

OFFICE OF THE PROVOST

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MEMORANDUM

TO: University Faculty

FROM: Anne Veeger, Ph.D.

Vice Provost for Academic and Faculty Initiatives

DATE: January 12, 2024

SUBJECT: Semester Information and Course Syllabus Guidance

This memo provides important updates and guidance to assist you as you prepare for the spring semester and develop your syllabi. Yes – we do update this every semester!

Spring 2024 UPDATES

NEW ACADEMIC POLICY – Military Service – In December 2023, the URI Faculty Senate adopted a new policy on absences due to military service. See <u>University Manual Section 8.51.12</u>. This new policy stipulates, per federal law, that students may not be penalized for absences due to Unites States Armed Forces and/or National Guard duty assignments.

REMINDER REVISED ACADEMIC POLICY – Resolution of Grades of Incomplete: In February 2023, the URI Faculty Senate adopted updated guidelines for the resolution of grades of incomplete. See <u>University Manual sections 8.53.20 – 8.53.24</u>. The revised policy clarifies the temporary nature of the grade of Incomplete, the circumstances under which it is appropriate to assign the grade of Incomplete, and the process for resolution of grades of Incomplete.

DID YOU KNOW? - Students cannot be required to take three final exams on the same day - See 8.51.27 for details.

URI BOOKSTORE ADOPTIONS – Many students want to purchase textbooks and course access codes from the URI Bookstore <u>before the start of the semester using their financial aid</u>. Unfortunately, some faculty haven't submitted their course information to the bookstore and students must therefore wait for a refund, or use a credit card, to purchase through an outside source. The URI Campus Store has moved to a new software for course adoptions, please check your email for a personalized adoption message from URI@verbasoftware.com to ensure that your course materials are available.

USE OF GENERATIVE AI – Faculty are urged to provide students with a clear generative AI acceptable-use statement for all courses, including whether use is permitted, and how students should reference their use of this technology. Please visit the Office for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning (ATL) <u>Teaching With ChatGPT and other AI</u> website for resources related to teaching and AI, including a link to a crowd-sourced <u>compilation</u> of generative AI syllabus policies.

ATL AI EVENT – Everything you always wanted to know about AI but were afraid to ask – Tuesday, February 6, 12-1 (ZOOM) – register here.

2024 INNOVATIVE EDUCATION CONFERENCE, March 27th (Virtual) - The Office for the Advancement of Teaching & Learning at the University of Rhode Island is proud to announce its inaugural Innovative Education Conference!

The purpose of the **Innovative Education Conference (IEC)** is to bring together URI faculty with other faculty and practitioners from across Rhode Island, the New England region, and beyond, to share and discuss best practice approaches to teaching, learning, faculty development and support in a higher education context. Please visit the <u>conference website</u> for details and registration.

ILLNESS-RELATED ABSENCES - Faculty should clearly outline class attendance and absence policies in their syllabus, bearing in mind that absences due to viral illness are expected. Students who are absent due to illness should not be penalized by grading or assignment/exam make-up policies. See <u>University Manual sections 8.51.11-8.51.14</u>.

