

## Preparing the Course Syllabus

Determine the dominant rationale for the course. Why should someone take this course? A rationale often reflects teacher values and biases, approach to the subject matter, worldview, and so on. How important is it that learners understand the rationale? The rationale might include one or more central questions that illustrate the rationale for the course. Obviously, the more questions that have to be answered, the less focused the course.

The rationale and the questions are often reflected in a Purpose statement. However, it is more likely that a course will have an orientation (or combination of orientations) or a "flavor." The orientation or "flavor" affects the design of the course, methods used in teaching, assignments given, and the type of testing used. For example:

Inquiry. Exploring the meaning and significance of the subject matter and/or events; understanding the relationships between ideas and concepts; suggesting implications, draw conclusions. Working with and/or developing criteria and principles to assess situations, examine literature, evaluate personal preferences or positions, and so on.

Appreciation. Developing personal preferences for elements of the subject matter. Examining criteria driving this appreciation.

Problem Solving Learning how to recognize and resolve problems, develop guidelines and a framework for decision-making or interpretation.

Decision Making. Providing/developing information and frameworks on which to base decisions.

Skill. Developing and/or practicing skills in research, ministry, communication, and so on.

Personal Growth. Defining personal goals, evaluating behavior, attitudes, and so on.

Make a list of the general ideas, meaningful questions, overarching behaviors that will comprise the course. Using the rationale, purpose/orientation, and the lists as a tangible base, develop a tentative course outline.