

Baylor University **Undergraduate Catalog Course Descriptions – Style Guide**

Overview

This style guide serves to assist faculty and staff in writing undergraduate catalog course descriptions. Course descriptions must conform to the format presented in the style guide when a new course is created or an existing course is modified. This ensures consistency throughout the *Undergraduate Catalog*.

What is a Course Description?

A course description is an informative synopsis of what instructors will teach in a course. In the list of courses in the *Undergraduate Catalog*, the course description is the paragraph that follows the course number, title, and any co-requisites and/or prerequisites.

Course descriptions should focus on *content*, thereby answering the question, “What is taught in this course?” In addition, the course description may include additional information such as the maximum hours that may be earned through repetition of the course, classroom/lab hours, fees, etc.

Course descriptions should be brief – no longer than 450 characters (including spaces).

Guidelines for Writing Course Descriptions

The rules of style for catalog course descriptions are different from rules appropriate for many other forms of writing. What is good style for a course syllabus may be poor style for a course description, and vice versa. Complete sentences should generally be avoided, although most other rules of grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and usage should be followed.

Do:

- Do express ideas using clear, concise, and direct language.
- Do use phrases or fragments, with a period at the end of each phrase or fragment.
- Do use a comma before the words “and” and “or” in a series.
- Do use present tense.
- Do use passive voice.
- If using acronyms, when practical, write out the complete name for the first use of the abbreviation.

Do not:

- Do not repeat the course title in the course description.
- Do not use the words “we” and “you” in the course description.
- Do not include words such as “This course will ...” or “Course includes...”
- Do not include words such as “The lecture and lab will consist of ...”
- Do not include references to students such as “designed to provide students with ...”
- Do not begin the course description with “a”, “an”, or “the”.

Suggestions for how to begin phrases:

Advanced topics in ...	Includes ...
Advanced instruction in ...	Instruction in ...
Analysis of ...	Investigates ...
Application of ...	Investigation of ...
Assessment of ...	Major elements of ...
Continuation of ...	Methods of ...
Designed to ...	Methodologies of ...
Development of ...	Overview of ...
Discussion of ...	Preparation in ...
Dynamics of ...	Principles of ...
Emphasis on ...	Provides ...
Evaluation of ...	Research ...
Examination of ...	Selected themes in ...
Examines ...	Survey of ...
Exploration of ...	Techniques ...
Explores ...	Theory ...
Exposure to ...	Topics include ...
Focus on ...	
Fundamentals of ...	

Phrases beginning with the following are typically used only in lower-level course descriptions:

Elementary ...
Introduces ...
Introduction to ...

Example Catalog Course Listings

ART 3360 Greek Painted Pottery (Cross-listed as CLA 3360)

Prerequisite(s): ART 2302 or consent of instructor. ART 3352 is recommended.

Techniques and stylistic development of Greek painted pottery from the Late Aegean Bronze Age through the Late Classical and Early Hellenistic periods.

AVS 2V03 Commercial or Instrument Flight Training

Prerequisite(s): Departmental consent required.

Flight training conducted in accordance with Federal Aviation Administration regulations up to Commercial Pilot License standards or Instrument Flight Rating certificate requirements. May be repeated for credit provided content is different.

BIO 1106 Modern Concepts of Bioscience Laboratory

Prerequisite(s): BIO 1306 or concurrent enrollment.

Laboratory experiments illustrating modern concepts in the biological sciences, with emphasis on morphology, general physiology, and ecology.

CHE 3331 Organic Chemistry I

Prerequisite(s): CHE 1302.

Chemistry of organic compounds which primarily contain the less polar functional groups. Topics include reaction mechanisms, stereochemistry, and organic spectroscopy.

CSD 2360 Oral Deaf Education Principles and Practices

Techniques for developing spoken language in children with hearing loss using therapy, linguistic knowledge, technology, and practice.

CSI 3334 Data Structures

Prerequisite(s): Minimum grade of B or better in CSI 1440.

Software design and construction with abstract data types. Description, performance, and use of commonly-used algorithms and data structures including lists, trees, and graphs.

ECO 2306 Principles of Microeconomics

Prerequisite(s): Cumulative GPA of 2.5 or higher.

