**Project Syllabus Guide and Template**

**Why Use a Project Syllabus?**

It is important to set expectations for students early in the project process. While Bass Connections is not a standard class, we suggest creating a project “syllabus” to lay out the general parameters of the team’s work. **At a minimum, if students are receiving academic credit, you must establish in writing how students will be graded** (see our [guidance on grading](https://bassconnections.duke.edu/sites/bassconnections.duke.edu/files/site-images/Grading%20guidance%20for%20project%20teams_2019.pdf)). If your project will include field work/travel (whether optional or mandatory), you should also share this information with students in writing.

Previous students in Bass Connections have noted that they struggled with the high degree of ambiguity at the outset of their project experience. While this ambiguity can provide a meaningful learning opportunity for students, a syllabus, and/or some other tool such as a [project charter](https://bassconnections.duke.edu/sites/bassconnections.duke.edu/files/ProjectTeamCharterTemplate.docx), can provide enough structure to help team members feel comfortable engaging in the work at hand.

Below, you will find a checklist of important components of a syllabus, followed by a template that you are welcome to adapt to your needs. You are welcome to use an alternative form if you prefer.

You may note that there is some overlap between the items covered here and the [project charter template](https://bassconnections.duke.edu/sites/bassconnections.duke.edu/files/ProjectTeamCharterTemplate.docx). The syllabus is meant to help you consider and set general expectations *before* your team begins its work, while the team charter is meant to help your team *work together* to refine the project’s goals and scope. You may choose to use one, both, or neither of these documents, and to adapt them to your preferences. However, we do strongly urge you develop documents that detail your expectations for your team members, and in turn, what your team members can expect regarding the academic administration of the course(s) associated with your team. Please do address the elements of a project syllabus (from the checklist below) and project charter that are most relevant to the work of your team.

For further guidance, see this [example syllabus](https://bassconnections.duke.edu/sites/bassconnections.duke.edu/files/BassConnectionsSyllabusExample__MentalHealthandtheJusticeSystem.docx) from a Bass Connections project team.

**Syllabus Checklist**

* Project Title
* Project Description
* Goals of Bass Connections
* Project Goal(s)
* Learning Objectives
* Preparation and Training
  + Preparatory/background materials or other background primers
  + Readings, software, resources
  + Required trainings
* Project Team Schedule
  + Regular meeting schedule and meeting process
  + Key project milestones and anticipated deliverables
  + Special team activities or meetings, particularly those requiring travel
* Academic Credit and Grading
  + Explanation of crediting mechanisms
  + Explanation of time expectations (weekly meeting time, independent and/or group work time outside of weekly meeting, other)
  + Deliverables (specify what they are and when they are due)
  + Explanation of how deliverables will be graded (provide a rubric)
  + Policy on late/missing deliverables
  + Policy on academic dishonesty
  + Detail how letter grades will be determined at end of semester
* Team Roster and Contact Information
  + The contact information and roles of team leaders, members, team mentors, and external partners
  + Team meeting location
  + Team meeting process (agenda, materials, preparation, decisions)
  + Team meeting roles (scribe, timekeeper, facilitator, etc.)
  + Required materials (if applicable)
* Team Communication and Culture
  + Expectations for team engagement
  + How will announcements be made?
  + How will files be organized and shared?
  + Where will the primary calendar for the team reside?
  + Will there be a team website? If so, where?
* Roles and Responsibilities
* Tentative Schedule/Scope of Semester Activities

**Syllabus Template**

Note for team leaders: *Text in italics is included for explanation and clarification and should be removed or replaced in the final version of your syllabus*.

# **Project Title**

# **Project Description**

*This should be a brief description of your project, including a sentence or two to help frame the issue(s) you are tackling and a few sentences laying out the project’s overarching goals and methods. Consider pulling from the text in your project proposal or online project description.*

**Meeting Times and Location***Teams should meet at least weekly. Students should be expected to attend all meetings. If you expect students to meet in subteams as well, please state those expectations here.*

**About Bass Connections Project Teams**

Project teams are expected to be more than a collection of individuals working in parallel. Instead, they should foster dynamic collaboration in which all members are exposed to the diverse aspects of each project and work together toward shared goals.

Bass Connections projects should provide students and faculty the opportunity to struggle collectively with a complex problem and produce meaningful deliverables – as defined by each individual team.

Students should not expect the project team to operate like a standard class. You will instead be asked to grapple with ambiguity and to help shape the trajectory of the project. That said, while this experience will differ from a standard class, **students receiving academic credit are expected to dedicate the same amount of time to their Bass Connections team as any other course (12 hours per week).**

**Project Goals**

*Projects should have both* ***high-level*** *and* ***tangible*** *goals and milestones to mark progress and motivate students.**Faculty leaders should consider engaging students in a discussion about these, which can be done using the* [*project charter template*](https://bassconnections.duke.edu/sites/bassconnections.duke.edu/files/ProjectTeamCharterTemplate.docx) *if desired. Project goals may also encompass an “If time permits” section, with tentative outcomes to complement project completion, such as published work or additional project applications. Consider using bullets for this section since your goals may already be listed in paragraph form in the Project Description section above.*

