

To: Arts & Sciences Chairs, Heads, and Program Directors
From: Jerry Gravander
Subject: Non-Standard Courses in Arts & Sciences

The Arts & Sciences Academic Affairs Committee has discussed the non-standard courses offered in the School, that is, courses for which the Master Schedule does not list assigned days and times....

In connection with the...recommendation [that titles and course descriptions for non-standard courses should be drawn from a set of standard titles and descriptions], the following list of course titles was developed. Each has a suggested course description and some policy comments. Certain types of detailed information that might be included in a course description have been omitted, for example, "Prior consent by the instructor is required," "Students are limited to X hours of {course type Y}", etc.

1. ***Directed Study in <name of field>***.

Suggested description: Students study subject(s) not otherwise available in formal courses under the supervision of a faculty member. Intended primarily for advanced students who wish to pursue special interests in <name of field>.

Policy comments: This is an individual (or small group) study of a topic or body of material for which a regularly scheduled course is not taught. Students work under the relatively close direction of supervising faculty. The primary objective is for students to learn subject matter that they otherwise would not learn. The primary learning mode is reading and understanding a set of textual material. The title that currently is most frequently used for this type of course is "Directed Study." "Independent Study" also is sometimes used, but this title currently is also used for projects of various kinds. EOH currently includes this type of course under its "Research in Environmental & Occupational Health" title

2. ***Project in <name of field>***.

Suggested description: Individual or small group projects in which students increase their understanding of and facility with the concepts and methods of <name of field> while investigating a topic or developing a solution for a problem that is selected with the advice of a supervising faculty member. A formal report is required at the conclusion of the course.

Policy comments: This is an individual (or small group) project-based learning experience. Students work under the direction of supervising faculty, though this might not be as close as with Directed Study, above. The primary objective is for students to learn the concepts and methods of an area by using them in the project. The primary

learning mode is experiential. This type of course currently has a variety of titles, ranging from “Independent Study,” “Research” with various associated qualifiers, and “Statistics Project.”

3. ***Undergraduate [or Directed] Research <in name of field>.***

Suggested description: Students engage in research under the supervision of a faculty member. Topics will be determined by faculty research programs. A formal report is required at the conclusion of the course.

Policy comments: This is an experience in which a student works in a genuine research mode under the supervision of a faculty member. This can range from serving as an assistant in the faculty member’s ongoing research to working more independently. The primary goal of the research activity is the discovery of new knowledge, and the primary learning outcome for the student is initiation into the community of researchers in the field. This is what we market to external audiences as “Undergraduate Research,” and this is the title currently used most frequently in Arts & Sciences.

4. ***Capstone Experience (aka Undergraduate Thesis, Capstone Project, Senior Research Paper, Digital Arts & Sciences Portfolio Project, etc.).***

Suggested description: There will be considerable variation in course titles and in the course descriptions, depending on the program and what counts as a culminating/capstone experience for the program. The main points to include in the description would be: (a) intended for seniors; (b) arranged with the consent of a staff member who assists the student in the choice of a problem and in the planning and execution of work on it; (c) based extensively on students’ prior learning; (d) models in some way the “real world” of the students’ future practice in their field; and (e) requires a report/paper/thesis or other communicative product at the end of the course.

Policy comments: This is a culminating or capstone experience in which students draw extensively on their knowledge of their field to address a substantial topic or problem. The primary objective is for students to have an experience in problem-definition, analysis, knowledge-synthesis, and problem-resolution that models as closely as possible the “real-world” work that is done in the field. Students generally work more independently than in Directed Study or Project, above. Currently, this type of course is titled “Undergraduate Thesis,” “Capstone Project,” and “Senior Thesis.”

5. ***Internship in <name of field>.***

Suggested description: Students gain practical work experience in <name of field> by working with a professional outside their department on issues, problems, or projects that are typical of the field. Summer employment and co-op positions can provide students with an internship experience depending on the type of work done; prior consent by the student’s department is required. Students prepare a formal report about their learning experiences in the internship, and approval of this report by the student’s department is required before the credit hours for this course can be recorded.

Policy comments: This is an experience in which a student works outside his or her academic department or program, with and/or under the supervision of professionals in the field, and this work requires the use of knowledge in the student’s field. The primary objective is for students to learn through doing, usually accompanied by mentoring, in the “real world.” Students may receive pay for this work. Students must develop written

and oral materials for their department that report some aspect of their learning experience (see, for example, the current course description for the EOH Internship). Currently, this type of course is titled “Internship.”

6. ***Undergraduate Teaching Assistantship.***

Suggested description: Students assist a faculty member in teaching a lecture or laboratory course. Students engage in substantial pedagogical work beyond mastery of the target course material. Such activities might include mentoring students in course work, leading class discussions or demonstrations, designing or assessing course modules, etc.

Policy comments: This is an experience in which students assist faculty in teaching a course. Students engage in substantial pedagogical work beyond mastery of the target course material, although they may also undertake such activities as grading and proctoring as long as these are secondary activities related to the pedagogical work . Pedagogical activities might include mentoring students in course work, leading class discussions or demonstrations, designing or assessing course modules, etc. The primary objective is for students to work with faculty to learn fundamental pedagogical practices in the discipline. Currently, this type of course is titled “Undergraduate TA,” “Undergraduate Teaching Assistant in Chemistry,” “Mathematics Course Assistance,” and “Teaching Methodology in Physics.”

7. ***Community-Based Project.***

Suggested description: An individual or small group project in which students deliver a service, product, or solution to a client in the community. Students identify a community-based client’s need and use knowledge from their field in serving this need, and client satisfaction will enter into the evaluation of the students’ work. Typically the project design also provides learning opportunities for the students.

Policy comments: This is an individual (or small group) experience in which students deliver a service, product, or solution to a client in the community. The educational model is service-learning, which means (a) students use their field-specific knowledge to identify and serve a community-based client’s needs and (b) students experience learning relevant to their field, often *via* the client, while providing the service. This model differs dramatically from plain old community service, for example, picking up trash from the gutters or delivering meals to the elderly, because such community service does not draw on students’ specific knowledge in their field, nor does it increase and/or deepen their knowledge of their field. This type of course currently is not listed.