

# Can a Single COR Work for Every Instructor?

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# Description

The course outline is the basis for establishing articulation/transfer agreements, C-ID approval, creating degrees and certificates, and establishing and reviewing prerequisites. However, no two instructors will ever teach the same course exactly the same way – thank goodness! How can local curriculum committees assist faculty in creating course outlines that allow for flexibility and academic freedom while ensuring the integrity of the instruction across course sections? Please join us for this discussion about creating a balance between academic freedom and required elements for all course outlines of record.



What brings you to this breakout?

What do you hope to learn?

# Things to Consider

- Required and Recommended Components of a COR
- Academic Freedom vs Regulatory Compliance
- Course Outline of Record vs Course Syllabus
- Flexibility in Instructional Methods, Methods of Evaluation, and Assignments
- What do you do when faculty ignore the COR?
- What local practices are proving to be effective for you?



# Required COR Components: Where To Look



- CCR, Title 5 (esp. Section 55002)
- CCCCO Program and Course Approval Handbook (PCAH) 6th Edition
- ACCJC accreditation standards
- C-ID and transfer institutions
- ASCCC 2017 paper: *The Course Outline of Record: A Curriculum Reference Guide Revisited*

# Required Components: Title 5 §55002 Credit

- Unit value (credit courses)
- Total contact hours for course (more on this later...)
- Conditions of enrollment: prerequisites, advisories, other conditions
- Catalog description
- Objectives
- Content (typically in outline form)
- Reading and Writing Assignments
- Other outside-of-class assignments
- Methods of instruction
- Methods of evaluation/grading policy



# Recommend Components

- DE Modality as a method of instruction
- Effective Term
- Teaching disciplines/Minimum qualifications
- Cross-Listed courses (can be in course description)
- Course repeatability or courses related in content
- Required texts and other instructional materials (lab manuals, software, etc.)
- GE and Transferability/C-ID
- Others?



# COR and Regulatory Compliance: Title 5 & ACCJC

§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.

I.C.7 In order to assure institutional and academic integrity, the institution uses and publishes governing board policies on academic freedom and responsibility. These policies make clear the institution's commitment to the free pursuit and dissemination of knowledge, and its support for an atmosphere in which intellectual freedom exists for all constituencies, including faculty and students.  
(ER 13)



# Academic Freedom: What is it?

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

\* <https://www.aaup.org/report/statement-professional-ethics>



# Academic Freedom vs Regulatory Compliance



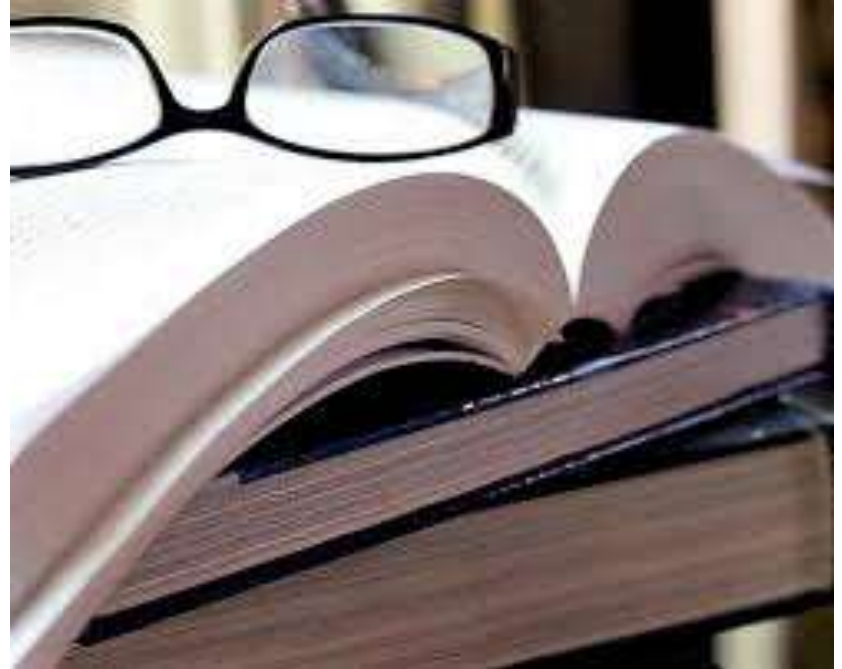
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# Academic Freedom vs Regulatory Compliance

Academic freedom is the freedom of teachers, students, and academic institutions to pursue knowledge wherever it may lead, without undue or unreasonable interference.

Does this freedom allow for faculty to deviate significantly from the COR?

Academic Freedom more about *implementation* of the COR, but the COR is the *standard*



# Academic Freedom vs Regulatory Compliance

Districts policies ensuring academic freedom; faculty must meet professional standards

The Board of Governors (thru title 5 regs) ensures that every student receives the education they have been promised



The COR is a legal document, establishes what to include every time a course is offered

Academic freedom can exist within regulatory compliance

# Academic Rigor

Determination of rigor embedded in the Standards for Approval (§55002)

- Grading Policy
- Units
- Intensity
- Prerequisites and Corequisites
- Basic Skills Requirements
- Difficulty
- Level



# Rigor

A concept describing either an assignment that challenges students to use critical thinking skills or a learning environment that is challenging but supportive and engaging.

