

## Full Course Title and CODE Fall 2017 Course Outline

**Instructor:** Name & Title

**Contact:** Instructor's office phone/voice mail; office room number/building.

Include Instructor's SMU email address and any instructions for email 'subject' line. [Note:

Particularly for large classes, Instructors may want to request that students use the course CODE1234 in the subject line so that student messages can be quickly identifiable. This also helps the Instructor to manage email; Outlook can be set to automatically direct those emails to a special folder.]

Our [Senate Policy on Course Outlines](#) requires certain elements to be included in the outline. These are the minimum requirements. The policy – and these guidelines – do not require you to organize your outline in any single fashion. You may want to consider how your outline is organized and the style of the language you are using to convey information. Does it set the tone you want to project for your course? Have you created something that can be used as an organizational tool by the student? Are the layout and design prepared with student motivation in mind? Will it help motivate students to set goals?

*Interesting Note: Lolita Paff, Associate Professor, Business & Economics at Penn State University writes that we might be unknowingly creating an adversarial relationship if our outline is entirely written as a 'contract'. Students might be left with the impression that you "don't expect them to live up to this standard unless you have it in writing" – and she adds that this might not foster a good learning environment.*

**Office Hours:** day/time/location

**Lectures:** day(s), time(s), location

**Lab:** day(s), time(s), location

**Recitation(s):** day(s), time(s), location

**Tutorial(s):** day(s), time(s), location

*or list as appropriate as an **online** or **field** course*

*if applicable, tell students if lab attendance is required*

*if applicable; tell students if attendance is required or optional*

*if applicable; tell students if attendance is required or optional*

If your TAs agree to have their names and/or contact information added to the course outline, this info might be added here. Remember, however, that course outline information must remain valid throughout the time of the course. Alternatively, you may want to write "TA contact information the course BrightSpace page" and list/update as necessary there.

**Course Site:** (If applicable) List link to course website or to BrightSpace course/lab site.

A short statement about what information/resources is/are available on the site and how/if the students are expected to use the course site would be very helpful here. Most students are used to learning management systems in high school, and are expecting this kind of organization and resource at university. The STUDIO has [instructional videos](#) on basic operations for Instructors in Brightspace.

### Course Description

(from Academic Calendar)

You might want to add a statement or two after the Calendar course description to make it more personal. Consider including why a student might be interested in taking this course and how it would serve a minor, major, or science elective in the student's degree program.

If you choose to write **course goals**, this is the appropriate place to include them. In contrast to student learning outcomes, course goals are overarching principles. They are broad statements that describe the general intentions

of the course. They are meant to be abstract, and not meant to be measured. They are often phrased in the following ways:

- The goal/aim of this course is to ...
  - help students increase their fundamental understanding of ...
  - introduce students to ...
  - demonstrate the ...
  - provide an opportunity for students to discover / gain experience in / develop ...

### 3 (or 6?) credit hours

**Prerequisites:** (if applicable) list as written in the current Calendar

**Co-requisites:** (if applicable) list as written in the current Calendar

**Notes:** (if applicable) list as written in the current Calendar

You may want to expand on the prerequisite by highlighting particular learning outcomes, knowledge, or skills that are expected of the students, having successfully completed the prerequisite course.

**Required Materials:** These might include any required text(s), clickers, or access-codes to online resources.

You may also consider including any **suggested materials** (e.g., solutions manual, auxiliary texts).

This is a good place to note any **restrictions** on the use of materials or equipment in your course. For example, are calculators permitted on assessments? If so – are students restricted to a specific model? Is it available for purchase in the Bookstore? It might be useful to include a picture of any model restrictions on your BrightSpace site.

### Course Content and Planned/Tentative Lecture Schedule

An ordered list of material or course topics can be listed here. If you include a lecture schedule, you are encouraged to add that ‘this schedule is subject to change’ or use a ‘tentative schedule’ heading. Alternatively, some instructors leave out the date and just list the topics in the order in which you they to teach them. Some instructors may want to reiterate the dates of any labs, deadlines of significant assignments, project deadlines, or in-class tests that are fixed. If applicable, use a table. Insert columns, rows as necessary; format as necessary. Some professors have gone so far as to include a few lines that explain why the different parts of the course are ordered in the way they are.

