**Things to Consider When You Write Your Next Syllabus**

**The lowest bar to clear:**

Include basic information required by the Department because it’s required by Middle States (and, of course, by our students!):

- Your contact information

- A course description

- A Gen Ed statement, if the course satisfies a Gen Ed requirement

- Learning goals in a separate list (see handout on learning goals)

- A dated, tentative schedule of assignments

**A somewhat higher bar:**

The best syllabi have two effects on their readers that can seem contradictory, although they can also work together. A good syllabus:

-Generates excitement around the big intellectual questions of the

course, but also

- Sets clear boundaries about workload and policies.

Stylistically, a good syllabus also models the kinds of professionalism that we hope to see in our students’ work, which is to say that it’s written with clarity and grace, without typographical mistakes or odd formatting.

**And as you structure your reading/writing assignments:**

Try writing the calendar like an essay. Create a sense of momentum to carry your students from the beginning of the semester through the middle and the end. For example:

Begin with assignments that define keyterms and raise rhetorical questions or establish scholarly debates.

Then give assignments that teach students how to redefine those terms in conversation with other scholars and answer those questions in a variety of ways.

Finally, give an assignment that helps students name what they have

learned and consider how they’ll continue this kind of inquiry beyond the scope of the course.