Course Overview and Introduction

Standard		
Standard	Annotation	Example
The instructor starts the course with a welcome and review of the syllabus, course schedule and other important information for the course.	It is helpful to give students an outline of work that they will be doing with a thorough syllabus. A welcome message helps students connect with the instructor of the course as a human being.	Record a video message from the instructor. Require reading of the course syllabus that includes course outline and UF policy.
The role that the online environment and technology will play in the course is clearly stated at the start of the course.	Instructors need to provide the students with clear information regarding how technology will be used in the course. This is especially important for hybrid courses.	Including specifically what is necessary (For ex: programs, or devices like video cameras, etc) at the start of the course gives students time to determine if they have the necessary equipment or will need to purchase or borrow it.
In the course site, students are immediately presented with an obvious starting location and explanation on how to navigate the course.	A clear starting point saves students time and frustration. Information on how to navigate through the course material can reduce the number of questions sent to the instructor.	A "Start Here" link or section provides a clear point of reference. A detailed tour of the course features can show students how to access the materials and outline tasks that much be done each week.
The syllabus, schedule and other important course documents are easily located.	It should be easy for students to locate the syllabus, course calendar and any other documents that students use regularly.	A list of the important documents, clearly named can be placed on the course home page.
The syllabus contains all the relevant elements from the UF syllabus policy.	A complete sylllabus provides clear answers to questions about course policies and procedures. Clear information in the syllabus and accompanying documents can reduce questions sent to the instructor.	Use the suggested online course syllabus template as a guide: http://teach.ufl.edu/resources/syllabus-templates/
All course deadlines are included in the course schedule.	A comprehensive listing of the course deadlines can help students to see the "big picture" as well as making it easy for them to plan weekly work.	Provide a spreadsheet example that includes Due Dates for the entire semester.

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Synchronous and asynchronous requirements for participating in the course are clearly outlined.	Clearly state the expectations for participating in course activities. Determine how students will receive credit for participation and whether or not makeup opportunities are available.	Expectations for participation in activities and Discussion Boards (and their points/grade value) are clearly communicated within the course and in the Due Dates document, particularly for synchronous requirements.
Instructions for course participation are clearly provided and easily found in the course site. The instructions define how students get started and where to find components of the course.	Instructions that outline how to access any tools can help to reduce the numbers of questions sent to the instructor. If the tool is located outside of the course management system, provide a link to the tool along with tutorials explaining its use.	For example, a course that uses VoiceThread might provide a link to an introductory VoiceThread that explains how the tool is going to be used in the class. The introductory VoiceThread could point out the tutorials that are shown on the user's MyVoicepage.
Students are provided with information explaining when feedback will be provided, the type of feedback, and mode of communication they should expect from the instructor.	Students are better able to manage their course participation if they know when faculty will provide grades and feedback for assignments and assessments. Providing this information to students early helps to reduce unrealistic expections.	An instructor who teaches a writing course might let students know that assignments will be evaluated with a grading rubric within 3 days of assignment submission.
Students and instructors are provided with space to introduce themselves to each other.	Encouraging interaction between students (and with instructors) helps to eliminate the feeling of isolation in an online course.	A humanities course asks students to introduce themselves to their discussion group. The assignment asks them to post their major and what they hope to learn from the course.
Consistent terminology is used for tools referenced in the course management system.	It is best to use the default names for tools that are part of the course management system. Consistent naming gives students a frame of reference from course to course and raises their comfort level.	For example, always refer to "Discussion Boards" as just that. Calling them "Discussion Forums" or "Discussion Area" interchangably can be confusing to students.

Course Overview and Introduction Exemplary		
Exemplary	**Annotation**	**Example**
An introductory quiz provides students with an opportunity to check their understanding of the syllabus, course requirements, and required tools and technologies.	Students who complete a syllabus quiz have a better understanding of course policies than students who do not.	The first quiz in a chemistry class checks student knowledge of the course policies outlined in the syllabus. The students can take the quiz up to three times (this reduces e-mails asking for a re-set due to students who accidentally open the quiz when they are not ready to take it.)
Instructor monitors and welcomes students as they start the course.	Instructors actively welcome students and are available to them as the course launches.	In a humanities course, the professor has created a Welcome video in which she reviews course policies that some students find confusing.
Students typically receive responses within 48 hours.	Students feel more in touch with instructors when their questions are answered in a timely manner.	Monitor your email frequently, setup up email templates containing the most commonly asked questions and create a spreadsheet with a listing of the most commonly used links used for the course.
A student survey during the course evaluates students' ease of navigation.	All instructors can benefit from student feedback about their experiences with the course site.	Ask students to complete a survey to get a better undertsanding of their experiences with the course site. Assigning points (even bonus points) to the survey will ensure that they complete it.
Course materials and aesthetic design are visually pleasing and consistent throughout course, and promote clarity and continuity of course structure and information.	A consistent look and feel helps keeps a course site user-friendly and uncomplicated.	Use available resources at UF (Instructional Design Services) to help keep your site looking organized and professional.

Supporting Research
Raymark P. The Syllabus Quiz. Teaching Of Psychology [serial online]. November 2002;29(4):286-288. Available
Examining online teaching, cognitive, and social presence for adult studentsFengfeng Ke, University of New
Looney M. Using an Online Survey Tool to Enhance Teaching. Measurement In Physical Education & Exercise