#### Example:

(Lecture # / Date)	Topic	Relevant Readings/Problems

### Learning Outcomes

Please view this short [PowerPoint information resource on writing student learning outcomes](#), and use the standard style described within to write your student learning outcomes in your course outline.

By including learning outcomes (i.e. **student** learning outcomes) we are helping students take responsibility for their learning, study purposefully, set standards, and identify strengths and weaknesses well in advance of tests and exams. We are helping ourselves as instructors to stay focused, design meaningful assessments that logically ensue, and provide meaningful test results on which to reflect on student learning in our courses. Learning outcomes are a concrete way of articulating expectations to our students.

Many of us will include course goals in our course outline, for example: “to increase your understanding of ...”, or “to expand your knowledge of ...”, or “to build upon the prerequisite knowledge base...”. These are important overarching course or teaching objectives/goals, but these are not learning outcomes. Consider the student’s point of view. The student will ask, “How do I know if I understand the material?” The response often contains a concrete,

measurable expectation that is essentially a learning outcome: “If you understand the material, then you should be able to ....”. These are the expressions of learning outcomes which are useful. They let the student know what they should be able to do with their new skills and knowledge to demonstrate both to them (when studying) and to you (on assessment) that they have learned. Of course, it is understood that being ‘able to’ does not imply a 100% grade in that area. This is a bit of a shift from the traditional focus on the skills and knowledge (or simply content checklists) to helping the students develop good habits of higher learning. This expression of expectations can complement a list of instructor’s objectives and/or broad course goals.

For many of us, articulating these expectations for our course is an exercise in thinking differently about what we teach and how we teach it. We may already do this inherently – but the idea of expressing them in the course outline for our students to read at the beginning of the course, may be new. Including them in our course outline provides a clear framework of our course for the student in terms of expectations, at the beginning of the course. It encourages alignment, early on, between instructor and student expectations. Students may more readily see the big picture relationships among what they are being taught, what they are doing on assignments and in other activities, and what they are learning. Clear expectations stated at the start of the course help to motivate students, and satisfy already-motivated students. They help students identify gaps in their learning and direct students seeking help. They can be specific to units of a course – or more general, at the level of the course. However you define your learning period, clearly communicating expectations of student achievement at the beginning of the course in the form of these learning outcomes directs the students in their discovery, learning, and studying.

To reiterate, learning outcomes are also a valuable teaching tool for the instructor. If course design begins with identifying student achievement in this way, then selected lecture activities, strategic assignment design, and good test design logically follow. Learning outcomes should not be considered a quality assurance checklist. Instead, they should be considered as providing clarification of the focus of a course. Creating this description that communicates a coherent framework of the course for the first time can be the most time-consuming part of the course outline construction. It may also be the most useful to the instructor, student – and program. It is important to note that being asked to provide what the students should be able to do by the end of an instructor-defined learning period does not place any restrictions on what the instructor teaches or what classroom practices s/he chooses. Academic freedom and responsibility remain intact.

**Example:**

Here is an example of a misplaced course/unit goal, or a teaching objective. It is not an example of a well written learning outcome or concrete measurable expectation:

“By the end of this unit, the successful student will have a greater understanding of and appreciation for the natural ecosystems in freshwater lakes.”

The following are examples of learning outcomes, in order of increasingly higher-order thinking skills, as is evident by the underlined verb in each expression of expectation. Each learning outcome begins with a phrase similar or equal to: “By the end of this unit/chapter/course, successful students should be able to:

- Identify the plant and animal species using field observation and identification skills
- Employ proper protocol in collecting fresh water lake samples for further analysis
- Explain how particular human activities potentially impact the species at risk
- Evaluate a particular conservation management strategy
- Plan an investigation according to recognized standards, analysis protocol, and scientific method

Learning outcomes are always listed in this way, using a verb that relates to something concrete and measurable to the student, like those underlined above. It indicates to the student what he or she can do with the new skills and knowledge content that you have listed in your contents. Please list them in this fashion, whether you choose to list 5 or 6 broad ones at the level of the course, or a couple of more detailed ones for each subunit you cover.

