PREFACE:

The purpose of a Standard Course Outline (SCO)

The SCO is a document written by faculty to describe the learning objectives and pedagogy of a specific course. It is an instructional tool to be shared among faculty teaching the course. Unlike syllabi, which are geared toward student audiences, an SCO provides information for the faculty teaching the course, acting as a set of guidelines to instruct and assist all present and future faculty of a course. A well-balanced SCO will provide both rigor and flexibility. Sufficient rigor refers to requiring consistent criteria and standards to be adhered to across sections and semesters of teaching the course. Flexibility allows faculty members to align those requirements according to their distinct teaching styles. It is not advisable to use a syllabus to create the SCO; rather, the SCO should inform and foster the design of all future syllabi. An SCO also serves as an agreement: all syllabi should conform to its specifications about what the course is designed to provide students as part of the curriculum as well as the methods by which those learning goals are accomplished.

A carefully crafted SCO should also serve as the foundation and design tool for course-level assessment planning, an integral component of discovering and implementing curricular change for enhancing students’ mastery of the learning objectives.

An SCO should also acquaint faculty with university policies on instruction, such as those regarding class attendance, grading, and textbook selection.

Required sections for the SCO are given on the following pages, each denoted by a roman numeral. For most sections, “samples” are provided.

Please see the GE webpage for additional guidelines related to the GE Policy 12-00.
I. General Information
Consult with curriculum committee chair if necessary about numbering new courses.

A. Course number:
B. Title:
C. Units:
D. Prerequisites:
E. Responsible faculty:
F. SCO Prepared by:
G. Date prepared/revised:

II. Catalog Description
Give catalog description (should be no more than 40 words), listing prerequisites if any. If a new course, consult the catalog for examples (tips: do not list specific assignments or, usually, specific authors or texts).

III. Curriculum Justification(s)
State the need for the course in the department and how it fits in with existing curriculum.

As a GE course, justify the requested GE Category. See GE Policy (PS 12-00) for classification criteria. Refer directly to GE policy and describe clearly the ways that the course applies and fits in each classification being requested.

IV. Measurable Student Learning Outcomes, Evaluation Instruments, and Instructional Strategies for Skill Development
Provide a bulleted list of course outcomes (typically, no more than 5 outcomes).

For All GE Courses, list the GE Student Learning Outcomes (adopted by Senate in GE Policy PS 12-00) relevant to the course. State that these outcomes should appear on all course syllabi.

Outcomes should include both Content-based outcomes (addressing the topic area of the course) and Skill-based outcomes (addressing the primary essential skills identified for the course). Departments will need to report on their assessment efforts related to the outcomes for primary essential skills identified in the SCO. The faculty GE website describes each Essential Skill:
http://www.csulb.edu/divisions/aa/ge/faculty/skills/index.html

The Essential Primary Skills of General Education are:
- Written Communication
- Oral Communication
- Critical Thinking
- Quantitative Reasoning
- Information Literacy
- Teamwork
- Inquiry and Analysis
- Intercultural Knowledge
- Ethical Reasoning
- Creativity and Discovery
- Foundation and Skills for Lifelong Learning
- Social Responsibility and Civic Engagement
- Interdisciplinary Learning
- Problem Solving
For EACH Outcome, state:

A. **STUDENT PERFORMANCE BENCHMARK(S).** Student Learning Outcomes must be expressed into specific student behaviors that can be measured. Benchmarks are specific statements of what students are expected to learn and be able to do upon successful completion of the course.

B. **EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS (ASSIGNMENTS).** Describe procedures and measures that would be suitable to evaluate student’s mastery of course content and skills. These might include quizzes, a research paper, essay exam, oral presentation, etc. Please identify which assignments in the course are related to the specific learning outcomes. Rather than making a blanket statement of all possible assignments that might take place in the class, give a meaningful description of how certain assignments will help you reach particular outcomes.

C. **INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES FOR SKILL DEVELOPMENT.** Describe what you will do as an instructor to teach the objective. For instance, teaching writing skills may involve, explaining rubrics for writing expectations both before and after the assignments, reviewing components of well-written essays with the class with examples from actual student essays, incorporating feedback on drafts with opportunities for revision, etc.

