

Finding Creativity within Structure: Allowing Instructors to Teach Their Classes While Ensuring Instructional Integrity

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Overview

- Structure and Creativity
- Title 5 Regulations
- Compliance and Freedom
- Ensuring Instructional Integrity



Start With Regulations

- Title 5, §55002
 - (a)(4) Conduct of course. All sections of the course are to be taught by a qualified instructor in accordance with a set of objectives and with other specifications defined in the course outline of record.



Why do we need the COR anyway?

- Contract between student, instructor, and institution
- Content, level of rigor and learning objectives for which students across all sections of the course will be held accountable.
- Establishes prerequisites, corequisites, and recommended preparation for the course (§ 55003)
- Primary document for course and program planning
- Basis of articulation
- Basis for C-ID Designation
- Instructional Integrity!!

Academic Freedom

- From AAUP's Statement on Professional Ethics:
 - Professors, guided by a deep conviction of the worth and dignity of the advancement of knowledge, recognize the special responsibilities placed upon them. Their primary responsibility to their subject is to seek and to state the truth as they see it.
 - As teachers, professors encourage the free pursuit of learning in their students. They hold before them the best scholarly and ethical standards of their discipline.
 - ...professors seek above all to be effective teachers and scholars

Accreditation and Academic Freedom

- The [ACCJC Eligibility Requirements](#) state the following about Academic Freedom:

The institution's faculty and students are free to examine and test all knowledge appropriate to their discipline or area of major study as judged by the academic/educational community in general.

Regardless of institutional affiliation or sponsorship, the institution maintains an atmosphere in which intellectual freedom and independence exist.

Local Boards and Academic Freedom

- Most districts have a board policy on academic freedom that establish that faculty are free express their ideas and use materials that support the instruction of students.
- Some sample policies can be found at:
 - [Rancho Santiago CCD](#)
 - [Sierra College](#)
 - [Peralta CCD](#)

That doesn't say anything about a COR?

- “Their primary responsibility to their subject is to seek and to state the truth as they see it.”
- The COR is created by faculty – it is an example of collective academic freedom
- The goal is to create a COR that allows instructors flexibility in how they teach a course while following regulations
- Implementation of COR is part of Academic Freedom.

Making a “Flexible” COR

- There must be collaboration among program faculty when creating or changing the COR.
- Ideal to including part time faculty in these conversations
- AAUP: “Professors do not discriminate against or harass colleagues. They respect and defend the free inquiry of associates, even when it leads to findings and conclusions that differ from their own.”
- Good vs. essential pedagogical practices for discipline
- Cycle of learning outcomes assessment/reflection can inform and strengthen teaching and learning

Putting the “Flex” in the COR

- Wording is key (e.g. “may” vs. “will”)
- What should be required?
- What should be optional?
- Remember that the COR applies to ALL sections
- Ensure Instructional Integrity and Consistency

What About Course Content?

Course content:

- If content is specified on COR, the expectation is that it is included in the course
- Individual instructors may NOT omit any info listed on the COR
- Individual instructors may choose to add info in their section

Specify on COR, e.g.:

Content Topic A

- 1.
- 2.

Content Topic B

- 1.
- 2.

May also include Topic C

- 1.
- 2.

Methods of Instruction

- A great place to grant flexibility (or not!)
- Should be appropriate for, align with, course objectives
- Title 5:
 - requires types/examples to be specified
 - does not mandate a comprehensive list of instructional methods
- Faculty have the academic freedom to choose methods to best suit different teaching and learning styles
- Discipline faculty must collaborate to determine if any particular method is *absolutely* essential

Mol Example 1

Objective	Methods of Instruction
<p>“Diagram and apply decision making strategies and problem solving techniques.”</p>	<p>Each Course Will Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Group problem solving project as presented in a group presentations using principles of panel and symposium formats. <p>Courses May Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Investigation of community problem-solving group• Written analysis of the group process, including group interaction and leadership styles, decision making methods, and problem solving techniques.

