

A Statement on Syllabi Statements

Most instructors appreciate the value syllabi have in effective teaching. Syllabi are broadly used to communicate the content of the course, course requirements, course structure, grading policies, instructor expectations, and the like. Over time, Faculty Council and the Provost's Office have recommended certain topics to be included in syllabi. Currently, there are four Provost's optional statements related to: (1) academic integrity, (2) intellectual pluralism, (3) accommodations for students with disabilities, and (4) recording of classes/lectures (attached). Three additional statements have been proposed to this committee: (1) Title IX, (2) ownership of course materials, and (3) rights given and retained in the use of "Turnitin" plagiarism detection software (also attached).

We suggest the following rule of thumb: material on syllabi should be restricted to information that is unique to the specific course and/or instructor. So, a statement on academic integrity might contain a statement of what will occur if dishonesty is found: reduction in course grade, failing course grade, assignment of additional work, or whatever. A statement that is not unique to the course or the instructor – a statement typically common across all courses – need not be contained on the instructor's personal/unique syllabus.

The existing statement on intellectual pluralism does not describe a course-specific practice and should be posted in the student handbook and/or faculty handbook, but not suggested for reproduction in each and every syllabus. The same is true of the proposed Title IX statement.

This is not to suggest that we believe that intellectual pluralism and Title IX are not important to this committee and to our students. However, students need not be told of these rights and responsibilities in each and every course they take. To do so disrespects the intelligence of our students. Moreover, if an optional statement is included on most syllabi but not on others it may lead to the incorrect inference that the matter (e.g. Title IX) does not apply to the latter courses.

Student rights and responsibilities that are common across all courses should be found in a common location and described in student orientation and reinforced throughout the university (and across the entire time of attendance) as the one definitive source for matters that pertain across courses. Perhaps the [M-Book](#) should be this source. (Currently student "rules" are contained everywhere: the faculty handbook, the Provost's website, the CRR, the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities etc. Everywhere and as a result, nowhere.)

Extensions to statements that are unique to the instructor or course should reference the appropriate subsection of the M-Book and then the syllabus should contain the specifics. So, for example...

Academic Dishonesty

If I find you violating university policy on academic integrity as described in the M-Book (URL of appropriate subsection here) you will (consequence stated here, e.g., fail the course).

Audio/Video Recording in this Course

As per UM Presidential Order #38 as describe in the M-Book (URL of appropriate subsection here) I have chosen that (you do/do not have permission to record this class unless.....).
(*Violations of my policy is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.* / or omit)

In place of the three proposed syllabi statements:

Ownership of Course Materials

I (claim / do not claim) copyright to all my original course materials as described in the M-Book (URL of appropriate subsection here). (Violation of my copyright is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct and a violation of federal law. / or omit)

“Turnitin” (omit if you do not use it)

I use the plagiarism software “Turnitin” in this course. See the M-Book (URL of subsection here) regarding how your assignments are treated and what rights you retain in the use of this software.

Under our proposal, the existing statement on ADA and Intellectual Pluralism would no longer be suggested. The proposed syllabus statement on Title IX would not be approved (because it is common across all courses). If the instructor wishes, he/she might add to the syllabus:

Other important information about your rights under the American Disabilities Act, Title IX and other federal and state laws, and who to contact to assert your rights under these laws and all the policies of MU can be found in the M-Book.

Note: It is important to remember that the content of a syllabus is determined by the instructor and that instructor is entitled to his/her faculty rights under [academic freedom](#). Moreover, in [most cases](#) the syllabus remains the intellectual property of the instructor and, as affirmed by a Missouri Court of Appeals, is [not a public document](#) subject to open records acts.

Existing Optional Syllabi Statements

Sample Statement for Academic Dishonesty

Academic integrity is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person's work has been responsibly and honorably acquired, developed, and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. The academic community regards breaches of the academic integrity rules as extremely serious matters. Sanctions for such a breach may include academic sanctions from the instructor, including failing the course for any violation, to disciplinary sanctions ranging from probation to expulsion. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting, collaboration, or any other form of cheating, consult the course instructor.

Sample Statement for ADA

Students with Disabilities:

If you anticipate barriers related to the format or requirements of this course, if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need to make arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please let me know as soon as possible.

If disability related accommodations are necessary (for example, a note taker, extended time on exams, captioning), please register with the [MU Disability Center](#), S5 Memorial Union, 573-882-4696, and then notify me of your eligibility for reasonable accommodations.

Sample Statement for Intellectual Pluralism

The University community welcomes intellectual diversity and respects student rights. Students who have questions or concerns regarding the atmosphere in this class (including respect for diverse opinions) may contact the departmental chair or divisional director; the director of the [Office of Students Rights and Responsibilities](#); the [MU Equity Office](#), or equity@missouri.edu.