If following the intent of the COR, rigor is maintained

# Course Outline of Record vs Course Syllabus

Legally required by title 5

Basis for determination of rigor, objectives, content

Basis of articulation agreements with other colleges

Establishes prerequisites, corequisites, advisories (§55003)

Changed by committee action

Serves as a legal contract

Communicates through assignments/methods/standards the rigor, objectives, content

Evidence to support articulation agreements/ transfer

Created with department/school guidance/expectations

# Academic “Flexibility:” Instructional Methods

- Appropriate for/ align with content/objectives/SLOs
- Title 5 requires examples, not a list
- Choose methods to best suit different teaching and learning styles (DE?)
- Discipline faculty collaborate to determine if any particular method is absolutely essential
- If a specific method isn't absolutely imperative, consider using “may” rather than “will” on COR





# Academic “Flexibility:” Methods of Evaluation



- Similar to Instructional methods
- Discipline faculty may choose to be as specific/ comprehensive, depending on local requirements
- Be cautious with wording addressing grading criteria – a statement like “Instructors will assign points based on the assignments given” can allow flexibility



# Academic “Flexibility:” Methods of Evaluation Cont.

- Methods of Evaluation can affect articulation and 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 Methods of Evaluation section



# Academic “Flexibility:” Assignments

- Last, but not least: “Assignments and/or Other Activities”
- COR must specify types or examples of assignments
- Must require critical thinking
- Be appropriate and clearly connected to course content and objectives



- Should substantiate unit value (minimum of three hours per unit per week in class and on outside assignments)
- May influence requisite implementation so wording is again key (WILL vs. MAY)

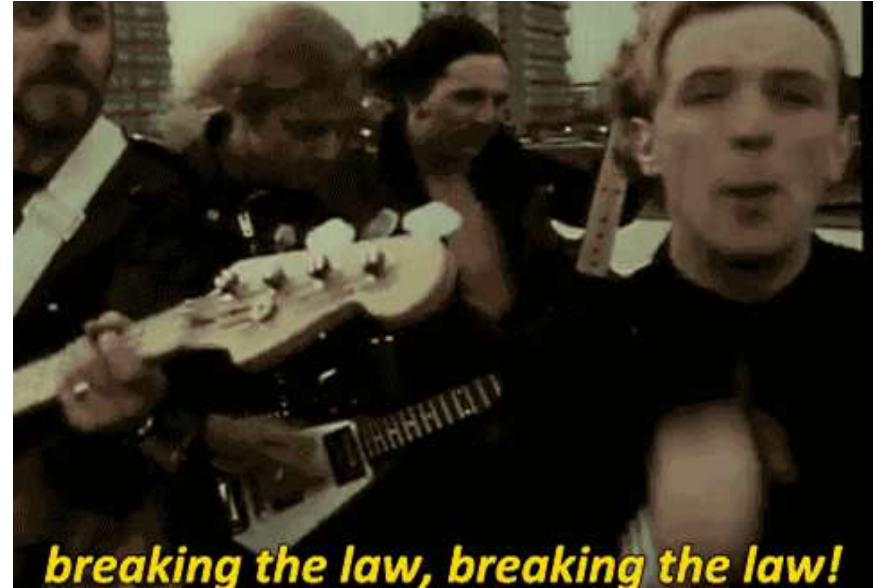
# What do you do when faculty ignore the COR?

- How can you be certain instructors follow the COR?
- Whose responsibility is it to monitor?  
(Curriculum Committee, department chairs, deans, other?)
- Is anyone looking at individual syllabi to see if they match the COR?



# What do you do when faculty ignore 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 do you do when faculty ignore 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 distribute COR to faculty every semester
- A strong academic freedom statement with emphasis on adhering to COR
- Emphasize importance of COR to establish prerequisites
- Dean can not assign course if not adhering



# Flexibility in the COR

- COR Flexibility begins when the COR is written
- There must be collaboration between all program faculty (include PT) when creating or changing the COR
- Reflection time to determine good vs. essential pedagogical practices for discipline
- Cycle of learning outcomes assessment/reflection can inform and strengthen teaching and learning and COR flexibility
- 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.”

# Flexibility in the COR

- COR applies to ALL sections taught
- Wording is key (e.g. “may” vs. “will”)
- Designation of required and optional elements in the COR will help faculty determine what they **MUST** do versus things that **MIGHT** do!
- Designating certain items as optional could impact C-ID approval or articulation agreements. Make sure you check with your articulation officer about these possibilities.



# What about your college?

What local practices prove to be effective for you?



# Questions?

Do you have any additional questions for us?

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