Course Contracts

What is Required
- Instructor’s name, office hours, and information about how students can contact you.
- Expected performance for which grades will be assigned as well as the instructor’s attendance policy, if any. This means explicit information about how a student can earn an A, a B, etc.
- A statement about the Honor System and exactly how it applies to different types of graded work for the course.
- An explicit statement about prerequisites for the course.

What Else to Include
- Course number, title, CRN, and current semester.
- In addition to office hours, list the times you will be available at the Math Emporium.
- You should indicate some willingness to meet with students by appointment, particularly if they have classes during your announced office hours.
- Your name, office location and phone number, your email address, the URL for your home page and the course home page, if any.
- The number and type of tests along with tentative dates.
- Homework policies: how often will it be assigned, will it be collected, how it will be graded? Also late homework or make-up policies. Will any HW grades be dropped?
- Quizzes: will they be given, will they be announced or unannounced, is there a make-up policy for a missed quiz? Will any quiz grades be dropped?
- Final exam information: date and time, in the case of common finals, location will be announced near the end of the semester.
- Other types of assignments or projects: labs, etc., how often they will be assigned, late policy, how they will be graded.
- Explicit grade calculation information, including exactly what a student needs to make an A, what a student need to receive a passing grade.
- A statement inviting students with special needs and circumstances to meet with you privately to discuss accommodations, etc.

Other Things to Consider
- Organization: try to make it reasonably easy for students to find whatever information they are looking for. Use headings, avoid long narrative paragraphs, editorializing, and extraneous details. Structure the information in some kind of logical order.
- Professionalism: Check for spelling or punctuation errors. A course contract isn’t the place for humor, colloquialism, or slang.
- Flexibility: you don’t want a contract that is so rigid and structured that you lose necessary flexibility, nor do you want your stated policies to confine you to something you might have trouble living with later on.
- Arbitrariness: while some decisions will be made at your discretion, I wouldn’t recommend pushing that theme in a course contract. Students shouldn’t feel as if their fate hangs on your whims at the moment.