Sample:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>MEASURABLE BENCHMARK FOR WRITTEN COMMUNICATION SLO:</strong> After taking this course, students will be able to demonstrate advanced writing processes, including developing ideas, effective note-taking and drafting, formulating and revising thesis statements, outlines, and arguments.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS:</strong> Specific assignments will vary by instructor, but typical assignments include take-home essays, research papers, and in-class essay exams.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES:</strong> A writing rubric evaluating content, organization, reasoning, rhetoric, and writing conventions will be used. Standards for good analytical writing will be discussed in class before and after written assignments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**V. Outline of Subject Matter**
Include a suggested course schedule. Include a disclaimer to allow for different ways of teaching the course, such as the following:

Sample:

| This is a broad outline of topics to be covered. Subject matter and sequence of topics may vary by instructor. |

**VI. Methods of Instruction**
Explain the nature of classroom activities. Is the course primarily lectures? Should there be opportunities for class discussion, group work, one-on-one instruction, and student presentations?

If the course is a large lecture, explain any opportunities for class discussion, student interaction, small group work, or other factors that would enhance active learning in this classroom environment.

If film or other audio-visual materials are used in the course, indicate all of the following: 1) why those particular materials are necessary for the course, 2) the amount of class time devoted to those
materials, and 3) a pedagogical justification for why the materials require in-class viewing/listening, rather than out-of-class preparation time.

Sample:

Because this is a critical thinking course, it is expected that formal lectures will be minimized and that students will be regularly and actively engaged in practicing their thinking skills through exercises and discussions. Individual instructors will decide on the specific methods used in this course, but it is suggested that students will participated extensively in different formats for learning, including demonstrations, small-group activities, and oral presentations.

VII. Information about Textbooks / Readings
Ensure compliance with University Policy PS 79-08 that defines Choice of Textbooks.

If there is a required text for the course, state so here. If not, provide a brief list of possible textbooks and readings to be used. Include a disclaimer such as the following:

Sample:

The following is a short list of textbooks that are most likely to be used for this course. Instructors may assign one or more of these and/or include other relevant texts/readings. Instructors may be asked to justify the use of old textbooks, if updated texts are available.

VIII. Bibliography
Include a one-page current bibliography of references, possibly with a disclaimer, like the following:

Sample:

This is a highly selective bibliography to provide instructors with a primary set of resource materials. For brevity, important works may be missed from this list. The list is intended to show the range of materials available to our students. Relevant course materials may also be found in periodicals, both in print and electronic form.

IX. Instructional Policies Requirements
List course policies that every instructor must follow, including Course Syllabi Policy (PS 11-07). The Course Syllabi Policy specifies required content for hybrid and online course delivery. Further detail on hybrid, online, and distance education courses can be found in Academic Technology and the Mode of Instruction (PS 03-11).

Include a reference to University policy on instructional issues. Make it explicit that such policies should appear on course syllabi.

Sample:

Instructors may specify their own policies with regard to plagiarism, withdrawal, absences, etc., as long as the policies are consistent with the University policies published in the CSULB Catalog. It is expected that every course will follow University policies on Attendance (PS 01-01), Course Syllabi and Standard Course Outlines (PS 11-07), Final Course Grades, Grading Procedures, and Final Assessments (PS 05-07), and Withdrawals (PS 02-02).
All sections of the course will have a syllabus that includes the information required by the syllabus policy adopted by the Academic Senate. Instructors will include information on how students may make up work for excused absences. When class participation is a required part of the course, syllabi will include information on how participation is assessed. When improvement in oral communication is an objective of the course, syllabi will include a rubric for how oral communication is to be evaluated.

X. Course Assessment
If the course has mandatory assignments (e.g., term paper, in-class essay final exam, 3 oral presentations) or mandatory formatting of assignments (e.g., multiple-choice questions should comprise no more than 50% of the total point value of exams), identify them here. Each course should provide a bulleted list of assignments with approximate percentages of course grade breakdown for various assignments. A disclaimer can clarify expectations, as below.

Sample:
The exact set of course assignments will vary depending on the instructor. University policy requires that no single evaluation of student achievement may count for more than one-third of final grade. Appropriate assignments may include…

XI. Consistency of SCO Standards across Sections
Part of the usefulness of an SCO is derived from the need for consistency of standards, across sections (for multi-sectioned courses) and semesters (for ALL courses). Present and future instructors of the course should follow the instructions given in the SCO to ensure consistency of pedagogical practices. This section outlines possible activities for the course coordinator(s) to measure consistency.

Additionally, this section should state that all future syllabi will conform to the SCO.

For additional resources see www.csulb.edu/ge/faculty