Since they help to direct students' learning, many first year courses tend to list these expectations for shorter defined periods (e.g., "by the end of this topic/unit/chapter, students should be able to ..."). Many senior courses will tend towards listing learning outcomes for longer learning periods (e.g., "by the end of this course, students should be able to ...").

### Methods of Course Delivery

Does the course make use of only traditional style lectures or are students expected to be active participants in class, regularly or from time to time? Students appreciate knowing up front, the expectations related to your course delivery methods that might include regular group work, classroom discussions, other active learning activities, field trips, or hands-on components. Students also appreciate any information on your regular use of technology and/or online resources in the course.

### Tips for Success!

Most students appreciate any tips for success from the instructor. A few bits of advice on effective class preparation, effective reading of the textbook, successful note-taking for your course, the value of regular attendance, in-class participation, and recommended time management for your course, are all greatly appreciated.

### Marking Scheme

At a minimum, the final grade breakdown for the course must be listed (preferably in a table), along with *any performance requirements* and *dates* (listed in a 'Comments' column). Longer descriptions of the different course components should be included in the next section, 'Description of Course Components'.

Particularly with introductory courses, it is useful to point out to students that final letter grades are assigned according to the Undergraduate Rating, Grades and Grade Points table listed in the Academic Regulation section of the Academic Calendar. Instructors may wish to write this last statement in the course outline and follow with the specific marking scheme for the course. Some instructors opt to reprint the table from Regulation 5a, or put a link to the calendar. You can use this link to the [2017 – 2018 Academic Calendar \(PDF\)](#). Regulation 5a is found on page 32.

In addition to its inclusion in the course outline, it is useful to have the course marking scheme posted as a stand-alone section on your BrightSpace course site as a resource. Students often wish to take a quick look at the marking scheme. They appreciate having it posted separately.

#### Example:

Component	Weight %	Comments
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>List any <i>performance requirements</i> and <i>dates</i></li> <li>Refer to any relevant policy in the subsequent section</li> </ul>
Assignment(s) Regular/weekly/etc.		
Quizzes (regular/weekly/pop/etc)		
Other component(s)		
Other component(s)		
Participation		
Test(s)/Midterm		<i>If this test is not scheduled during class time, the <b>date and time</b> must be listed here and announced the first day of classes. Include accommodation policy for students with conflicts (2 weeks' notice)</i>
Final Exam		<i>If it is a formal exam, list that it is scheduled by the Registrar during the formal exam period. Refer to University Special Exams policy (Academic Reg.#10)</i>
Lab Exam		

### Description of Course Components

This section uses headings which are the contents of the 'Component' column in the above table. Each component should have a reasonable description and include any expectations. Descriptions would include, for example: details on submitting work (do you use a mailbox in the Science Building?); picking-up graded work (in compliance with FOIPOP); any grading practices that involve dropping the lowest quiz grade, or other option(s); descriptions of writing assignments (consider adding a link to helpful guidelines on the Writing Centre website, or refer to your own guidelines you have prepared and made available as a Department or on your BrightSpace course page/website); details on projects; details on an oral presentation assignment; expectations for a lab or practical skills exam; details of any field trip; details on if/how/when solutions to assignments are made available. If this is different for tests, then describe. For first-year classes in particular, it is useful to list that formal exams are not returned to the student, but that they may be viewed in the Instructor's office.

