

Course Description Guidelines

The Curriculum Committee asks that departments please follow the guidelines below when drafting course descriptions for the Undergraduate Bulletin—it will make our job a lot easier!

1. Keep descriptions as concise as possible, focusing on subject content (rather than course activities, for example).
2. Begin with a noun phrase which identifies the nature of the course. For example, “A study of...”, “Inquiry into...”, or “An introduction to...” Please avoid opening the description with a full sentence such as “The course is designed to...” or “This course will attempt to...”
3. Write the description in the third person, and using the present tense.
4. While it may be appropriate to cite examples of subjects that will be covered, such lists should be kept as short as possible and generally be illustrative rather than comprehensive.
5. Write numerical modifiers of centuries using numbers, such as “in the 21st century” or “16th-century music,” rather than as full words.
6. Use a comma before the “and” or “or” in a series. (ex. Rome, Florence, Milan, and Venice)
7. Statements about the course being repeatable or cross-listed or having Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grading are also part of the description and should always be included when drafting or editing a course description.