RESOURCES

- Concerned about Al/Chatbot GPT? The Office for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning has created a web resource for faculty interested in learning about Al and how courses and teaching pedagogy can be adapted in light of the rapidly growing use among students and faculty. Dr Stephen Atlas, from the URI College of Business, has written ChaptGPT for Higher Education and Professional Development: A Guide to Conversational Al.
- Providing equal access for students with disabilities Every qualified student with a disability has the right to
 equal access to educational programs, services, activities and facilities. Documentation-supported accommodations
 are communicated to faculty through a letter from Disability, Access and Inclusion (DAI), delivered by the student.
 Faculty are required by law to provide these accommodations and are encouraged to review the information on the DAI website. The Academic Testing Center is available to support testing accommodation needs.
- Disability, Access, and Inclusion Drop-In Hours Questions about student DAI accommodations? DAI staff are available each weekday from 2-4pm in their webex room: https://rhody.webex.com/meet/DAI or call 874-2098. DAI leadership also provides special Faculty WebEx Drop-in Hours, for the first month of the Fall and Spring semesters on Wednesdays from 8-10AM, and Fridays from 10am-12pm. Please also reach out to us at dai@uri.edu if you would like to discuss a Workshop for your department or colleagues, we can work with you to tailor this to your individual needs and interests.
- Spring 2024 Academic Calendar and Final Exam Schedule Available here. Classes begin on Monday, January 22. Classes end on Monday, April 29. Spring Break is the week of March 10th.
- Advancement for Teaching & Learning (ATL) Resources As you develop your courses and syllabi, please take
 advantage of the faculty development resources offered through the Office for the <u>Advancement of Teaching and</u>
 <u>Learning</u>, including the <u>syllabus development</u>, <u>course design</u>, and <u>assessment design</u> resources. Visit the <u>ATL website</u>
 for upcoming programs and their library of web-based resources, including the ATL Teaching Strategies and
 Techniques quick links https://web.uri.edu/atl/teaching/teaching-strategies-techniques/.
- **ITS Teaching and Learning Services** Visit the <u>ITS-TLS web site</u> for educational technology support and training. See the full calendar of ITS training and support options here: https://its.uri.edu/training/
 - New to Brightspace? Take the self-paced Basic Brightspace Training Course.
 - Captioning and ADA Accessibility Resources visit https://its.uri.edu/tls/ada/ for information on live and post-production captioning.
 - Faculty Spotlight: Faculty interviews about innovative implementation of instructional technologies: https://its.uri.edu/tls/ed-tech-faculty-spotlight/.
- Writing Across URI Writing retreats; support for faculty writers; consultations on designing effective writing
 assignments; support for integrating Eli Review in any course. Contact cywhite@uri.edu or
 visit https://web.uri.edu/writingacrossuri/ for more information.
- Academic Testing Center (ATC) The ATC offers a dedicated facility and professional proctoring support for faculty
 and students. Faculty are invited to submit requests for exams and quizzes for students with approved testing
 accommodations, excused absences, and culturally responsive assessments. Visit https://web.uri.edu/atc/faculty/ for
 more information. Faculty, colleges, and departments interested in ATC services, unique needs, or expanded
 partnerships can contact Lisa Macaruso, lmacaruso@uri.edu, for a consultation.
- Fall 2023 IDEA student feedback results are available for review web.uri.edu/provost/idea/. See Reflective Teaching Practice & IDEA from ATL for resources to incorporate into your reflective teaching practice.

STUDENT SUPPORT AND SUCCESS

 $\textbf{SYLLABUS QUICK TIPS}: \ \ \text{Please visit } \underline{\text{web.uri.edu/atl/design/syllabus/}} \ \text{for syllabus resources}.$

Set students up for success:

- Get to know your students: use a survey to ask them to share something about themselves that they would like you to know.
- Clearly articulate what it takes to be successful in your course (how much time outside of class, how to approach the material, how to "study", etc).
- Encourage students to complete the <u>AEC Academic Success modules</u> to set themselves up for success in their courses.
- Clearly indicate which software/technology platforms students will need to use in your course and where to find them.

- Establish class conduct and communication expectations in collaboration with your students, including
 expectations regarding academic integrity, eating/drinking in class, and use of electronic devices in class.
- Be explicit, in writing, about what constitutes academic integrity in your course common sources of confusion for example, are whether they can collaborate on homework/take-home tests, or look at (or share) exams from prior semesters, and what is considered acceptable use of AI tools like ChatGPT.
- Be explicit, in writing, about your policies regarding use/sharing of your course materials (e.g. posting course materials to a third party site like Chegg).
- Be explicit, in writing, about acceptable use of generative AI, including how to reference use.
- Clearly communicate class attendance/participation expectations.
 - Students should communicate illness-related absence in advance of missed class/assignment/assessment.
- Explicitly communicate options for accommodating illness-related absences, including missed work/exams.
 - o If appropriate for your course, consider recording your class for later viewing. Students report that they find class recordings to be a helpful study resource, and this can also be helpful in the event of absences.
 - o See Grading for Equitable Learning from ATL for resources on Grading and Student Assessment
- Note on Finals: students cannot be required to take three final exams on the same day See 8.51.27 for details.
- To minimize conflicts with final examinations, list the time of the final for your course in the syllabus and to provide students with the link to the final exam schedule so they can plan ahead. (Final exam schedule is posted at https://web.uri.edu/academic-calendars/).

