Tables, Formatting Columns and Accessibility in Word

Tables and columns are often used in faculty materials. Here are a few tips to help in designing documents for accessibility.

Tables

1. Specify column header rows in tables
   Click anywhere on the table.
   Use the Table Tools Design Tab, in the Table Style Options group.
   Select the Row tab
   Check Repeat as Header Row

2. Make sure you describe the table using the Alt text tab

3. To test and simplify the structure, select the first cell of the table, and press tab to be sure the focus moves across the row and down.

4. You may need to merge or split cells, using the Table Tools Layout tab, in the Merge group. Click Merge Cells or Split Cells

5. If your table is being used to display data, make sure there are no blank rows or cells. Right-click and delete the row from the table.

6. Designate Table Headers http://accessibility.psu.edu/microsofttableheaders

7. If your table is being used for layout, remove all styles from the table. Click on the small button in the Style browser to expand the gallery. Once expanded, the Clear Style option is at the bottom of the window. This affects the entire table, so only use it if the table is used for layout or design purposes. Keep in mind you may be able to create the same visual effect using Text Styles instead of using tables.

Columns

1. Select Page Layout
2. Select Columns
3. This will format your text that you already have written, or you can use it to type into columns
4. You can also use Insert a column break to control how text flows between columns.

Templates

When you select a New Word document; templates are available that you can use to customize your layout for documents like a syllabus that may include columns. You may have to reformat them to your liking, but it is easier to use this than to try and reformat your documents and fix reported errors.