READ THIS SYLLABUS TWICE PER DAY!!!!!!

Professor Hatch's mantra: When in doubt: read the syllabus....

Read the syllabus: It is a lot of trouble to prepare such a detailed syllabus. You should assume I had a reason for it. You must read every word in the syllabus before the second class.

Students are expected to read this syllabus in its entirety.

This syllabus and the addendum contain essential information. Please read them carefully.

PLEASE READ THE SYLLABUS CAREFULLY AND KEEP IT WITH YOU WHenever you come to class. All the information on the syllabus is important and includes everything you need in order to do well in this class. You will also be able to download the syllabus on WebCT if you somehow lose this copy. Please do not ask me to send you a copy.

I have read this syllabus and agree to the schedule and procedures stated therein.

Print name:__________________________ (Signed) ______________  
Student ID:______________ Date:___________

These examples are excerpted from real syllabi posted on the Web. Though the course syllabus contains essential information that students need throughout the semester, it's apparent that instructors have one challenge in common—getting students to actually read the syllabus. Simple pleas do not seem to work. Encouragement and threats do not seem to work. This tip provides a few creative methods clever instructors use to accomplish this feat.

Reading the Syllabus Aloud
More than one professor has resorted to reading the syllabus aloud during the first class meeting. This at least ensures that students have heard all the information in the syllabus even though they may have not read it themselves.

Signing on the Line
One simple method is to treat the syllabus like a contract, as illustrated in the last example above, and have students sign on the bottom line. Note: Though appealing in its 'official' contract appearance, this method does not guarantee full comprehension of your syllabus.
Computer Responses
Have students read the syllabus and send one question regarding it to the group forum on the class web site. The instructor can then post a response to the whole class.

Cooperative Group Questions
Distribute your syllabus to the whole class. Then, divide the class into groups and have them read and prepare a list of questions about the syllabus. Have each group choose a spokesperson to ask any questions they might like about the course, the syllabus, or you, as the instructor. Be prepared for personal, and possibly embarrassing, questions not relating to the syllabus.

Syllabus Homework
As an extra-credit homework assignment, have students write about how the course objectives and assignments relate to their academic interests and goals.

Short-Answer Syllabus Quiz
Give a 10-question, 100-point syllabus quiz. Questions might be: "Which week is Chapter 6 assignment due?" or "What will your final grade be if everything averages out to 85.32?"

A Syllabus Quiz Requiring Application of Syllabus Information
In an article titled The Syllabus Quiz (Raymark, P.H. & Connor-Greene, P.A. 2002), the effectiveness of developing a syllabus quiz to enhance understanding of course policies and procedures was evaluated.

On the first day of classes a quiz was handed out with the syllabus. Students were told that they would receive extra credit points if the quiz was returned by the second day of class. Out of 200 students, little more than 60% completed and turned in their quiz. Not merely a true/false or multiple choice quiz, the seven syllabus quiz questions actually asked students to apply information found in the syllabus.

The quiz was prefaced with: "Imagine that you are the instructor for this class. Now respond to your students in a way that is consistent with what is stated in the course syllabus."
Sample questions included:

- Rebecca asks whether it is possible to meet with you outside of regularly scheduled office hours.
- Tom wants to know why he doesn't automatically get a "C" since he did not miss one lecture all semester.
- Wendy overslept on the day of her first exam. Now she wants to know why you've chosen your particular make-up exam policy.
- Ann asks you to explain the purpose of the research participation points.

Of course, when all else fails, you could always include the following heading on the first line of your next syllabus: READ THIS SYLLABUS TWICE PER DAY!!!!!!

Source:
About the Institute for Learning and Teaching and the Master Teacher Initiative: The Institute for Learning and Teaching (TILT) was established in 2006 to enhance teaching and learning at Colorado State University. We offer professional development programs and activities, provide funding and support for research on learning and teaching, offer colloquia on the scholarship of teaching and learning, and promote collaboration within and across disciplines. Visit us on the Web at [http://tilt.colostate.edu](http://tilt.colostate.edu), or contact us at (970) 491-3132 or TILT@ColoState.edu.

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