

# Covering the Syllabus

This does not need to be the most tedious task for the instructor nor the most dreaded activity for students on the first day of class. Consider presenting your syllabus as part of an interactive or group activity rather than a monologic chore. Engaging and involving your students is the key.

## Getting to Know the Professor and Course Requirements

This can be done with both small and large classes and takes about 10-15 minutes.

1. Pass the syllabus out as they come into the room and ask them to begin reading it.
2. Divide them into groups of four or five, have them read over the syllabus, list their questions, and choose a spokesperson to ask the questions.
3. Tell them they can ask anything they want about the course or about you. Typically, most questions are about grading, testing, requirements, etc. However, expect other interesting questions as well.

## Getting Students to Read a Long Syllabus

If your syllabus is too long to be read in class, assign it as homework. During the next class period, answer student questions about the syllabus and then have your students sign a contract stating that they have thoroughly read the syllabus and understand the requirements, grading procedures, and policies stated in the syllabus.

Another option for a long syllabus is to assign it as homework and give a quiz on it the next class period. Have the questions go beyond rote recall. For instance, ask how the course objectives and assignments relate to their personal interests, goals, and learning styles.

## Textbook Reconnaissance

This is an activity from Dr. Judy Hale (COE, USA) that may work well in some of your classes.

During the first day of class, ask your students (either individually or in small groups) to take 10 minutes to scan through the text and find x number of topics that caught the students interest. Each student (or group) then shares what interested them in the book. It helps to break the ice and gets the students to open the book and see what kind of things they'll be seeing during the semester.