



Academic Programs

1. Syllabus
 - a. Faculty must prepare a syllabus for each course they teach. The syllabus must include information contained in the syllabus template available on the college website. The syllabus must provide students an accurate description of the course, the assignments, required texts and other materials, and the grading scale and criteria. The syllabus must be posted on Canvas before the start of the academic term. Faculty must send their syllabuses to the administrative associate no later than the first Friday after the start of the term.
2. Classes with Multiple Sections
 - a. Students who take classes with multiple sections taught by different instructors should have substantially similar experiences and preparation. Such classes should use a single syllabus with adjustments for only such matters as class dates and times. All faculty teaching a section of a class with multiple sections must follow the standard syllabus for that class. All must use the same textbook, have similar assignments and expectations, and use the same communication channel, if one is specified for that class. Because many of the classes with multiple sections are foundational ones that prepare students for later courses, a high degree of uniformity in the class is essential so that all students will be well prepared for more advanced studies.
3. Canvas
 - a. The University of Nebraska-Lincoln uses Canvas as its learning management system. Faculty members shall use the system for posting course documents, communicating with students, recording grades, and other class functions. They can learn about the system through the online tutorial available through the college website. Those who are teaching a course with multiple sections should follow the policies for using Canvas set forth in the standard syllabus.
4. Class Meetings
 - a. Every class that meets in person has a scheduled time and place to meet. The university prohibits moving such a class to a different time because students sign up for multiple courses and changing times may upset their schedules. Also, many students work or have outside activities that prevent them from meeting at times other than the scheduled times. Classrooms may be changed, but only with the approval of the associate dean for academic programs and the college staff person in charge of scheduling rooms. If a room change involves one of the general-purpose classrooms in Andersen Hall (Rooms 15 or 109), approval from the Office of the Registrar is necessary.
 - b. If a faculty member expects to miss a class, the faculty member should arrange for another faculty member to conduct the class or identify other means for delivering instructional materials. If a faculty member is unable to meet with a class because of illness, accident or some other unforeseen circumstance, the faculty member should notify the associate dean for research and faculty affairs by phone and email as promptly as possible and notify the students in the class by email or other communication channel the students use in connection with the class. If a faculty member is going to be gone for

reasons such as a professional conference, faculty must also complete the memorandum of absence.

5. Class Technology

- a. If students are required to use specific equipment or software in order to complete their course assignments, the instructor must be sufficiently competent in the use of the equipment or software to be able to adequately instruct and supervise the students

6. Grade Policies

- a. Section 5.3 of the Board of Regents Bylaws requires that all students receive an evaluation of their performance during the course of the semester, if requested. All students must receive either a final grade or an incomplete at the end of the semester. Unless course requirements specify otherwise, all students majoring in the College of Journalism and Mass Communications must receive a letter grade for courses in any major in the college. The grade a student receives should reflect the instructor's honest evaluation of a student's work.
- b. To provide early feedback to students and improve retention efforts, instructors should assign and provide a grade and feedback on the first assignment within the first two weeks of the semester. Instructors should ensure all grades are posted and current at midterm.
- c. For students expecting to graduate at the end of the semester, instructors must submit degree grades in advance of the final grade. The degree grade given should indicate the lowest possible grade that student might receive at the end of the semester.

7. Incomplete Grades

- a. Instructors may give the grade Incomplete or "I" only when a student is unable to complete a course due to illness, military service, hardship, or death in the immediate family. Incompletes will be only given if the student has already substantially completed the major requirements of the course. A contract for how and when the students will complete the course requirements must be approved by the student and the instructor.

