This template follows the suggested course syllabus outline recommended in the Faculty Handbook. Each instructor should “customize” the template by removing this heading and *most of the italicized material*, and adding their own contact information, grading policies, syllabus calendar, and other information critical to their individual section of USI 130.

USI 130

**\*\*SYLLABUS TEMPLATE\*\***

**Instructor:** *(name, office, phone, email, office hours, etc.)*

**Catalog Course Description:** The University Experience (1 credit hour). Introduction to the university and to higher education. Discussion of issues involved in the transition from high school to college. Emphasis on academic and career planning and personal development.

**Purpose and Objectives:**

The Goals of the University Experience Course include the following:

1. To help you orient yourself at WCU by making you familiar with academic policies, programs and support resources;
2. To help you cope successfully with the stresses that often accompany major life transitions, such as coming to college;
3. To create a context in which you can clarify values and continue to develop a sense of responsibility for your academic, personal, and career development;
4. To guide you to develop empathy, respect, and appreciation for others who are different from you in terms of the ways our society defines human and group differences, including race, ethnicity, religious backgrounds, linguistic differences, socioeconomic levels, age, geography, sexual orientation, and national origins.

The University Experience Course is meant to get you off to a good start in college, and to motivate you to successfully complete your college education. It is the place to get your questions answered, explore and establish your goals, develop connections to the campus community, and discover resources that will help you be successful. Your instructor is also a mentor, a “go-to” person, when you have questions, insecurities, indecisions, or other difficulties—please take advantage of this both in class and individually!

Instructors should make students aware of and incorporate the Learning Outcomes of the University Quality Enhancement Plan throughout their USI 130 course. Students should

1. Identify their aptitudes, abilities, and interests and articulate their future goals and aspirations;
2. Modify their behaviors and values in response to knowledge and skills gained from their academic and co-curricular experiences; and
3. Recognize the synthesis of their university experiences relative to their future education and career plans.

To achieve the expected learning goals, WCU had identified a set of core skills and behaviors (outcomes) that are central to a student’s development as an integrated, intentional learner. These core expectations include the ability to:

* Integrate information from a variety of contexts;
* Solve complex problems;
* Communicate effectively and responsibly
* Practice civic engagement; and
* Clarify and act on purpose and values

**Attendance in USI 130:**

Much of a person’s learning and thinking originates in, and is supported by, interactions with other people. What happens inside the classroom is the “meat” of the USI 130 course. Therefore, your performance on in-class activities and contributions to class discussion are important to you and to your fellow students, and will be the basis for your course grade.

The University’s Undergraduate Catalog, The Record, states the following regarding class attendance: “Western Carolina University expects students to recognize the positive effect on academic success of class attendance and participation. All undergraduates are expected to attend all meetings of the courses in which they are enrolled: any absence is incurred at the student’s own risk… A student with more unexcused absences in a 100-(freshman) or 200-(sophomore) level course than the semester hours given for the course can expect the instructor to lower the course grade.” You are encouraged to consult the complete statement of this policy in the Undergraduate Catalog.

You are allowed up to two absences **provided that your instructor excuses the absence**. Acceptable excuses include the following:

* Clear evidence that you are too ill or otherwise indisposed to benefit from being in class and will be a risk or distraction to others in the class;
* Documented evidence of your required presence in a court of law;
* Documented evidence of a personal or family emergency requiring your presence away from campus;
* Documented evidence of your participation in an approved university activity (field trip, athletic event, etc.; documentation will be provided by the university official in charge of the activity, and must be presented before the time of the absence);
* **Other circumstances approved by your instructor**, **preferably *prior to the absence***.

