook and YouTube into my online class rather than "disconnecting," "powering down," or needing to draw upon a different communication vocabulary.

So, one thing I did was transform my syllabus into a rich, visual message. From the excerpts below, you will see that color and font variety have been introduced; but there's also an infusion of text-boxes, which allow me to stress certain ideas and make recommendations. These visual nuances allow me to weave in multiple layers of hierarchies within a page, more parallel to the way I would present the syllabus synchronously to a class of learners.

Also, the introduction of art historical images into the syllabus weaves in a subtle scaffolding of curricular content (this is an art appreciation class). Upon first reading, students see art historical images that are meaningless to them. Each time they revisit the syllabus, they realize the new meaning that has formed around each image we have learned about in class. Finally, visual diagrams (like a pie chart to illustrate a breakdown of course points by assignment type) empower me to communicate essential information in more than one way, enforcing principles of Universal Design for Learning.



Art 10 ART APPRECIATION Online
MICHELLE PACANSKY-BROCK

Hi, my name is Michelle Pacansky-Brock and I am your online instructor. As you get to know me, you'll learn that I am passionate about art and truly love what I do. I work hard to make your experience meaningful and pertinent to your everyday life. Please take time to read this syllabus carefully and contact me right away if you have questions or concerns. I will respond to emails within 24 hours, usually sooner, but I'm slower on the weekends. If I do not respond within 24 hours, assume I did not get your email. When you send me an email, please include "10 OL: Your Class Color (Blue or Red)" in the subject line.

Michelle
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Office Hours:
Tues & Thurs: 9:30-11:00
and 12:30-1:30
Michelle

This syllabus is your "contract" for this class. Please read it thoroughly and contact me if you have any questions or concerns. Subject to change at the instructor's discretion.

Course Introduction

Hello and welcome to Art Appreciation! This semester will be an exciting journey as you acquire the basic skills for interpreting, understanding, and appreciating art. This class is intended for non-art majors and people with little or no experience with art. You will explore the physical and psychological aspects of seeing; learn the formal elements of art; write a formal analysis of a work of art; consider why art is important to the world; identify your personal preferences for art; visit an art gallery or a museum; and examine a wide array of artistic mediums. You will also become better acquainted with your own personal beliefs and values, be challenged by new ideas and concepts, and stimulate creativity in your daily life. All of this will be done through reflective writing, group discussions, gallery/museum visits, visual lectures, regular homework assignments and exams. Active and regular participation in this online class is vital to your success. Please note, the focus of this course is appreciating and interpreting art, not creating art. Also, while the history of art will be a component of many of our topics, this is not an art history course.

Finally, you may have heard from other students that I incorporate many forms of technology into my classes. I want to assure you that you are not expected to be a technology expert to succeed in this class. If you are unfamiliar with

blogs, podcasts and VoiceThreads, you will need to stay patient and be willing to try something new. You may feel overwhelmed or unsure about taking on a new skill. What's critical for you to understand is that I am *very* selective about the forms of technology I require you to use. I *only* integrate technologies that enhance your learning and I fully rely upon my students for guidance and feedback along the way. If I keep a tool around for more than a semester, it's because my students want me to.

Also, I need you to let me know how you're feeling about things. I am here to work with you. I have many students who have conveyed a tremendous sense of accomplishment after this class because they've left not only with a mastery of our course learning outcomes but also with 21st century cultural literacy. Hang in there, stay positive and stay in touch!

Student Learning Outcomes

Upon the successful completion of this class, you will be able to:

1. Distinguish the difference between form and content.
2. Discuss the role of iconography in art and our visual culture.
3. Identify images as representational, abstract or non-objective.
4. Relate the meaning of artworks to their historical contexts.
5. Write a critical formal analysis of a work of art.
6. Discuss the social, economic, and political factors of art in contemporary society.
7. Identify and discuss the unique characteristics of different art mediums.
8. Identify and discuss the basic steps and processes related to each major art medium.
9. Discuss the role of the artist in contemporary culture.
10. Discuss the value and potential of creativity in the 21st century.

Important!!!
Due to the visual and interactive nature of this class, a high speed internet connection (DSL, cable or satellite) is absolutely critical to your success. If you have concerns about this, contact me today.

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Grading

There is a total of 500 possible points in this course. The total number of points you earn throughout the semester will determine your grade. It's that simple, really! At the end of the semester, the following point scale will be used:

500-450 points = A	● Ning Blog
449-400 points = B	● Tests
399-350 points = C	● Homework
349-300 points = D	● Art Visit
299 and below = F	

How to Earn Points

3 Tests: Total of 275 Points

There will be three tests (or major assessments) in this class and they will be taken online (there is no test requirement to come to campus). Tests one and two are worth 100 points and test three is worth 75 points. The tests will be a combination of fill-in-the-blank, multiple choice, short answer, and long essay questions. Exams **must** be submitted between the dates/times listed below:

!!Important Note about Timed Exams!!
The exams in this class are timed. I establish a time limit to maintain integrity with on-line assessments. You are expected to have *learned* the material and complete the exams without needing time to review your notes. **If the time limit is exceeded, one point will be deducted from your test score for each minute used beyond the time limit.**

Test Dates - put these on your calendar TODAY!!
Make-up tests are offered only in cases of legitimate emergencies and when I am notified immediately. You are expected to be aware of and available for exams on the following dates by agreeing to the conditions of this class. If you have concerns, contact me today.

Test 1 - Wk 4: Tues, Feb 3rd at 6am to Thurs, Feb 5th at 11pm
Test 2 - Wk 9: Tues, March 10th at 6am to March 12th at 11pm
Test 3 - Wk 15: Tues, April 28th at 6am - Thurs, April 30th at 11pm

Homework: 75 points

You will have homework assignments in this class that will be discussed in your Learning Unit content (remember, this will be posted each week on Tuesday morning). When you receive a homework assignment, it will be due the following Monday by 11pm (unless otherwise noted). Assignments will vary in format but will usually take the form of VoiceThread discussion participation. VoiceThread assignments may not be submitted late, as they are *conversations* that all students participate in during a learning unit and all students learning from, hence late comments are counterproductive.

Your Ning Blog: 100 points

Each week, after you complete the required learning content in Blackboard, you will enter a special social network that I've created for our class on Ning. The social network is "private" which means only invited individuals can view our content. I will only invite students who are enrolled in my online Art Appreciation classes and, although you have the ability to invite new members, please refrain from doing so. Our network will remain closed to the public so I can ensure your privacy is protected, your learning remains safe and your experiences are shared with your trustworthy classmates.

In order to sign up for our network, it is imperative that you receive the email invitation from me. In the email, you will see a link to our network. Click on that link and follow the instructions in the email. NOTE: the Ning invitations will be sent out to the email address linked to your Blackboard account. This is the same email linked to your MySierra account. **If you haven't received an invitation to join Ning by the first day of class, contact me immediately.**

Once you've joined our Art Appreciation network on Ning, you will create YourPage. Consider it your space for expression, kind of like a blank canvas! YourPage will include your very own blog on which you will be required to make weekly posts responding to specific prompts I assign in each Learning Unit (in Blackboard).

Your requirement is to keep your blog current with all assigned posts. I will periodically visit each page and when I notice one that is not up-to-date with blog posts, I will leave a very special "nudge" comment on your page. Each nudge will result in a five point deduction when I grade the pages at mid-semester and the end of the semester.

Tip!
Track your points in the MyGrades area. You should always know how you are doing in this class.

Pick up more great teaching ideas on my blog, *Teaching Without Walls*, at <http://www.teachingwithoutwalls.com>.

-Michelle Pacansky-Brock