ACCESSIBILITY REQUIREMENTS: To ensure that we are supporting the success of all students, federal law requires course materials to be accessible (e.g., videos, audio recording, texts, etc.) in face-to-face, blended and fully online courses. The Office of Disability, Access, and Inclusion provides resources for faculty and staff.

ITS Instructional Technology and Media Services provides information and support about captioning video content. Adding captioning to video content is required to make videos accessible to all viewers – especially for learners who are deaf or have low hearing. Captions are also shown to increase comprehension for students whose native language is different from what is spoken in the video.

STUDENT SUCCESS RESOURCES:

- Spring 2024 Academic Enhancement Center services begin 1/29/2024. Visit <u>uri.edu/aec/</u> for information about the three programs that make up the AEC: STEM & BUS Tutoring, Undergraduate Writing Center, and Academic Skills Development (see syllabus statements in the following section).
- Center for Career and Experiential Education. The Center for Career and Experiential Education (CCEE) supports undergraduate students with career preparation through one-on-one advising, 24-7 online resources, career education courses, and career events that prepare them for life after graduation and connect them with employers and community partners. A Career Education Specialist (CES) is available to meet with students. For more information or to meet with a CES, go to uri.edu/career.
- Mental Health and Wellness. URI offers mental health and wellness resources for students including the <u>URI Counseling Center</u>, <u>TELUS Health Student Support</u> App, the <u>Wellness Resource Center</u>, and <u>Well-being</u> Coaching.

CONNECTING STUDENTS WITH CAMPUS RESOURCES: Find resources, report a concern or refer a student through the <u>Faculty & Staff resources page</u>.

SYLLABUS STATEMENTS

We ask you to include these statements (or similar) in your syllabi:

Viral Illness Precautions Statement: The University is committed to delivering its educational mission while protecting the health and safety of our community. Students who are <u>experiencing symptoms of viral illness should NOT</u> go to class/work. Those who test positive for COVID-19 should follow the <u>isolation guidelines</u> from the CDC.

If you are unable to attend class, please notify me prior to the start of class at 401/874-xxxx or xxx@uri.edu or through the medium we have established for the class.

Academic Honesty: Students are expected to be honest in all academic work. A student's name on any written work, quiz or exam shall be regarded as assurance that the work is the result of the student's own independent thought and study. Work should be stated in the student's own words, properly attributed to its source. Students have an obligation to know how to quote, paraphrase, summarize, cite and reference the work of others with integrity. [Faculty are encouraged to include details regarding course-specific expectations, including the use of generative AI tools.]

Excused Absences: Absences due to serious illness or traumatic loss, religious observances, military service, or participation in a university sanctioned event are considered excused absences. Students are responsible for work missed during an excused absence but will not be penalized by grading or assignment/exam make-up policies. Students should notify faculty in advance of absences due to religious observance or university-sanction events, and as soon as possible for other absences See University Manual sections 8.51.11-8.51.16 for details.

Mental Health and Wellness: We understand that college comes with challenges and stress associated with your courses, job/family responsibilities and personal life. URI offers students a range of services to support your <u>mental health and wellbeing</u>, including the <u>URI Counseling Center</u>, <u>TELUS Health Student Support</u> App, the <u>Wellness Resource Center</u>, and Well-being Coaching.

Land Acknowledgement: The University of Rhode Island land acknowledgment is a statement written by members of the University community in close partnership with members of the Narragansett Tribe. The statement recognizes and pays tribute to the people who lived on and stewarded the land on which the University now resides. The statement seeks to show gratitude and respect to Indigenous people and cultures and build community with the Narragansett Nation and other Native American tribes.

