Designing a Syllabus According to the Writing Assignments
(A Kind of Reverse Engineering)

1) Map out the kinds and number of writing assignments in your course. And consider how the assignments relate to each other. *Does each build on the one before it? And anticipate the next one?*

2) Figure out how many weeks you want to devote to each one and when the drafts and revisions will be due.

3) Think about what the student will need to do the assignment:
- What kinds of readings? *A choice of problematic short texts she can sink her teeth into? An array of argumentative essays that center around a certain question?*
- What kinds of writing skills does it require? *An ability to engage with other critics without losing her own point? An understanding of what it means to ask a good question; More work on what a good thesis entails?*
- What kinds of background? *An understanding of certain concepts? Background on a given historical period?*
- What pre-draft assignments make sense for the assignment?

4) Fill in the weeks devoted to that assignment accordingly.

How To Think About Your Course Topic When Designing Your Syllabus

Not "What readings do I have to include to make sure the students get full coverage of this topic?"

But

"What are 3-5 (depending on the number of your assignments) interesting problems or issues that my course topic suggests and what readings would allow my students to explore and write about those problems or issues?"