Required information for each component includes:

- any late submission policies; any missed lab or other missed work policies;
- details on the assessment of any group work;
- details on any participation mark;
- any safety requirement

Most instructors give the laboratory component its own special section in the course outline. It is extremely useful to students and TAs if this information specific to the lab is also posted separately on a BrightSpace class site. Some details to consider including (and reiterating) are:

- a schedule of experiments with dates
- any requirement to successfully complete a safety/competency/skills/training course prior to being permitted to participate in the lab session;
- any performance requirement;
- information for repeating/upgrading students who are seeking a lab exemption, if available;
- any required tools/equipment, personal protective clothing or protective equipment;
- location of or access to lab manuals and other instruction information;
- location of or access to weekly schedule of experiments;
- explanation of any collaborative or group work, and its assessment;
- a marking scheme for the lab component;
- details on any lab or practical exam;
- details on expectations and assessments, including deadlines for weekly pre/post lab assignments, weekly reports, etc.;
- any details surrounding field trips;
- any policies on missed labs or make-up labs.

### Technology in our Classroom/Lab

If you have a policy on the use of touch screens, phones, recording lectures, photographing slides, that you are going to enforce, you may want to list it here.

### Academic Integrity

You may want to use the following statement or create one yourself. Either way, it is recommended that you refer to the appropriate section of the Calendar. Students are encouraged to consult the Academic Integrity and Student Code of Conduct sections of the Academic Regulations in the [2017-2018 Academic Calendar](#), (page 19) in order to be well informed on the consequences of dishonest behaviour.

**Late Submissions** List any policy you will enforce.

**Missed [Tests/Quiz/etc.]** List any policy you will enforce.

To assist Science Instructors with their management of students who miss academic deadlines, or similar, due to some claimed potentially-legitimate reasons, we have developed Guidelines and a process which all Instructors are strongly encouraged to adopt (both to clarify/simplify their own process, and to communicate to students expectations in this regard - particularly with respect to need, or not, of medical notes): All Instructors should read the **Declaration of Extenuating Circumstances** form and the associated **Dispensation Guidelines** for its application, provided on the [Faculty Resources menu of the Faculty of Science webpage](#). These outline the suggested protocol for Faculty of Science courses when responding to students that request academic dispensation due to extenuating circumstances interfering with their academics. Any questions regarding these issues should be directed to the Associate Dean of Science – Student Affairs.

### Privacy Information

If you choose to include a statement on this, you may choose your own relevant heading. Please note that FOIPOP rules state that **student grades or marks are never posted**. Performance or mark distributions can be made available to students, so long as there is no way to identify the student (name, ID # in whole or in part). Before you write your course outline and/or class policy/rules, please the [FOIPOP FAQ list](#) for Faculty.

### Accessibility

You may choose to include an Accessibility Statement as a standard addition to your course outline. As part of Saint Mary's University Core Values statement, the University is committed to accessibility, diversity and the provision of a positive and supportive learning environment through the effective integration of teaching and research.

Support for students with disabilities is delivered through the [Fred Smithers Centre](#), formerly known as the Atlantic Centre. You may need to update your references with the new name. The Centre establishes individualized support service programs to facilitate the participation of students with physical, medical, and learning disabilities, and to provide students with disability accommodation services and supports. Students are encouraged to seek more information by visiting the Centre, or its website using the link below. On it, there are instructions for students on how to initiate contact with the Centre, and how to be considered for exam accommodation.

### In Case of Emergency

It is important to be familiar with the location of your teaching assignment so you are prepared in the case of an emergency situation/need for evacuation. If you wish to add any emergency procedures information to your course outline, or to your BrightSpace course site, Security has [Campus Emergency Procedures](#) posted, as well as a few [Safety Videos](#) posted. Please view these, as they contain info on what to do in the case of each of the different emergency messages one might hear over the intercom system on campus. Faculty should be familiar with its contents.

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### Other Considerations ....

Instructors may want to add a relevant image or other personal touches to their course outlines. Departments may want to add a common graphic. The University Faculty of Science logo should be included at the top, as on this template. Please consider any copyrights when using images other your own.

Thank you for taking the time to read through these Guidelines.