University of Rhode Island Land Acknowledgment

The University of Rhode Island occupies the traditional stomping ground of the Narragansett Nation and the Niantic People. We honor and respect the enduring and continuing relationship between the Indigenous people and this land by teaching and learning more about their history and present-day communities, and by becoming stewards of the land we, too, inhabit.

Anti-Bias Syllabus Statement: We respect the rights and dignity of each individual and group. We reject prejudice and intolerance, and we work to understand differences. We believe that equity and inclusion are critical components for campus community members to thrive. If you are a target or a witness of a bias incident, you are encouraged to submit a report to the URI Bias Resource Team at www.uri.edu/brt. There you will also find people and resources to help.

Disability, Access, and Inclusion Services for Students Statement: Your access in this course is important. Please send me your Disability, Access, and Inclusion (DAI) accommodation letter early in the semester so that we have adequate time to discuss and arrange your approved academic accommodations. If you have not yet established services through DAI, please contact them to engage in a confidential conversation about the process for requesting reasonable accommodations in the classroom. DAI can be reached by calling: 401-874-2098, visiting: web.uri.edu/disability, or emailing: dai@etaI.uri.edu.

Please consider including the following information in your syllabus or course site to highlight these important student resources:

Academic Enhancement Center: The Academic Enhancement Center (AEC) offers face-to-face and online services to undergraduate students seeking academic support. Services are based out of Roosevelt Hall, the Carothers Library room LL004, and online.

- Peer tutoring is available for STEM & BUS-related courses through the Drop-In Center and small-group tutoring.
- The Writing Center peer consultants offer feedback focused on supporting undergraduate writers at any stage of a writing assignment.
- The UCS 160 and 161 courses and one-to-one Academic Skills Consultations offer strategies for improving studying and test-taking skills.

Complete details about each of these programs, up-to-date schedules, contact information, and self-service study resources are all available on the AEC website, uri.edu/aec.

All Academic Enhancement Center support services for Spring 2024 begin 1/29/2024. Visit <u>uri.edu/aec</u> for information about our three AEC programs.

STEM & BUS Tutoring helps undergraduate students navigate a variety of 100 and 200 level STEM & BUS courses-through free peer tutoring in-person and online. Students can select occasional or weekly tutoring sessions through the TracCloud system or visit the Drop-In Center, located in the Carothers Library lower level room LL004. The TracCloud application is available through URI Microsoft 365 single sign-on and more detailed information and instructions can be found at uri.edu/aec/tutoring.

- Academic Skills Development programs teach students to develop and apply metacognitive thinking strategies to improve their time management, problem solving and study skills. UCS 160: Success in Higher Education is a 1-credit course on planning and managing work and studying in college. UCS 161: Becoming a Self Directed Student teaches strategies for identifying and overcoming challenges in academic work and life. Academic Consultations are 1 to 1 in-person or online consultations that help students to directly address individual academic challenges. Students can schedule sessions with Peer Academic Consultants on TracCloud or with Dr. David Hayes on Starfish. Finally, Study Your Way to Success is a self-guided web portal connecting students to tips and strategies on studying and time management related topics. For information or help with scheduling, contact Dr. Hayes directly at davidhayes@uri.edu
- The Undergraduate Writing Center provides peer writing support to students in any class, at any stage of writing: from understanding an assignment and brainstorming ideas, to developing, organizing, and revising a draft. Writing consultations are available through: 1) 25- or 50-minute in-person appointments, 2) synchronous online appointments, and 3) asynchronous written feedback. Students can view availability and book online through URI Microsoft 365 single sign-on via the WCOnline (Undergrad) app. For more information, visit uri.edu/aec/writing.

Center for Career and Experiential Education: The Center for Career and Experiential Education (CCEE) supports undergraduate students with career preparation through one-on-one advising, 24-7 online resources, career education courses, and career events that prepare you for life after graduation and connect you with employers and community partners. Your Career Education Specialist (CES) is available to meet with you all year long, as early as your first-year, both in-person and virtually, to assist with exploring your career options, resume and cover letter writing, interview preparation, job and internship search, and more. We use Handshake to connect you to on and off campus jobs and internships and RhodyServes to connect you with volunteer opportunities in RI. Our team on the first floor of Roosevelt Hall can help you learn how to use Handshake effectively to find amazing opportunities. For more information or to meet with a CES, go to uri.edu/career.