* *What are your aspirations for the project and anticipated outcomes?*
* *What impact do you want to achieve with your project?*

**Learning Objectives**

*This section should include what you expect students to learn from their team experience during the academic term. It will also be helpful to work with students to create individual learning and development goals so that they can make the most of their experience and you can plan complementary learning opportunities or provide additional resources as needed.*

* *What will students be able to do or know as a result of this experience?*
* *What perspectives and insights do you hope students will gain from this unique experience?*
* *Are there particular skills students may develop as a result of working on this project team?*

**Preparation and Training**

**Preparatory/Background Materials**

*If you are planning to share a syllabus with your students prior to your first scheduled meeting, please establish any expectations for preparation prior to the start of the project. For example, list any readings, trainings or data sets that students should review before the first team meeting. This can also be an opportunity to list reference materials, books, websites, and other forms of media that would be useful resources throughout the project.*

*You may also want to consider pointing students to some background videos on basic research methods. We have created* [*several videos*](https://warpwire.duke.edu/w/4QcGAA/) *that cover common research methods and may be useful to your team.*

**Required Materials**

*List any texts, software, or specific equipment that the student will need to obtain.*

**Project Team Schedule**

*Since most projects occur over nine to twelve months and are fluid in nature, it may be difficult for you to set a schedule for the entire project, but you can use this section to set general expectations for team meetings, the content of those meetings to the extent that its known, other team events (such as trips or meetings with external partners), and team-building opportunities.* ***Please note if/how you plan to update this schedule as you go and how adjustments will be communicated.***

**Typical Meeting Process**

*How will you structure a typical meeting? Will you have different meeting formats to meet different objectives? Will there be an agenda, other materials, required preparation, a process for decision making? If so, please describe your expectations for these components.*

**Fall Semester**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Date | Day | Activity |
| 8/ | Monday | First Day of Classes |
| 8/ |  | Team Meeting 1 |
| 8/ |  | …. |
| 9/ |  | …. |
| 9/ | Friday | Drop/Add Ends |
| 9/ |  | …. |
| 9/ |  | …. |
| 9/ |  | …. |
| 10/ |  | …. |
| 10/ | Friday | Fall Break Begins at 7:30 p.m. |
| 10/ | Wednesday | Fall Break Ends; Classes Resume |
| 10/ |  | …. |
| 10/ |  | …. |
| 10/ |  | …. |
| 10/ |  | …. |
| 11/ |  | …. |
| 11/ |  | …. |
| 11/ |  | …. |
| 11/ |  | …. |
| 11/ | Wednesday | Thanksgiving Recess |
| 11/ | Monday | Thanksgiving Recess Ends; Classes Resume |
| 12/ |  | Last Day of Classes |
| 12/ |  | Finals Begin |
| 12/ |  | Finals End |

**Academic Crediting and Grading**

*You should confirm the credit options available and your expectations for work, time in meetings, and deliverables. Please note that students who are participating for credit are expected to dedicate the same amount of time to their Bass Connections project as any other course (~12 hours per week).*

*It may be possible for students to participate through other crediting mechanisms including departmental independent studies or the fulfillment of curricular capstone requirements. To explore these options, students should consult with you as well as their advisor and/or director of undergraduate/graduate studies.*

**Grading**

# *Grading a team project can be difficult for faculty and frustrating for students, particularly in the first semester when a team typically has fewer final outputs. We have developed* [*grading guidance and resources*](https://bassconnections.duke.edu/sites/bassconnections.duke.edu/files/site-images/Grading%20guidance%20for%20project%20teams_2019.pdf) *that we encourage teams to use.*

# *At a minimum, it is important to explain up front how students will be graded. Please note that students who are receiving credit for their participation on your team will need a grade at the end of each semester. Questions to ask yourself about grading include: How will you give feedback and measure team members’ contributions to the project? How will you separate out individual effort from the team’s effort? What if the project does not achieve the intended goals?*

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*You might consider incorporating the following components in your grading rubric (we have also provided a sample rubric below):*

* *Team meeting attendance*
* *Participation in meetings*
* *Peer feedback and ratings*
* *Individual work and group work*
* *Individual reflection/progress logs*
* *Final presentation/poster and/or written report*

*Consider how each of these components will be graded and provide as much detail as possible in the form of a rubric, so that students will know what is required for a given letter grade. We strongly encourage you to make these expectations and details clear from the beginning. Greater clarity will lead to greater student buy-in, productivity, and satisfaction with structure of the project.*

**Sample Grading Rubric**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Category** | **Description** | **Percentage of Grade** |
| Attendance | Did student attend all meetings or receive an approved excused absence? | 10% (lose 1 percentage point for each unexcused absence) |
| Participation | Did student actively and consistently participate in meetings, providing comments, asking questions, and contributing to team progress? | 10% |
| Teamwork-related Behaviors | Did student contribute productively to the team environment?  Did they participate actively and in a timely manner?  Were they responsive to suggestions for improvement/revision?  Did they make other students feel welcome and included? | 20% |
| Individual Work Deliverables | Were deliverables of sufficiently high quality, based on expectations in the field and the student’s level?  Were tasks completed in a timely manner? | 25% |
| Group Work Deliverables | Was the student’s team successful in meeting objectives?  Did the team, as a whole, produce quality deliverables? | 25% |
| Reflection | Student will write two 500-word reflections on their progress over the semester –one at the midpoint and one at the end – each worth 5%. See some [recommendations on how to assess reflection](https://bassconnections.duke.edu/sites/bassconnections.duke.edu/files/site-images/Reflection%20guidance%20for%20team%20leaders_2019.pdf). | 10% |