8. Grade Appeals

- a. Regents Bylaw 5.3 specifies that students have the right to appeal grades they consider the product of caprice or prejudice on the part of the instructor. The provision requires the college to have a process for resolving disputes about grades.
- b. Students first should talk to the instructor to seek a mutual understanding about the grade. If they are unable to agree, students may appeal the grade to the associate dean for academic programs. The associate dean may ask the instructor for information about the course, the grading policies, and how the appealing student's grade was determined. The associate dean also may request information about the distribution of grades for other students in the class. Such information should be anonymized. The associate dean also may ask the student to explain the basis for believing the grade is the product of caprice or prejudice on the part of the instructor. Based on the evidence presented by the student and the instructor, the associate dean shall render a judgment. If the judgment is that the preponderance of the evidence shows the grade was the product of caprice or prejudice, the associate dean shall ask the instructor to change the grade.
- c. Either the student or the instructor may appeal an adverse decision by the associate dean for academic programs to the Executive Committee. The evidence the student and the instructor presented to the associate dean shall be forwarded to the committee. The committee may request additional information from either or both parties. The committee, at its discretion, may schedule a hearing at which the student and the

instructor may present evidence and answer questions. The burden of proof in such disputes is on the student to show by a preponderance of the evidence that the grade was the product of caprice or prejudice on the part of the instructor. The decision of the committee shall be by majority vote. If the decision is that the grade was the product of caprice or prejudice by the instructor, it may order the grade to be changed. If the instructor refuses to change the grade, the associate dean shall administer the grade change.

9. Faculty Office Hours

- a. Faculty shall post on Canvas, in their syllabuses and outside their offices, the hours during which students may expect them to be available for conferences. In the alternative, faculty may ask students to schedule appointments for conferences. In either case, faculty shall make reasonable efforts to accommodate all students who need advice or assistance.

10. Faculty Course Attendance Policy

- a. The following policy is intended to provide clarity about required measures related to instructor absences and changes in mode of instruction. Informing units of absences and plans for coverage or makeup of missed instructional duties is a professional responsibility and an expectation of the college. The College of Journalism & Mass Communications requires that instructors inform college administration (e.g., the associate deans) via a complete Memorandum of Absence form when they are unable to be present in their classes due to approved planned absences. Unplanned absences related to illness or emergencies are discussed separately below.
- b. Planning ahead for absences:
 - i. As described in the campus Instructional Continuity Guidelines, “ all instructors should include a statement on their syllabus that explains the mode of communication they will use (e.g., @huskers.unl.edu email or Canvas) if in-person classes are canceled and the campus follows instructional continuity plans.” Instructors are also encouraged to use this section to discuss the mode of communication to be followed in the event of unplanned absences related to illness or personal events.
- c. Planned absences for university business, nonroutine medical appointments and procedures, and religious observances requiring absence from the workplace.
 - i. Instructors must provide advance notice, using the Memorandum of Absence described above, for a planned absence of an academic working day or more, or any absence which will result in missing a scheduled teaching assignment. Memoranda must be filed for any class that will be missed. Ideally, any absence will be planned and written into the syllabus at the beginning of the term.
 - ii. All planned absences during academic working days must be approved in advance by the Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Affairs at least 10 business days prior to the absence, unless under unusual circumstances.
 - iii. It is the expectation that courses approved for in-person delivery mode will not employ more than one week’s worth of classes in an alternative format (e.g., three times for a class that meets MWF, two times for TR classes, once for classes that meet once a week) during the Fall or Spring 15-week semesters, unless the class includes a hybrid format in the course listing. Exceptions are possible, but only after discussion with the Associate Dean for Research and Faculty Affairs.