Graduate Writing Center (for graduate courses): The <u>Graduate Writing Center</u> provides writing support to all URI doctoral and master's students to foster continuing development of academic and professional writing skills necessary to succeed in graduate programs and academic or professional careers.

Rhody Outpost Basic Needs Pantry: Food insecurity affects up to 30% of college students. That means you might not have enough food to get through a day or week, you don't have money to purchase groceries or personal products, or you are primarily eating foods that don't provide a lot of nutrition because they're all you can afford. This can all impact your academic success.

Rhody Outpost provides URI students who are food insecure with emergency food services and resources. The Outpost is housed at the Dining Services Warehouse at 10 Tootell Road, between Flagg Road and West Alumni Avenue. We are open every Friday from 3-5:30. Any student in need is welcome to visit the Outpost after filling out a brief request form.

If you have questions about food or housing insecurity, contact Barbara Sweeney, Coordinator of Food Security Outreach, at barbara_sweeney@uri.edu, or 401-874-5633. We want to help all students succeed and make URI a place with #NoRamHungry.

UNIVERSITY MANUAL REQUIREMENTS

Please familiarize yourself with Chapter 8 of the University Manual which contains important academic regulations.

Course Syllabus Requirement (<u>University Manual 8.50.30</u>) – According to the University Manual: "All instructors shall make available a syllabus in the first week of class, or first day of class for fully-online accelerated programs (8.51.24), to students enrolled in each of their courses. Syllabi components should clearly communicate classroom policies, essential aspects of the course, and expectations of student participation."

In addition to satisfying Faculty Senate approved policies, your syllabus communicates mutual expectations between you and your students and serves as a roadmap to successful course completion, including your course scope, expectations, learning outcomes, deadlines, attendance policies, grading criteria, and other important information. Please provide students with information about assessment/major paper/project due dates, office hours, availability of special tutorial sessions, and expectations on individual vs group work. This clear outlining of expectations helps to ensure that students in your classes understand what they are expected to learn, how they will be assessed, and are fully aware of your academic standards. Providing such information can help avoid misunderstanding, frustration—on both sides—and foster acceptance of responsibility by our students.

RESOURCE NOTE: As you develop your courses and syllabi, please refer to the faculty development resources offered through the Office for the <u>Advancement of Teaching and Learning</u>, including the <u>syllabus development</u>, <u>course design</u>, and <u>assessment design</u> resources.

The *University Manual* also contains information that is helpful in preparing your syllabus. I refer particularly to the following sections in <u>Chapter 8 of the Manual</u>: <u>8.27.10-19</u> (plagiarism—instructor's responsibilities, judicial action, and student's responsibilities); <u>8.39.10-12</u> (attendance); and <u>8.51.10-27</u> (examinations). Each semester, issues are directed to this office that are addressed specifically in these sections.

Final Exams - Please pay special attention to sections <u>8.51.18</u>, which states the University's long-standing policy regarding administering examinations during the final week of classes -

... Final examinations are not required by the university, but any final examination, with the exception of take-home examinations, must be administered according to the final examination schedule prepared by the Office of Enrollment Services.Faculty members cannot administer an examination during the last five days classes are in session in lieu of a final examination, but must instead postpone such an examination to be administered according to the final examination schedule.

OTHER TOPICS

FERPA - Please be aware in your communications with students and about a student's academic progress in your course, that FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) regulations prohibit any disclosure of "personally identifiable information" from a student's "education record" without the prior written consent of the student. For more detailed information on FERPA regulations, please go to: security.uri.edu/policies/ferpa/

Video Capture – There are some privacy issues to consider for those faculty who are using video capture in their classrooms. If the video captures only the instructor and course materials, there are no privacy issues. If the video captures images or voices of your students AND you intend to use these recordings in another class or for any other purpose, students must be notified of this in advance on the syllabus and you must provide accommodations for students who do not wish to appear in class recordings.

