

The Center for Teaching, Learning and Outreach (CTLO) would like to offer you the following course syllabus template, designed specifically for Caltech faculty and instructors. Please feel free to edit, add, and sequence sections as you see fit for your particular course.

In addition, we would be happy to give you feedback on your course syllabus or plans for your course. You can find additional resources on course design and course syllabi at <https://ctlo.caltech.edu/universityteaching/resources/courses>.

Updates for Academic Year 2023-2024:

* The Library’s iPad loaner program has been discontinued
* New policies requiring divisional approval for ANY regular use of remote teaching required. See <https://teach.caltech.edu/de-faculty-guidance>

Please reach out to us about any of your course design, syllabus and teaching-related needs at [ctlo@caltech.edu](mailto:ctlo@caltech.edu).

(Last updated July 2023)

# Course Code: Course Title

## *Course Syllabus – Quarter / Year*

## Department, California Institute of Technology

### Course Instructor

Name + Pronouns

Contact Information (office, Zoom room, phone number, email address)

Office Hours (It can be very helpful to include information about what office hours are and how to schedule one-on-one meetings)

### Teaching Assistant(s)

Name + Pronouns

Contact Information (office, Zoom room, phone number, email address)

Office Hours

### Course Description

Insert course description here as seen in the Caltech Catalog. You may also want to explicitly state the prerequisites.

### Course Welcome

You may choose to use this space to welcome students to your course, set a positive tone for the class, describe why the course is important and interesting beyond the formal course description, and introduce your teaching methods, use of active learning, commitments, and actions toward creating an inclusive and equitable learning environment, and other expectations that you might have. This is also a good place to encourage any and all students to attend office hours – not just if they are struggling.

### Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

* Learning outcome 1
* Learning outcome 2
* Learning outcome 3
* Learning outcome 4
* Learning outcome 5

Learning outcomes are key to helping students identify what they are expected to achieve in the course. They should be specific, measurable, and observable behaviors that are taught in the course. For more information visit [CTLO’s Course and Syllabus Design](https://ctlo.caltech.edu/universityteaching/resources/courses/course-and-syllabus-design) page.

### Required Text

Required textbooks and where they can be purchased / found / whether they are on reserve at the Caltech library. Also note if older editions are suitable. In a project-based class where students may be required to purchase materials, include information about where financial assistance can be found.

### Course Website or Learning Management System

List the online course resources (Canvas and/or other websites or tools) that your course will use. Give information about how students can access these resources; for those that are integrated into Canvas, there is typically no need for additional instructions. Note that Caltech requests that all courses have, at a minimum, a Canvas page published with the syllabus and a link where students can find course content – even if Canvas will not be used for the course.

### Assessment Rubric

Give a percentage breakdown of how you will be assessing your students here (e.g., problems sets 5 \* 5%, final exam 30%, etc.). As much detail as possible will be appreciated by your students! Consider dropping the lowest homework, problem set, attendance or participation grade(s) if many are given throughout the quarter – this can be especially useful for handling student absences.

### Attendance and Participation

Do attendance and/or participation count towards a student’s final grade? What are your expectations in terms of students attending and/or participating in lecture? An explanation of why you have this policy can be helpful for students. It is helpful to clearly articulate your policies related to absences related to family emergencies, religious holidays, conferences, job interviews, and other common events.

### Wellness Policy

Some faculty and instructors have chosen to share their wellness policies with their students, which students have very much appreciated. Here, you may want to share that you value and appreciate your students needing to prioritize their health and well-being and how your course has been structured to support that (e.g., this may also include your assessments and policy for dropping the lowest problem set / participation grade). NOTE: The Student Wellness Center and the Dean’s Office DO NOT provide notes to students for illness.

Examples of how faculty have conveyed this message include the following:

* I want to clearly state that taking care of your health and well-being should be your number one priority. You cannot learn if you are unwell or under extreme duress.
* The course work should feel challenging in a positive way, but I do not want you to be overwhelmed by your work for this course.
* If you find yourself overwhelmed or encountering other personal challenges during the term, please reach out to me so we can develop a plan for you to pursue success in this course in a healthy way. In addition, I encourage you to utilize Caltech’s resources.
* I am available to chat, and you can always attend office hours for a non-academic conversation if necessary. You can also visit the counseling center or talk to a dean if you find you need help beyond the course staff.
* Diversity, inclusion, and belonging are all core values of this course. All participants in this course must be treated with respect by others in accordance with the honor code. If you feel unwelcome or unsafe in any way, no matter how minor, I encourage you to talk to me or one of the Deans.

\*Special thanks to Susanne Hall, Adam Blank and Claire Ralph for sharing their policies, which have been adapted for this template.