- iv. Arrange ahead of time for coverage of your courses. Notify students via announcements and syllabus/calendar postings within the learning management system.
- v. Some possibilities when you cannot teach in person:
 1. Ask a colleague, or if appropriate and with due consideration for student workload and teaching experience, an advanced graduate student, to cover your course. Please note that employing non-instructional staff members as alternative options for classroom management is not appropriate.
 2. Provide digital versions of course material (video/audio lecture or materials or other course content or feedback on work).
 3. Invite a career coach or other student support unit to deliver a workshop appropriate to the course and students enrolled.
 4. Offer the class at the scheduled time via web conferencing.
 5. Final exams should be offered at the time designated by the Registrar; see the Registrar's Final Exam page for current policies regarding final exams.
- d. Unplanned absences for emergencies. The goal is to ensure students remain on track in terms of meeting learning outcomes.
 - i. As soon as possible, notify students via communication through the learning management system; reach out to the college administration (dean, associate deans) for assistance if needed.
 - ii. Notify CoJMC administrators (dean, associate deans) by e-mail or phone message as soon as possible; file the Memorandum of Absence form as soon as feasible.
 - iii. Faculty are expected to make up the missed contact hour(s) or provide the missed course material. Some possibilities are:
 - iv. Provide digital versions of course material (video/audio lecture or materials or other course content or feedback on work).
 - v. Ask other faculty to help cover lectures or course content.
 - vi. Provide specific plans for each course as soon as possible via the Memorandum of Absence form.
- e. Teaching Overload and Summer Pay
 - i. Compliance
 1. All overloads must comply with the University of Nebraska Overload Policy.
 - ii. Pop-up Courses
 1. Regardless of rank or position, all faculty are paid a flat fee of \$1,200 per credit hour for pop-up courses. All full-time faculty are paid on overload. Pop-up courses are not counted in load for faculty.
 - iii. Summer Sessions
 1. All faculty are paid 2.8% of base salary per credit hour, up to a maximum of \$8,000 for a 3-credit-hour summer instruction course.
 - iv. Academic Year Overload
 1. It is expected that academic year overloads will be rare and only utilized when all other instruction options have been exhausted. Faculty teaching

an academic year overload will be paid 4.16% of base salary per credit hour.

11. Course Applications

a. Purpose

- i. The College of Journalism and Mass Communications places the highest value on offering our students excellent experiential opportunities. Recognizing that some opportunities require students to meet expectations beyond preliminary coursework, we establish these guidelines to direct the use of applications as a requirement for entrance into CoJMC courses.
- ii. Any student who meets listed pre-requisites is eligible to enroll in any course in the College of Journalism and Mass Communications unless entrance requires an application that complies with these guidelines.

b. Principles

- i. Fairness in our treatment of students
- ii. Transparency in our process and requirements
- iii. Accountability in our decision making
- iv. Excellence in our course offerings and student experiences

c. Criteria and Requirements

- i. Faculty wishing to use an application process for acceptance into a course must:
 1. Develop minimum criteria that applicants must meet for consideration and acceptance into the courses
 2. Develop criteria that will be used to evaluate prior work or a portfolio submitted as part of the application process
 3. Develop an application procedure that is user-friendly and accessible to students
 4. Establish a timeline for the acceptance of applications
 5. Follow the standard curriculum process for a new course or changes to an existing course to be by application only

d. Promotions

- i. The opportunity to apply, criteria for consideration, application procedures and deadlines must be promoted to all CoJMC students through Today@CoJMC or a similar mechanism at least 3 weeks before the decisions are made about admits

e. Evaluation

- i. All applications received on or before the publicized deadline must be evaluated
- ii. All evaluations should be based upon the application materials received
- iii. No fewer than three full-time or part-time CoJMC faculty should evaluate the applications. The instructor of record should solicit faculty included in the evaluation process for the course.
- iv. Undergraduate students may not participate in the review of applications from other undergraduate students.
- v. Graduate students may participate in the review of undergraduate students' applications as long as they are not enrolled in the same course during the same semester. Graduate students may not participate in the review of other graduate students.

f. Communications

- i. All applicants should be notified about the outcome of the evaluation

- ii. Students selected for participation should register for the course as soon as possible
 - iii. Courses will not be held on the books if they fail to meet the minimum registration by the stated deadlines, even if additional students have been accepted.
- g. Limitations
 - i. The completion of prior courses as an entrance requirement should be added as a prerequisite through the established CoJMC curriculum process and not included as part of the application process

Adoption

The academic program policies were approved by the faculty on March 11, 2022, except for the faculty class attendance policy, which was approved April 12, 2024 and the course applications policy which was approved on October 5, 2018.