Info from Three Sources Re Objectives, Outcomes, & Goals (Reedley)

How do learning outcomes differ from course objectives or course goals?

Student learning outcomes build upon, but are different from, course objectives and course goals because they represent a new perspective.

Objectives	Outcomes
Objectives represent valuable skills, tools, or content (nuts and bolts) that enable a student to engage a particular subject.	SLOs represent overarching products of the course.
Objectives focus on content and skills important within the classroom or program; what the staff and faculty will do. Often termed the input in the course.	Outcomes express higher level thinking skills that integrate the content and activities and can be observed as a behavior, skill, or discrete useable knowledge upon completing the class.
Objectives can often be numerous, specific, and detailed. Assessing and reporting on each objective for each student may be impossible.	An assessable outcome is an end product that can be displayed or observed and evaluated against criteria.

Goals reflect the targets for a course or program. Goals are where you want to go, objectives are how you get there, and outcomes are proof that you have arrived.

"Outcomes demonstrate an understanding and application of a subject beyond the nuts and bolts which hold it together; objectives represent the nuts and bolts." (BC Chemistry Prof).

Examples of Course Goals – the target for the course

The goal of this general art course is to cultivate a sense of aesthetic significance through analysis of problems and interpretations as they apply to a variety of disciplines

The goal of this general education biology course is to help students acquire and retain relevant biologic knowledge/information, teach them to think/apply this knowledge, and stimulate them to continue learning in the field.

The goal of this nutrition course is to prioritize key nutrition behaviors, identify health and nutrition needs, and integrate these behaviors into health interventions, educational training, and policy.

Examples of Course Objectives – the specific teaching objectives usually detailing course content and activities. (see examples for the nutrition course above)

Review nutritional recommendations and components.
Discuss differences in nutritional requirements associated with sex, age, and activity.
Describe causes and consequences of nutritional problems.
Explain complications of underlying physiologic conditions (e.g. diabetes & malabsorption).
Identify key factors involved in correcting nutritional behaviors.
Describe resources and strategies to treat nutritional disorders.

Example of a Course SLO – At the end of this nutrition course, a student will be able to analyze a documented nutritional problem, determine a strategy to correct the problem, and write a draft nutritional policy addressing the broader scope of the problem.

--From Summer 2005 Curriculum Institute Workshop on Student Learning Outcomes

Defining Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

Student learning outcomes are the specific measurable goals and results that are expected subsequent to a learning experience. These outcomes may involve knowledge (cognitive), skills (behavioral), or attitudes (affective behavior) that display evidence that learning has occurred, at a specified level of competency, as a result of a course or program. Learning outcomes are clear and assessable statements that define what a student is able to DO at the completion of a course or program. Learning outcomes provide a focus and a standard for the classroom or the student services program.

When writing SLOs:

- **Focus on what the student can do.** Don't address what was taught or presented, but address the observable outcome you expect to see in the student.)
- **Use active verbs.** Active verbs are easier to measure. [Note: what this and other sites mean by "active verbs" is not the grammatical definition of active verbs.] For instance, if you want the students to understand how to correctly use a microscope - using the word *understand* is not measurable. Can you measure understanding? Instead try to imagine the outcome - Students will focus and display an image on the microscope. For this I can both develop criteria and measure ability.
- **Include an assessable expectation.** It helps if you have clearly defined expectations concerning the criteria related to that outcome. In the above example, some of the criteria related to using the microscope would include:
  - a clearly focused image
  - correct lighting adjustment of the diaphragm and condenser
  - appropriate magnification for the object
  - an evenly distributed specimen field
  - clearly located object identified by the pointer
  - a written identification
- **Share the outcomes with faculty from other disciplines and within your own discipline.** This helps focus the meaning of the statements. For instance in the above criteria the faculty might ask for clarification of "appropriate magnification."
- **Share the outcomes with your students.** Students need to clearly understand what is expected, they are unfamiliar with the discipline specific language. This helps focus the clarity of the statements.
- **Modify as you learn from experience.** Leave the word "DRAFT" at the top of your SLOs to remind yourself and communicate to others that you are actively improving them.

Learning outcomes are clear and measurable statements that define what a student is able to DO at the completion of a course or program.

Info below is from the FCC Curriculum Website.

The examples below are courtesy of Bill Scroggins, see Student Learning Outcomes—A Focus on Results for his complete analysis.

Old Course Objective #1 (English) Write well-organized, accurate and significant content.
Statement of Desired SLO Context: Given an in-class writing task based on an assigned reading,
Objective: demonstrate appropriate and competent writing which
Traits: states a thesis, supports assertions, maintains unity of thought and purpose, is organized, and is technically correct in paragraph composition, sentence structure, grammar, spelling, and word use.

Old Course Objective #2 (Psychology) Analyze behavior following the major accepted theories.
Statement of Desired SLO Context: Given a particular behavior and its context (e.g., playing incessantly with one's hair when under pressure in the presence of the opposite sex),
Objective: describe how the perspectives of behaviorism, humanistic, psychoanalytic, and biological psychology would interpret that behavior and what methods might each use to alter that behavior.
Traits: Include theoretical basis, description of causality, and treatment regimen.

Old Course Objective #3 (Biology) Understand and apply the scientific method.
Statement of Desired SLO Context: Given a hypothesis,
Objective: design experiments and interpret data according to the scientific method in order to evaluate the hypothesis.
Traits: Include the ability to approach the scientific method in a variety of ways, formulate questions, design experiments that answer the questions; and manipulate and evaluate the experimental data to reach conclusions.

Old Course Objective #4 (Film) Compare and contrast the text and film versions of a literary work.
Statement of Desired SLO Context: After viewing an assigned film based on a literary text,
Objective: write a review of the film.
Traits: Include an appraisal of the director's selection and effective translation of content from the literary text and the dominant tone the director seems to be trying to achieve, supporting each statement with detail from the text and film and your personal reaction to the cited scenes.