You may also want to share when and how students can reach out beyond the instructors to resources such as the Deans and Student Wellness Services along with COVID-19 (and other illness) procedures. For example:

While COVID-19 remains a concern, all members of the Caltech community, including students and others, are required to [promptly report](https://access.caltech.edu/auth/login?service=https://access.caltech.edu/covid19_reporting/) to the Institute if they have become ill with [COVID-like symptoms](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html) or have been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19. Furthermore, any individual, regardless of vaccination status, who is ill or has been exposed to COVID-19 should stay home or return home if they have already reported on-site (including not attending class or other meetings in person), and report their status through the [Caltech COVID-19 Reporting Application](https://access.caltech.edu/auth/login?service=https://access.caltech.edu/covid19_reporting/). Individuals who have reported their status through the COVID-19 Reporting Application will receive personal follow up and guidance from Student Wellness Services on next steps. For additional information on the Institute’s COVID-19 preventative health measures and requirements, visit the [Caltech Together](http://together.caltech.edu/) website.

If you would like to ask about flexibility with coursework for a temporary or minor wellness issue, please contact [insert course personnel: e.g., instructor, TA, head TA] directly. The Deans’ Office, Student Wellness Services (SWS) and Caltech Accessibility Services for Students (CASS) are available to help you with illness and health conditions that may impact your coursework:

* [Student Wellness Services](http://wellness.caltech.edu/) will assess and treat illnesses and medical conditions and communicate (with student’s permission) with the Deans’ Office if needed. CASS, part of SWS, can recommend and provide for accommodations needed due to temporary or long-term disabilities. Policies about academic extensions for medical reasons can be found [here](https://www.deans.caltech.edu/AcademicSupport).
* [The Deans’ Office](https://deans.caltech.edu/AcademicSupport) may recommend academic exceptions in cases of significant family or personal emergencies, or moderate to severe illness or medical conditions that make it difficult to keep up with coursework. Please reach out to a dean as soon as possible if you experience these conditions.

### Students with Documented Disabilities

You may choose to make a statement here about your intent for the course to be accessible to all students and/or your hope to hear from students as early in the term as possible. At a minimum, please include the following text:

Students who may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability must initiate the request with Caltech Accessibility Services for Students (CASS).  Professional staff will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend reasonable accommodations, and prepare an Accommodation Letter for faculty dated in the current quarter in which the request is being made. Students should contact CASS as soon as possible, since timely notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. For more information: <https://cass.caltech.edu/>, [cass@caltech.edu](mailto:cass@caltech.edu). If you are having difficulties with access or other challenges in the class you think might be related to a disability, but do not yet have a diagnosis, please feel free to reach out to CASS to learn more about resources.

### Academic Integrity

In addition to stating the honor code here, you might choose to articulate what the honor code means for you or your class in particular. Please find a guide for preventing and responding to plagiarism for faculty here: <https://writing.caltech.edu/faculty/plagiarism>

Caltech’s Honor Code: “No member of the Caltech community shall take unfair advantage of any other member of the Caltech community.”

Understanding and Avoiding Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit, and it violates the honor code in a fundamental way. You can find more information at: <https://writing.caltech.edu/resources/plagiarism>.

All instances of plagiarism or other academic misconduct will be referred to the [Board of Control](https://deans.caltech.edu/HonorCode) for undergraduates. For graduate students, contact the [Graduate Office](https://www.gradoffice.caltech.edu/current/community-standards).

The CTLO recommends frequent conversations with students about the Honor Code and its application in your course. All exam rules should be clearly and explicitly stated on the exam and discussed with students in class.

### Collaboration Policy

Students will appreciate you being as explicit as possible here, especially in terms of the level of collaboration intended (e.g., allowing discussion of line-by-line solutions, whether students can check their answer when they’ve completed their solution, or discussion of p-sets in class). Be sure to discuss all aspects of the course (problem sets, in-class assignments, final exams) and online aspects were applicable (e.g., screensharing). Students particularly appreciate the use of checklists or tables in being able to quickly view collaboration policies. Please also explicitly state your policies on the use of AI tools (ChatGPT, CoPilot, etc.) on assignments and in the course generally.

Example Collaboration Policies:

* Written Guidance
* Full discussion of the problem and solutions is allowed. This includes talking about the concepts relevant to the problem, as well as the details of the solution; or
* Discussion of the problem and how to solve it is allowed. However, intermediate work and the final solution should not be shared; or
* Discussion of the conceptual issues of the problem is allowed, but discussion of the solution is not.
* Checklist-Style Guidance

The following types of collaboration are allowed:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | PS | Quiz | Test |
| Basic discussion of the problems | Yes | Yes | No |
| Look at communal materials while writing up solutions | Yes | Yes | No |
| Look at other’s noncommunal work (i.e., writeups) | No | No | No |
| Turn in a set with more than one name on it | No | No | No |

Comments:

Here are some example collaboration policies for Caltech courses. Special thanks to Ryan Patterson and Doug MacMartin for sharing the following examples:

#### Example 1

The HW you hand in must be your own and not copied from others or from the blackboard in Recitation. You are encouraged to work on the problems with others and to seek additional help if you find that useful, but the write-up must be your own. Also, you may not consult any prepared solutions for the problems, whether they are this years or from previous years, or from Caltech or external sources. As a guideline for the collaboration policy, you should be able to reproduce any solution you hand in without help from anyone else. It is possible to achieve high scores on the HW but still fail the quizzes and the final exam. This indicates poor adherence to the collaboration policy: the object of the HW problems and the collaboration policy is to help you learn the material.