Academic Integrity - Understanding the culture of source management and attribution in academe is a process of learning and relearning, with increasing complexity over time. Our goal is to better distinguish between intentional plagiarism or cheating, and making mistakes. URI's Student Handbook web.uri.edu/studentconduct/student-handbook/) provides guidelines concerning academic honesty in this regard. Additional assistance is available at the Writing Center and the Academic Enhancement Center. It may be useful to add an extended and course-specific statement to your syllabi such as:

Students are expected to be honest in all academic work. A student's name on any written work, quiz or exam shall be regarded as assurance that the work is the result of the student's own independent thought and study. Work should be stated in the student's own words, properly attributed to its source. Students have an obligation to know how to quote, paraphrase, summarize, cite and reference the work of others with integrity. The following are examples of academic dishonesty.

- Using material, directly or paraphrasing, from published/web sources (print or electronic, including ChatGPT) without appropriate citation
- Claiming disproportionate credit for work not done independently
- Unauthorized possession or access to exams
- Unauthorized communication during exams
- Unauthorized use of another's work or preparing work for another student
- Taking an exam for another student
- Altering or attempting to alter grades
- The use of notes or electronic devices to gain an unauthorized advantage during exams
- Fabricating or falsifying facts, data or references
- Facilitating or aiding another's academic dishonesty
- Submitting the same paper for more than one course without prior approval from the instructors

Students who engage in academic dishonesty should be reported through the Student Conduct process (see Report Academic Misconduct).

Student Feedback – URI uses the <u>IDEA Diagnostic Feedback Instrument</u> to collect student feedback. As you develop your syllabus and course learning objectives, please think ahead to their alignment with IDEA course objectives that will be measured at the end of the semester (see list below). Incorporation of relevant learning objectives in your course syllabus is likely to yield more reliable and informative student feedback on the IDEA feedback form at the end of your

course. Instructors will be able to set IDEA objectives for their courses during the last 6 weeks of the semester. While you may want your students to master many of the IDEA objectives, you should choose no more than 2 or 3 essential and 2 or 3 important objectives that are critical learning objectives for your course. Choosing a larger number of objectives will limit the usefulness of your feedback. The student response period begins ~2 weeks before the end of classes and closes at 11:59 pm on the last reading day; students can use a variety of devices e.g. (laptop, cell phone, tablet) and in order to maximize response rates, faculty are encouraged to provide 15 minutes at the beginning of a class for students to complete the IDEA survey. Results are available to Instructors, Chairs, and Deans two days after official grades are officially posted for the semester.

The 13 IDEA course objectives are listed below for your convenience (with links to IDEA resources):

- 1. <u>Gaining a basic understanding of the subject (e.g., factual knowledge, methods, principles, generalizations, theories)</u>
- 2. Developing knowledge and understanding of diverse perspectives, global awareness, or other cultures
- 3. Learning to Apply Course Material (to improve thinking, problem solving, and decisions)
- 4. <u>Developing specific skills, competencies, and points of view needed by professionals in the field most closely</u> related to this course
- 5. Acquiring skills in working with others as a member of a team
- 6. <u>Developing creative capacities (inventing, designing, writing, performing in art, music, drama, etc.)</u>
- 7. Gaining a broader understanding and appreciation of intellectual/cultural activity
- 8. <u>Developing skill in expressing myself orally or in writing</u>
- 9. Learning how to find, evaluate, and use resources to explore a topic in depth
- 10. Developing ethical reasoning and/or ethical decision making
- 11. Learning to analyze and critically evaluate ideas, arguments, and points of view
- 12. Learning to apply knowledge and skills to benefit others or serve the public good
- 13. Learning appropriate methods for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting numerical information

The Office for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning provides <u>support for setting your objectives and interpreting your results</u>. If you would like to review the elements of the IDEA instrument, please go to: https://www.ideaedu.org/Services/Student-Ratings-of-Instruction-Tools. If you have questions about how the process works at URI or are looking for ways to increase response rates please visit: https://web.uri.edu/provost/idea/, or contact Sean Krueger at, skrueger@uri.edu.

Thank you for all the work you do supporting the success of your students and best wishes for an enjoyable and productive semester.

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c: Academic Deans