The recording of today’s presentation will help you to better understand the Syllabus Section of your ELI course. My name is Katie Aimone and I am the orientation specialist here at ELI. I work with new ELI students to help with the transition to online courses.
Essentially, the syllabus is like a blueprint for your course. It outlines the format that the course will follow and gives you a detailed idea of the pace and expectations for assignments so that you can plan your study schedule accordingly. The syllabus is the single most important instrument of structure for your course. The syllabus will outline the goals and objectives of the course, the grading system, the materials that are required for the course, topics that will be covered, and the schedule for the semester.
In today’s recording, we will cover a general ELI syllabus. We will not go into course specifics, but we will touch on the general ELI syllabus you will see in all ELI courses. We will discuss:

What is in your syllabus?
The importance of regular syllabus reviews.
Using your syllabus as a communication tool with classmates and instructors.
Student Support Services available at ELI
You will receive a Quick Start Syllabus in the postal mail before your course begins. The Quick Start syllabus will give you general information about ELI and include your instructors contact information. You should receive one Quick Start Syllabus for each ELI course you are enrolled in.

Instructors make courses available the day the course is scheduled to begin or sometimes a few days in advance. Once you have access to your course in Blackboard, you will be able to see the syllabus section. You will see the menu on the left side of your screen and you will be able to access your syllabus folder from there. The Quick Start Syllabus will also give you instructions on how to log into Blackboard.
Once you have access to your course in Blackboard you will see your Syllabus folder in the menu on the left hand side. Right now you are seeing the Blackboard Dashboard. On the right side, you will see the “my blackboard courses” area and see the ELI Sample Course listed here. On your page, you will see your courses listed here. Remember, your course will not open until the start date, or possibly a few days in advance.

Now I am going to click on the course name, and enter the course site. To explore the sample course on your own, find the log-in information here: http://eli.nvcc.edu/orientation/index.htm.
This is a generic ELI sample course to show you what you might see in your course. Each course is set up a little differently, so the names of the folders and the order of the sections might vary, but I am going to point out some things you might see in your course and some helpful things to look for.

Once you open the Syllabus Folder you will see several folders inside. I would highly recommend clicking on each folder in the syllabus section so you are familiar with the set up of your course.

Since the set up of the syllabus folder is a little different than a syllabus you might get in an on campus course, you will want to be familiar with the information found inside the folder. Some of the information might be a review from when you signed up or as you were getting started. However, some information might be new to you, like the critical course deadlines and course specific due dates. You might also find, exam dates, grade distribution, and your instructors office hours.

I want to start by pointing out the Overview of Assignments area. Whenever you see an icon like the open folder (seen next to the Overview of Assignments tab) it means there is information inside. When in doubt, try to click on the title and see if more information is inside the folder so you don’t miss anything. For this sample class, there is a chart with the assignments laid out inside. This might be helpful to you and could help you stay on track and not miss any assignments or due dates.
At the top of the page, you will see this breadcrumb trail, so you can see how you got to the folder you are in. Instead of clicking the back button, you can just go back to the syllabus folder from here.

The next section I want to point out is the Grading, Withdrawals, and Incompletes section. In this section you will see the grade distribution for the assignments, discussion boards, and exams. You will also see course specific policies. If your instructor accepts late assignments for partial credit, that might be listed here. Not all instructors accept late work, but you want to be aware of the late policy and that information might be here. All ELI courses require at least two proctored exams or assignments. You are required to pass a majority of your proctored exams and assignments, so the course specific policy will be listed here. This will vary in your courses, so you want to make sure you are familiar with this policy for your course.

The next section I want to point out is the Taking Exams and Using Exam Passes section. If you are in the Northern Virginia area and taking your exam on campus, you will need to print out the exam pass that can be found here. These are course specific, and exam specific, so you want to make sure you have the correct exam pass printed out for your exam. If you are out of the area, you will need to submit a proctor request form and that information will be posted here as well. Proctor U gives you the option to have your exams proctored at home. If this is an option for your course, more information will be listed here.

You will want to go through the plagiarism, netiquette and ELI Policies sections or any other sections your instructor has posted here, so you are familiar with the policies for your course and at ELI. Click on links and make sure you are aware of policies, procedures, due dates and course expectations.

Again, this is just an example of what a blackboard course might look like, so start by clicking through all the folders and looking at course specific policies and the set up of your individual course. And remember, instructors make courses available the first day the course is scheduled to begin or sometimes a few days in advance. If your course has already started, and you don’t have access let us know. If the course has not started yet, check back closer to the start date.
Once you have access to your blackboard course site, check the important dates and course specific due dates. This will help keep you on a weekly schedule. There are many tips and tricks to help you remember, but most importantly learn what works well for you, and stick with it. Read through all the sections so you are familiar with what is there, you can always go back to access the information.

Use a planner, a calendar, a to do list to help you stay on track.

Make note of your instructors contact information and any posted office hours so you can contact them easily.
Review your syllabus regularly

- To keep you from missing important assignments and deadlines.
- For long and short term academic planning.
- Help you stay on task in achieving your desired grade(s) for the semester.
- Stay aware of recurrent themes and concepts.
- To plan when to communicate with your professor.

Reviewing your syllabus regularly helps you stay on track throughout the semester. The overview of assignments section will help as you are planning out your weekly schedule and you can use it as a check list to make sure you get all the assignments are turned in on time. You might be able to work ahead on assignments due later in the semester to help you get ahead or if you know you have events in work or life that might make it harder for you certain weeks. You will just need to make sure you are communicating with your instructor if you do plan to work ahead.

Reviewing your syllabus regularly can help you from missing important assignments and deadlines, and can help with your long and short term academic planning. It will also help you stay on track in achieving your desired grade for your semester.
Your instructor is available to help you succeed in your course. Make sure you are aware of their contact information and any posted office hours in the syllabus. Office hours might mean that is the time they have designated to answer emails, be available through the phone or even have virtual office hours where you are able to log into Blackboard Collaborate and ask any questions about assignments or the course.
The grade distribution section of the syllabus will help you stay on track of the grade you are earning for your course. Use your planner to help you keep on track of assignment points and due dates. Know the late policy for your course, if you fall behind, some assignments could still have point value and be worth turning in. Use study guides that are made available to help you prepare for exams. Use the syllabus as a guide to help you achieve your goal for the course. If you have any questions about academic planning, there are academic counselors available at ELI to help you reach your goals.
ELI has a lot of resources for you throughout the semester. If you aren't sure of a service, let us know! We can help make sure you are taking advantage of the resources available to you as a student. When you think about online courses, you might not necessarily think about student support services, but we are here to help! ELI has free online tutoring, technology support, success coaches, and many more. Your instructors are also great resources for you.
Thank you for attending today’s Reviewing Your Online Syllabus webinar.
If you have any questions contact me, Katie Aimone, ELI Orientation Specialist at kaimone@nvcc.edu or 703.323.3510.

Thank you for joining us for this recording. If you have any questions please contact me at kaimone@nvcc.edu.