What follows are our observations and suggestions (actually a stream of consciousness more than anything else).

In our view the syllabus is a contract between students and teacher. It defines roles and responsibilities, details the course objectives and assignments, and delineates the grading scheme. It also serves to cover your butt in the event of misconduct, missed exams and the like. Additionally, it can provide asset and resource information of a general nature.

Here you go:

1. Use descriptive headings. Title of course comes first…
2. Instructors information should be clear, including how you’re to be contacted, office hours etc.
3. Course meeting times, room…..
4. Short course description covering basics of content.
5. Course objectives, I prefer to number or bullet them.
6. Resources: Textbooks, journals, websites; include title, primary author, edition or year, URL etc
7. Classroom and course etiquette
   a. Beepers and cell phones
   b. Attendance
   c. Misconduct
8. Exams and other assessments
   a. Specific percentages for each element that goes into calculating the grade.
   b. Make-up and missed exam policy (don’t forget religious observances).
   c. May even wasn’t to include the university’s policy on incompletes.
9. General resources available; library, study assistance, disability, even counseling.
10. Let them know things may have to be modified. A disclaimer in other words.
11. Lecture schedule by week or class meeting.
   a. We like to see a short, one sentence, description of what will happen each week or class period.
   b. Include reading assignments, web etc.
   c. Include exams in the overall schedule