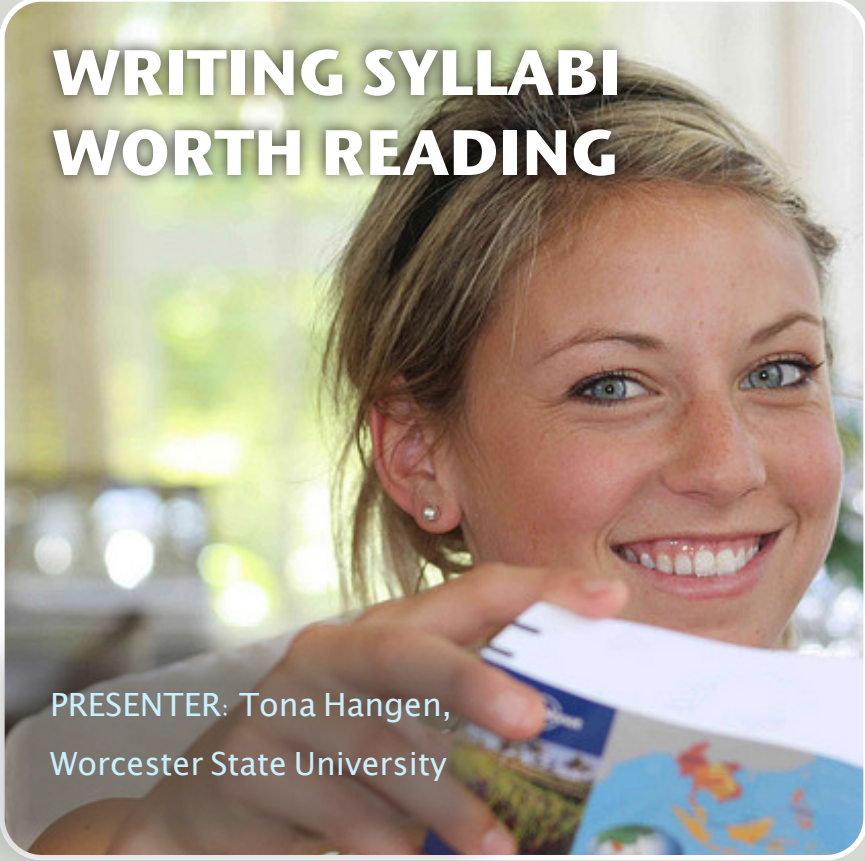


# WRITING SYLLABI WORTH READING



PRESENTER: Tona Hangen,  
Worcester State University

## Want More Ideas?

Visit <http://www.tonahangen.com/courses/syllabusdesign/> for more information and resources for turning your syllabus from **YAWN** to **WOW**.

Feel free to contact me at [thangen@worcester.edu](mailto:thangen@worcester.edu) with suggestions or to continue the conversation!



## Can a syllabus be both a thing of beauty & a tool to think with about teaching? Yes.

Who said a syllabus has to be 5-10 pages of plain text, printed portrait-style on 8.5x11" paper and written in "legalese"? Every class must have a syllabus, but why not reinvent this most ubiquitous of academic documents from the inside out? Look to good designers of all kinds (magazine, graphic, architectural, software, web) for ideas on how to convey complicated information with a more engaging user interface.

Begin with strong student learning outcomes (designing with the end in mind). Then consider how students might best be introduced to your course's structure, content, and responsibilities. A guiding analogy might help you organize... for example, could your syllabus be a map, a story, a formula, or a blueprint?

Might some of the essentials be displayed as tables, sidebars, charts or images? Use font and color to convey emphasis. Try using a newsletter template in Word or Pages; or compose in Powerpoint, greeting card design software, or with a brochure program like Publisher to create visually engaging and well-organized syllabi with personality. This isn't just about window-dressing or making purely cosmetic changes. Thinking deeply about your course content is an iterative process that's part of becoming an excellent teacher. Different audiences might need different formats (see below), but try new tools and experiment to make your course syllabus a fresher, more functional focal point for your teaching and your students' learning.

**Nichols College**  
March 20, 2012

PROVIDE MULTIPLE FORMATS	PAPER/TEXT	PDF	BORN DIGITAL	GOOGLE TOOLS
<p><b>Plain text version</b> handed out in class the first day... Classic &amp; probably still indispensable.</p>	<p><b>Experiment with full color</b> and dazzling formatting. Display as a Flipsnack ebook &amp; allow downloading.</p>	<p><b>Embed course info</b> into your Moodle shell, as a stand-alone page or in nested folders. Think outside the document.</p>	<p><b>Use Google</b> to create a Google calendar or share your syllabus as a Google doc.</p>	