#### Example 2

Collaboration on homework assignments is encouraged. You may consult outside reference materials, other students, the TA, or the instructor, but you cannot consult homework solutions from prior years, and you must cite any use of material from outside references. All solutions that are handed in should be written up individually and should reflect your own understanding of the subject matter at the time of writing. Python or MATLAB scripts and plots are considered part of your write-up and should be done individually (you can share ideas, but not code).  No collaboration is allowed on the midterm or final exams.

For a complete example checklist, see: <https://ctlo.caltech.edu/documents/18980/checklistcollaborationpolicy.pdf>

and further Caltech-specific collaboration policy resources are here: <https://ctlo.caltech.edu/universityteaching/resources/courses>.

### Course Ombuds

If you participate in the [Course Ombuds](https://ctlo.caltech.edu/universityteaching/programs/training/courseombuds) program, it’s a good idea to explain it in the syllabus and indicate where students can find out who the ombuds are. Email the [Academics and Research Committee](https://sites.google.com/site/arccaltech/about-us?authuser=0) (ARC) for more information about this program.

This course will have 3 or more course ombuds who will be listed in the “Course Ombuds” module in Canvas. I invite you to share concerns about the course directly with me, but you can also share them with the course ombuds*.* I will meet with the ombuds during weeks 4, 9, and if they reach out to schedule additional meetings.

### My Status as a “Responsible Employee”

The following text has been provided by the Equity and Title IX Office and is suggested for incorporation into syllabi to articulate your responsibilities as a faculty member:

As a faculty member, I am required to notify the Institute’s Equity and Title IX Office when I become aware of discrimination, sexual harassment, or sex- or gender-based misconduct involving our community members. If one of my students shares such an experience with me, I can help connect them to support resources but will not be able to keep that information confidential as part of fulfilling my responsibility to make sure my students are offered the opportunity to access information and support by the Institute. For more information, you can email [equity@caltech.edu](mailto:equity@caltech.edu), go to [equity.caltech.edu](http://equity.caltech.edu/), or review the Institute’s [Sex- and Gender-Based Misconduct Policy](https://hr.caltech.edu/documents/2925/caltech_institute_policy-sex_and_gender_based_misconduct.pdf).

If you have experienced such prohibited conduct and want to report it or speak to a confidential resource, consult the [Equity and Title IX Office's webpage on reporting](https://titleix.caltech.edu/reporting/reporting-options) for guidance.

### Course Schedule

Course schedules including lecture topics, associated readings and homework (if appropriate to include in this table for your course) can be clearly laid out in a table format. Include key dates for exams, project milestones, etc.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Week | Date | Lecture Topic | Associated Readings | Homework Due |
| 1 |  |  |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |  |

### Academic Resources for Students

* **Tutoring:** The undergraduate dean’s office provides a free peer tutoring service; If the course isn’t listed, students can talk with the dean’s office to arrange for a tutor; <https://deans.caltech.edu/>
* **Writing:** The Hixon Writing Center provides professional writing tutors as well as peer tutors, individual and group writing space, and additional resources; <https://writing.caltech.edu>
* **Registrar & FERPA:** The registrar can answer questions about degree progress, privacy of student records, and course enrollment procedures; <https://registrar.caltech.edu>. The website also lists *Option Representatives* for option-specific advising, policies, and information.
* **Library:** Borrow books, retrieve journal articles, receive guidance about research; <https://library.caltech.edu/>
* **Dean of Undergraduate Students**: Wide-ranging assistance addressing issues (academic and other) for undergraduates; <https://deans.caltech.edu>
* **Dean of Graduate Studies**: Wide-ranging assistance addressing issues (academic and other) for graduate students; <https://gradoffice.caltech.edu>

### **Additional Resources for Students**

* **Student Wellness Center:**Wide variety of health and wellbeing services; <https://wellness.caltech.edu/>
* **Counseling Services:** Free for all students, regardless of insurance plan; <https://counseling.caltech.edu>
* **Occupational Therapy:** Individual sessions and consultations on building healthy habits and routines, time management, planning and organization, and more. Free for all students; <https://ot.caltech.edu>
* **Center for Inclusion and Diversity**: Resources concerning navigating diversity and inclusion, including staff who can speak with students about challenges of harassment and discrimination; <https://diversity.caltech.edu/>
* **Title IX**: Caltech’s Title IX Coordinator ([titleix@caltech.edu](mailto:titleix@caltech.edu)) works with students on issues related to sexual harassment, sexual misconduct, and sex discrimination; <https://titleix.caltech.edu/>
* **Caltech Accessibility Services for Students**: The Accessibility Services Specialist works with students with temporary medical conditions, or mental, physical or learning disabilities on accommodation requests and services; <https://cass.caltech.edu>
* **Residential Support**: Resident Associates (RAs) and Residential Life Coordinators (RLCs) are also resources for TAs and students; <https://residentialexperience.caltech.edu/>
* **Career Advising and Experiential Learning:** Provides resources to help students make career decisions and implement career plans; <https://career.caltech.edu/>