Mol Example 2

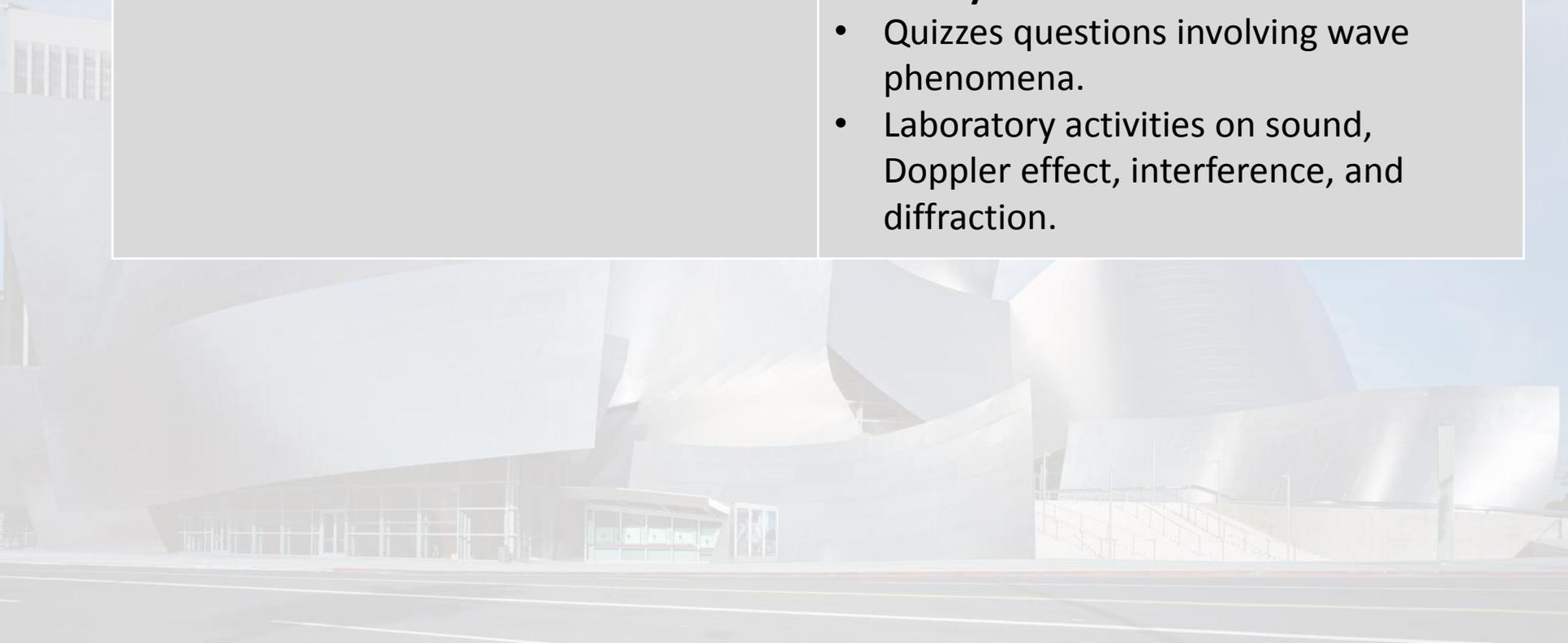
Objective	Methods of Instruction
<p>“Correctly predict the behavior of simple electric circuits and electromagnetic devices.”</p>	<p>Each Course Will Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assembly of electric circuits.• Solving electric circuits using Kirchhoff’s laws. <p>Courses May Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Design projects involving robotics.
<p>“Analyze various electrostatic phenomena using vectors, algebra, calculus, and Gauss' law”</p>	<p>Courses May Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Group problem solving exercises• Demonstrations of Electrostatic Phenomena <p>Each Course Will Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Solving numerical and symbolic problems that require the use of differential and integral calculus.

Methods of Evaluation

- Another place to incorporate pedagogical flexibility (or not!)
- Should be appropriate for, align with, course objectives
- Must require critical thinking
- Title 5 only requires inclusion of types/examples, not a comprehensive list – discipline faculty may choose to be as specific and/or comprehensive as the deem necessary
- Discipline faculty should collaborate to determine if any particular method is ***absolutely*** imperative

MoE Examples

Objective	Methods of Evaluation
<p>“analyze wave motion using various mathematical techniques and appropriate physical principles.”</p>	<p>MoE will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Free response exams that require students to analyze problems involving mechanical and electromagnetic waves. <p>MoE may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Quizzes questions involving wave phenomena.• Laboratory activities on sound, Doppler effect, interference, and diffraction.



MoE Examples

Objective	Methods of Evaluation
<p>“Present cogent, logical and well-reasoned arguments.”</p>	<p>MoE will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Debate performance requiring clarity of proposition, logical organization, use of evidence to support claims, use of argument chains to build a cohesive case, extent of preparation as exhibited in cross examination and rebuttal, use of sound reasoning, ethical use of appeals, and effective verbal and nonverbal delivery. <p>MoE may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Persuasive speeches that utilize effective argumentation, logical organization, evidence to support claims, sound reasoning, ethical use of appeals and effective delivery.

Additional Consideration for MoE

- MoE can affect articulation, transferability
 - If an assignment is actually required for all sections then it should be listed that way on the COR
 - Not listing enough information can lead to requests for syllabi or even loss of articulation
 - Establishing prerequisites and corequisites using content review often involves listing the skills that students must use during the course so should be indicated in MoE section
- MoE may affect C-ID Designation

Assignments and/or Other Activities

- Last, but not least: “Assignments and/or Other Activities”
 - COR must specify types or examples of assignments
 - Must require critical thinking
 - Should be appropriate and clearly connected to course content and objectives
 - Should help substantiate unit value of course (Students are expected to spend a minimum of three hours per unit per week in class and on outside assignments)
- Might influence pre- or corequisite implementation so wording is again key (will vs. may)

Ensuring Compliance

- Who is responsible in ensuring that instructors are following the COR in their classes?
- Is anyone looking at individual syllabi to see if they match the COR?
- What about the instructor that has taught the same class for the last 10 years and doesn't care that the COR has changed?
- Is teaching to the COR part of the evaluation process?
- What about student evaluations or complaints to the chair/dean?

What If an Instructor is NOT Teaching to the COR?

- Assume the best of your colleagues... perhaps they simply don't know about the COR and/or its significance?
 - Department chair or dean should distribute COR to faculty every semester
 - Emphasize importance of COR re: establishing prerequisites
- Dean has right of assignment, can simply not assign course to someone if not adhering
- A strong academic freedom statement emphasized in a senate resolution will help faculty recognize the value
 - include importance of academic freedom
 - follow with emphasis on adhering to COR

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS?



Thank You!!

- Do you have any additional questions for us?
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