

# *The Great American Syllabus*

This next assignment is designed with two purposes in mind. First, I want you all to see relations in these texts which I have chosen not to pursue in this class, and, second, I want to give you some idea of what it's like to design a syllabus for a class. Basically, this assignment involves redesigning a portion of the syllabus for this class.

You should hand in three items on **NOVEMBER 29**. Each item should be on a separate page. You should turn in

- The actual syllabus
- A set of lesson plans
- A 2-3 page description of your rationale

## Section I: *The Actual Syllabus*

This section should look something like the syllabus for this class. I am asking you group together four texts topically. You can either use a topic that already appears on the syllabus (e.g., The American, Gender, Race) and then organize four to five *different* texts under it, or you can choose a new topic and use four to five texts we have read to explore that topic. Your syllabus should have the following features:

- Dates. These dates are imaginary, but put a *little* bit of thinking into them. Do you want to teach this section at the very start? in the middle? in the end?
- Main topic. What topic are you exploring?
- Sub-topic. Your syllabus should cover four days. What sub-topic are you exploring each day?
- Texts. You should have only one, at most two, texts for each day of class. Two texts is a **LOT** to discuss, so if you choose two you might want to plan on spilling into the next day or you might want to pair shorter texts.

You finished product for this first section should look like a piece of the syllabus you have for this class. Use that as a model for formatting your own syllabus.

Section II: *A Set of Lesson Plans*

Every class needs a plan. You have to know what you want to teach, where you want to go in the text, or how you will stimulate discussion. Thus, for the second part of this assignment you should include a set of lesson plans for these four days of your class. This should include

- Five questions for each text which are designed to stimulate discussion around your topic. You can either make these direct questions ("How does this text relate to this topic?") or you can frame these as passages you want to explore ("Let's take a look at the passage on this page. What elements of this topic can you see here?"). Your questions, of course, should be more specific
- You should, then, turn in a page with four groups of five questions each. You may want to include questions that interrelate the readings as well.

Section III: *The Rationale*

Finally, I want a short written description of your rationale for this syllabus.

- Explain in one or two pages why these texts are useful for exploring this topic. You may want a very simple structure: an introduction, then a short paragraph explaining in text in relation to the topic, and then a brief conclusion. This section certainly should be no more than three pages.

**BE SURE TO FOLLOW THE ABOVE DIRECTIONS FOR EACH OF THE THREE (3) SEPARATE ITEMS YOU ARE EXPECTED TO HAVE. BE SURE TO TURN IN ALL THREE (3) ITEMS ON NOVEMBER 29. THE EASIEST WAY TO LOSE POINTS ON THIS ASSIGNMENT IS TO IGNORE THE ABOVE DIRECTIONS.**