All students will have the opportunity to submit an anonymous evaluation of the instructor(s) at the end of the course.

Sample Statement for Executive Order #38, Academic Inquiry, Course Discussion and Privacy

Faculty allowing recording:

University of Missouri System Executive Order No. 38 lays out principles regarding the sanctity of classroom discussions at the university. The policy is described fully in Section 200.015 of the Collected Rules and Regulations. In this class, students may make audio or video recordings of course activity unless specifically prohibited by the faculty member. However, the redistribution of audio or video recordings of statements or comments from the course to individuals who are not students in the course is prohibited without the express permission of the faculty member and of any students who are recorded. Students found to have violated this policy are subject to discipline in accordance with provisions of [section 200.020](#) of the Collected Rules and Regulations of the University of Missouri pertaining to student conduct matters.

Faculty not allowing recording:

University of Missouri System Executive Order No. 38 lays out principles regarding the sanctity of classroom discussions at the university. The policy is described fully in [section 200.015](#) of the Collected Rules and Regulations. In this class, students may not make audio or video recordings of course activity, except students permitted to record as an accommodation under [section 240.040](#) of the Collected Rules. All other students who record and/or distribute audio or video recordings of class activity are subject to discipline in accordance with provisions of [section 200.020](#) of the Collected Rules and Regulations of the University of Missouri pertaining to student conduct matters.

Those students who are permitted to record are not permitted to redistribute audio or video recordings of statements or comments from the course to individuals who are not students in the course without the express permission of the faculty member and of any students who are recorded. Students found to have violated this policy are subject to discipline in accordance with provisions of [section 200.020](#) of the Collected Rules and Regulations of the University of Missouri pertaining to student conduct matters.

Proposed Optional Syllabi Statements

In addition to the four existing optional syllabi statements (academic dishonesty, disability accommodations, intellectual pluralism, Exec Order #38 – Filming/Recording) the following three statements were submitted to Faculty Council and its Academic Affairs committee consideration):

Ownership of Course Material (Suggested by Rigel Oliveri, Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities)

The course materials that I author, including but not limited to, Power Point slides, Blackboard screen shots, class hand-outs, exams and quizzes, homework problems, and course syllabi are my intellectual property and are protected by copyright law. You may download and make copies of my course materials for your own use. You are not allowed to publicly reproduce or distribute these materials, or enable others to do so, without my express written consent. Posting such material to or accessing such material from any database or website other than the official website for this course may also constitute an academic integrity violation and result in disciplinary action from the Provost. (See the Student Conduct Code, section [200.010](#), Collected Rules and Regulations of the University of Missouri)

Rights Given/Retained in Use of “Turnitin” (Suggested by Vice-Provost Jim Spain)

University of Missouri has a license agreement with [Turnitin](#) service that helps detect plagiarism by comparing student papers with Turnitin's database and Internet sources. Students who take this course agree that all required papers may be submitted to [Turnitin](#). Students who submit papers to Turnitin retain the copyright to the work they created. A copy of submitted papers is retained in a Turnitin database archive to be compared with future submissions—a practice that helps protect and strengthen copyright ownership. Use of the Turnitin service is subject to the Terms and Conditions of Use posted on Turnitin's website at http://turnitin.com/en_us/about-us/privacy/#legal.

Title IX (Suggested by Ellen Eardley, Assistant Vice Provost for Civil Rights & Title IX)

University of Missouri policies prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, pregnancy, age, genetic information, disability and protected veteran status. Discrimination includes any form of unequal treatment such as denial of opportunities, harassment, and violence. Sex-based violence includes rape, sexual assault, unwanted touching, stalking, dating/interpersonal violence, and sexual exploitation.

If you experience discrimination, you are encouraged (but not required) to report the incident to the MU Office for Civil Rights & Title IX. Learn more about your rights and options at <http://missouri.edu/civil-rights-title-ix/> or call (573) 882-3880. You also may make an anonymous report online.

Students may also contact the Relationship & Sexual Violence Prevention (RSVP) Center, a confidential resource, for advocacy and other support related to rape or power-based personal violence at rsvp@missouri.edu or (573) 882-6638, or go to <http://rsvp.missouri.edu/>.

Both the Office for Civil Rights & Title IX and the RSVP Center can provide assistance to students who need help with academics, housing, or other issues.

Required Referral: Mizzou employees are required to refer all incidents of sex discrimination to the Office for Civil Rights & Title IX. The Office connects students with resources and helps them decide whether they wish to file a complaint of discrimination. To learn more, contact title9@missouri.edu or (573) 882-3880, or go to www.title9.missouri.edu or <http://missouri.edu/civil-rights-title-ix/>.