

CETL Weekly Teaching Tips presents

Syllabus Scavenger Hunt

“It’s on the syllabus!”

Professors always complain about students not reading the syllabus. How many emails have we wanted to answer with “It’s on the syllabus!”? We all go over the syllabus in the first class, but that oral input just doesn’t seem to sink in. Instead, try having a syllabus scavenger hunt during the first or second class meeting.

Student groups find the answers to key questions using the syllabus.

Collect answers, and redistribute them to other groups for evaluating.

Invite follow-up questions on policy.



For additional procedure and sample questions to pose, visit

oakland.edu/teachingtips

CETL adapted this material from Liz Shesko, Assistant Professor of History at Oakland University.

Gather more teaching tips for the semester.

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Syllabus Scavenger Hunt

Professors always complain about students not reading the syllabus. How many emails have we wanted to answer with: "It's on the syllabus!"?

We all go over the syllabus on the first class, but that oral input just doesn't seem to sink in.

Instead, try having a syllabus scavenger hunt during the first or second class meeting. In groups, have the students find the answers to particular key questions using the syllabus. The group that finishes first with all the questions correct, gets a prize (candy, a desk copy of text for the class, an extra excused absence). Collect them as the groups finish to determine which group was first. Then redistribute the answers to other groups for grading. Have students read the answer to each question and go over why it's right or wrong. At the same time, invite questions about the policy.

Sample questions:

What is this course about?

What will I learn in this course?

What happens if I'm absent more than X times?

What counts as an excused absence?

What do I need to bring to class each day?

What are the components of quality participation?

What happens if I turn a paper in late?

What happens if I miss an exam?

What is plagiarism?

What counts as academic misconduct?

Where I can find more information about plagiarism and citations?

When can I collaborate with other students in class?

What happens if I'm texting in class?

Where can I find help if I'm not understanding the course material?

Where can I find the readings?

How can I contact the professor?

Submitted by:

Liz Shesko

Assistant Professor of History

Oakland University

shesko@oakland.edu