**Late/Missing Assignments**

*Please include your policy on late or missing deliverables/assignments.*

**Academic Dishonesty**

Adherence to the Duke Community Standard is expected. To uphold the Duke Community Standard:

I will not lie, cheat, or steal in my academic endeavors;

I will conduct myself honorably in all my endeavors; and

I will act if the Standard is compromised.

Please visit the [Duke Community Standard](https://studentaffairs.duke.edu/node/1975) website for information about the Standard and your obligation to act with respect to it.

[Academic dishonesty](https://studentaffairs.duke.edu/conduct/z-policies/academic-dishonesty), including lying, cheating (including plagiarism), or stealing, is a violation of university [policy](https://studentaffairs.duke.edu/conduct/z-policies). Please visit Duke University Libraries for more information about properly [citing sources](http://library.duke.edu/research/citing/) and [avoiding plagiarism](http://library.duke.edu/research/plagiarism).

**Accommodations**

Students with disabilities who believe they may need accommodations in this class are encouraged to contact the [Student Disability Access Office](http://access.duke.edu/students/index.php) at (919) 668-1267 or <https://access.duke.edu/students> as soon as possible to ensure that such accommodations can be implemented in a timely fashion.

If you need special accommodations due to physical or learning disabilities, medical needs, religious practices, or other reasons, please inform us as soon as possible so we can work to accommodate those needs.

**Team Roster and Contact Information**

**Team Leaders**

These faculty/staff will attend all team meetings and be available for students regularly.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Name* | *Email* | *Affiliation* |
| Point of Contact\*\* | Leader1@duke.edu | School and Dept OR Institute |
| Leader2 | Leader2@duke.edu | School and Dept OR Institute |
| Leader3 | Leader3@duke.edu | School and Dept OR Institute |

\*\*denotes team point-of-contact

**Team Members**

These students will attend all team meetings.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Name* | *Email* | *Affiliation* |
| Member1 | Member1@duke.edu | School and Dept OR Institute |
| Member2 | Member2@duke.edu | School and Dept OR Institute |
| Member3 | Member3@duke.edu | School and Dept OR Institute |
| Member4 | Member4@duke.edu | School and Dept OR Institute |

**Team Advisors**

These individuals will occasionally attend team meetings and be available to support the team as needed.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Name* | *Email* | *Affiliation* |
| Mentor1 | Mentor1@duke.edu | School and Dept OR Institute |
| Mentor2 | Mentor2@duke.edu | School and Dept OR Institute |

**External Partners**

*Please describe the role of external partners in your project if they exist.*

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Name* | *Email* | *Affiliation* |
| Partner1 | Partner1@... | Organization |
| Partner2 | Partner2@... | Organization |

# **Team Member Roles and Responsibilities**

*Clear roles and responsibilities are important to helping the team work effectively together and to enable all students to contribute. You may wish to outline initial roles to give team members a sense of how they might contribute to the project and allow them to consider these opportunities in advance. You might also consider using this section to share subteam rosters and responsibilities, if applicable. You can use the* [*Project Charter Template*](https://bassconnections.duke.edu/sites/bassconnections.duke.edu/files/ProjectTeamCharterTemplate.docx) *to set more specific roles with your team.*

*You may also wish to assign specific roles related to meeting maintenance such as taking notes, facilitating the meeting, keeping time, etc.*

# **Team Communication and Culture**

*Long-term team projects require active project management in order to keep the team on track. How will your team keep track and manage progress to achieve the goals of the project? Will one person be responsible for project management, or will you rotate this role? Are there specific tools that you plan to use?*

* *How will announcements be made? (e.g., Microsoft Teams, team email listserv)*
* *How will files be organized and shared? (e.g., Google drive, Duke Box, a shared listserv)*
* *Where will the master calendar for the team reside? (e.g., Outlook, Teams, Google)*
* *Will there be a team website, and if so, where? (e.g., Sakai, Duke WordPress, custom website)*

*We have compiled a list of collaboration tools and technology resources that might be helpful to team leaders* [*here*](https://bassconnections.duke.edu/sites/bassconnections.duke.edu/files/file-attachments/Research%20and%20Technology%20Support%20Resources_0.pdf)*.*

**Learning Environment and Expectations**

*We encourage teams to work collegially and collaboratively to set norms for the group, but you might use this space to set the tone for how you expect the team to operate and your basic expectations for engagement and teamwork. You might also outline what students should expect from you, the team leaders, in terms of engagement, guidance, and responsiveness. This is a good space to reiterate that this is not a standard class and that you expect students to help shape the trajectory of the project, take initiative, and voice any concerns or challenges.*