

Developing Course Goals and Objectives¹

Purposes of Course Goals

Understanding the basic purpose and function of course goals in a class and on a syllabus makes it easier to understand what they should and should not contain and how best to use them.

Course goals are helpful for three primary purposes:

- (1) Clarifies the purpose of the course
- (2) Clarifies expectation for students
- (3) Assists you in selecting topics, readings, and assignments.

Conceptualizing Goals and Objectives

Below are some useful criteria to think about and consider before you write your course goals. All goals should be written from a student-centered perspective. Additionally, your course goals do not have to be a laundry list of items, there is no magic number of how many you need but your list of goals should give a complete picture of what the course is all about and what you expect as an instructor.

- (a) Ask yourself, by the end of the course, what do I want students to *know* and/or be able to *do*?
- (b) Prioritize: start big and then work toward more specifics.
- (c) Be realistic about what can be accomplished in a semester/quarter.
- (d) Be specific/concrete to make goals useful to you/students.

Writing Goals and Objectives

Once you have had a chance to think about your course goals, try writing them out. Provided here is a template for how to structure your goal statements on your syllabus.

Template: **(1) Do something** with **(2) content** by **(3) using a method**.

- (1) [insert verb]
- (2) [insert the knowledge or skill students are expected to learn and understand]
- (3) [insert how the knowledge or skill will be applied and/or assessed]

Examples:

Assess how various social forces and hierarchies structure and shape the lives of Chican@s in the United States by developing a solution to a Chican@ social problem in your critical essay.

Explain how racism is intimately connected with other systems of oppression (i.e. heterosexism, patriarchy, classism, nativism) by critically engaging Chicana/Latina feminist and queer authors through your writing in a reflexive essay.

¹The information in this document was provided by Dr. Joanna Gilmore, Instructional Consultant, Center for Teaching and Learning, UT-Austin.