You must request **IN WRITING** that each absence be excused **before the next regular class period**. Your written excuse must be presented to your instructor as soon as possible after the absence occurs. If you miss class for what you believe is a good reason, you still must ask, in writing, that the absence be excused—we want to see that you are acting responsibly about class attendance. Even if you miss class unexpectedly or accidentally, don’t compound the error by failing to turn in a request for an excuse; if you act responsibly, you might be granted an excuse even with a poor reason. **It is up to your instructor to grant excuses, so don’t ever assume your absence won’t be excused until you have communicated with your instructor**. *(individual instructors should specify if they will accept emailed excuse explanations, and specify the amount of detail they want in these excuse requests)*

Attendance affects your final grade as follows:

* If you have three or more excused absences, you should expect your course grade to be affected adversely, regardless of your performance on course assignments;
* If you have more than four excused absences, your instructor may assign a grade of F, regardless of your performance on course assignments;
* If you have ANY absences that are not excused, you will receive a grade of F, regardless of your performance on the rest of the course assignments.

Keep in mind that if you miss a class meeting, you are still responsible for the material addressed during that meeting and for submitting assignments due at the meeting.

**Course Content:**

**FIRST WEEK:** Introductions, ice-breakers; go over syllabus; ask students to make sure they get their email accounts up and running; save time for individual questions about schedules, problems, resources, etc.

The remaining class meetings should cover the following topics (*order is instructor’s choice; suggested class activities for each topic will be discussed at the training meeting. Instructors are encouraged to consult the Common Elements for Transition Courses at WCU for elaboration about topics and suggestions*):

* The value of college and liberal learning; the Liberal Studies program;
* College Life Issues: time management; coping with college classes and schedules; use of Academic Success Centers; use of professional advisors and academic department advisors; interacting with professors; class attendance and keeping up with class work; study skills for college level work;
* Academic policies as covered by the Catalog; the purpose and consequences of grades;
* Self-evaluation of abilities and information on selecting a major and preparing for a career;
* Responsible living, including keeping balance in your life, interpersonal relationships, drug and alcohol use, safe sex practices, and general wellness;
* Diversity and ethical considerations in the University community;
* Brief discussion of Western Carolina University and its history;
* The University Quality Enhancement Plan; strategies for encouraging and creating synthesis within academic and co-curricular experiences; introduction of the activities of academic engagement;
* Use The Transition to College Writing as appropriate throughout the course;
* Include at least an introduction to Service Learning;

(Instructors may ask personnel from Health Services, Residential Living, the Academic Success Centers, Career Services, Advising, Counseling and Psychological Services, Wellness, etc., to help them cover any of these topics.)

Classes must meet once per week for the whole semester; all classes are scheduled for two class meetings per week to accommodate special activities, individual meetings with students, or meetings with small groups from a class. Classes will meet during both meeting times for the first couple of weeks so students have ample opportunity to get help with adjustment issues. Some kind of final assessment activity is required of all classes, to be completed according to the final exam schedule ***during final exam week***.

**Textbooks**: The Transition to College Writing by Keith Hjortshoj. The University Experience: Strategies for Success by the USI 130 Instructional Staff (copies available to instructors as a resource; NOT A BOOK RENTAL TEXT); also refer to the undergraduate catalog, The Record, which is available on-line.

**Basis for Student Evaluation:**

(Components of the final grade for your section, including attendance, participation in workshops or campus activities, service learning, specific assignments, scope of assignments, quantity of writing expected, other expectations; be aware of the plus/minus grading scale)

**1. Attendance and class participation** will be the primary determining factor in your grade for this course. You will be asked for very little work outside of class, so your presence and participation in class will form the substance of the course.

2. You will be required to sample a number of **out-of-class activities** during the semester. Instructors will require some written reflection on some or all of these activities.

3**. Service Learning Assignment** The class will participate in a service learning experience, as a group, at some point in the semester. There will be a limited number of individual service learning opportunities that you may choose as an alternative to the group experience. The experience should take at least 5 hours of time. You will be asked to write a summary and reflection of the experience.

4. **Individual instructor’s discretion**. In class informal writing, brief out-of-class assignments to prepare for class activities, participation in assessments, etc. (*Each instructor should spell out how this component of the grade will be determined for their class.)*

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

Western Carolina University is committed to providing equal educational opportunities for students with documented disabilities.  Students who require disability services or reasonable accommodations must identify themselves as having a disability and provide current diagnostic documentation to Disability Services.  All information is confidential.  Please contact Disability Services for more information at (828) 227-2716 or 144 Killian Annex.