Sample Syllabus Statement

Excerpt from my syllabus for History of the English Language: Summer 2017

LATE WORK POLICIES

Policies on late work vary depending upon the assignment:

Weekly Discussion Contributions

Posts made after 11:59pm on Sunday of each week aren't able to truly contribute to the weekly discussion forum, since the conversation has already ended and your classmates will not have the opportunity to respond to your ideas. For this reason, **no late or make-up work will be accepted for weekly discussion board participation.**

Missing or late discussion posts count as an F, and accumulating F's will seriously bring down your grade, so please be attentive to discussion deadlines.

Exams 1, 2, and 3

Late submissions will not be accepted, and making up exams is not possible. The window for taking each exam will close after 11:59pm on the due date. Exams are each released on Monday of the week in which they are due, so you have ample time to fit the exam into your own schedule during that week.

Homework and Weeks 1-6 Discussion Portfolio

Here's the policy for the following assignments:

- Homework (accepted until Wednesday following the due date)
- Weeks 1-6 Discussion Portfolio (accepted for one week after the due date)

Late homework will be accepted for three days with no penalty, until 11:59pm on the Wednesday after the due date. Homework will not be accepted after the Wednesday following the due date. On most Thursdays, I will release an explanation for the prior week's homework assignment; that's why Wednesday is the cut-off for late submissions. Like the weekly discussion participation, homework is an easy portion of your grade to earn points on, provided that you make an effort and keep up with the schedule.

Late submissions of the Weeks 1-6 Discussion Portfolio will be accepted for up to one week after the due date, with no penalty and no excuse needed. No Weeks 1-6 Discussion Portfolio assignments will be accepted more than one week past the due date.

You might be wondering: why would anyone ever submit a homework assignment or Weeks 1-6 Discussion Portfolio on time, then? Here are two compelling reasons:

1. **Workflow management.** Excellent students often plan their schedules so that they are able to complete assignments early rather than at the last minute. In my experience, timeliness is an indication that a student is really on top of the material and the work.
2. **Extra credit.** If you submit *all* of the assignments listed in this section on time (i.e. by 11:59pm on the due date), you'll receive a 4-point boost to your final course

grade, plus your course grade will be rounded if it's within 0.5% of the next grade up. 4 points are enough to bump you up from one grade to the next (e.g. A- to A). These extra credit points can *only* be earned by turning in all assignments on time. Missing any due date for any of these assignments negates the possibility of receiving this extra credit, and no exceptions or extensions will be granted.

Weeks 7-12 Discussion Portfolio

Because the Weeks 7-12 Discussion Portfolio is due on the final day of the semester, no late submissions will be accepted. No assignments of any kind will be accepted after Saturday, August 5.

Summary and Rationale for Late Policies

To sum up:

- No exceptions, late work, or make-up opportunities will be provided for weekly discussion participation or exams
- Late homework will be accepted until Wednesday after the due date
- Late Weeks 1-6 Discussion Portfolio submissions will be accepted for one week after the due date
- Completing every homework assignment plus the Weeks 1-6 Discussion Portfolio *on time* will earn a substantial bonus to your final course grade
- Weeks 7-12 Discussion Portfolio must be submitted on-time because it's due on the last day of the semester

Why have I established these particular late policies? In short, these policies provide a balance between keeping up with the weekly schedule and the fact that "life happens" and sometimes a little flexibility is needed. For things like exams and discussion, on-time performance is crucial, because the course material moves forward quickly. However, where possible (in the homework and the first discussion portfolio) I want to provide some wiggle room so that you're able to cope with emergent events in your lives beyond this class.

I also believe it's important for late policies to be fair to *all* students. In a typical class with a typical late penalty (e.g. "1-letter penalty per day" or something like that), the system rewards students who are bold enough to ask for special consideration such as exceptions or extensions, while those who don't speak up are implicitly "punished" because they simply accept the default late penalty. The system we're using in this class is fair to everyone, because there is no need and no opportunity to request extensions or exceptions.