Microeconomic analysis including the theories and applications of demand, production, industrial organization, international trade, and Christian ethics in economic decisions. A student with credit in ECO 1305 may not earn credit in ECO 2306.

EGR 4396 Special Topics in Engineering

Prerequisite(s): Consent of department chair.

Study of advanced topics in engineering. This course may be repeated once under a different topic.

ENG 3311 English Literature through the Sixteenth Century

Prerequisite(s): ENG 2301 and either 2304 or 2306; and upper-level standing.

Old English (Anglo-Saxon), Middle English, and English poetry, prose, and drama to 1600, studied in relation to the cultural and social character of the period.

FRE 3335 Theater in Paris

Prerequisite(s): FRE 2320.

Study of selected French plays and attendance at their performances. Offered as part of the Baylor in Paris Summer Program.

GEO 3349 Hydrologic Processes

Prerequisite(s): Upper-level standing.

Theory and principles of hydrology and hydrogeology focusing on the physical processes: the hydrologic cycle, definitions, equations, streams, flooding, erosion, sedimentation and transport, aquifers, groundwater flow, and well hydraulics. One or more local field trips required.

GKC 4351 The Gospels and New Testament Criticism

Prerequisite(s): GKC 2310 and 2320.

Readings in the Gospels emphasizing the history of New Testament criticism and interpretation. Attention will also be given to the writings of the Church Fathers, as well as to recent methodologies.

GTX 3341 Master Works in Drama (Cross-listed as THEA 3341)

Prerequisite(s): Upper-level standing.

Survey and analysis of a selection of the most important dramatic works of the Western intellectual tradition.

HED 3331 Program Planning in Health Education

Prerequisite(s): HED 2330 and 2331.

Provides in-depth focus on program planning in health education that includes planning models and strategies. Experiential learning through a group writing project serves as the framework for each component of the program plan.

HON 4187 Honors Thesis III

Prerequisite(s): HON 4178 or concurrent enrollment.

Completion and submission of a full draft of the Honors thesis project, supervised by a faculty member in the student's major department or concentration.

JOU 3367 Public Relations

Prerequisite(s): JOU 2303 or JOU 3372 or consent of instructor.

Professional communication principles applied in contemporary public relations concepts. Theory, history, and practice of public relations, including evaluation of public opinion, and the planning, implementing, and evaluating of public relations programs. Designed for students with journalism backgrounds.

LF 1130 Social Dance

Introduction to social dance for the purpose of developing a lifetime recreational activity, often linked to social and professional situations. Various styles of social dance, such as fox trot, waltz, swing, rock and roll, country western, cha-cha, and tango, will be covered.

LS 4306 Curriculum Applications in Children's Literature

Research in the field of children's literature and its application to the elementary classroom, emphasizing activity approaches and curriculum planning.

ME 4336 Energy Systems Design

Prerequisite(s): Credit or concurrent enrollment in ME 4345.

Design and analysis of thermal energy systems such as pipe networks, HVAC systems, and steam power plants. Specification of energy system components such as pumps, pipes, control valves, and heat exchangers.

MTH 2V90 Introduction to Research in Mathematics

1 to 3 sem. hrs.

Prerequisite(s): Consent of Instructor.

Beginning independent study or research in topics not available in other courses. May be repeated for a maximum of 3 hours.

MUS 4317 Piano Pedagogy III

Prerequisite(s): MUS 3312.

Examination and evaluation of standard literature, teaching materials, and music technology for the intermediate student. Exploring issues related to the piano teaching profession. Directed teaching in the Piano Laboratory Program, both individual and group lesson settings.

MUS 4362 Traditional Music and Culture in Asia (Cross-listed with AST 4362)

Prerequisite(s): Junior standing and above.

Analysis of specific Asian musical traditions within their cultural, geographical, historical, and social contexts as points of departure for analyzing and understanding broader patterns and dynamics of human activity.

NUR 3425 Professional Nursing Practice II

Prerequisite(s): All Semester I courses.

Professional nursing practice with individuals and families experiencing less obvious and/or more complex unmet human needs from diverse populations. Laboratory experiences include medical-surgical and mental health settings.

PHI 4311 Epistemology

A critical examination of classical and current problems in theories of knowledge. Attention is given to such problems as meaning, truth, the knowing situation, universals, knowledge of the external world and of other minds, and validation of knowledge claims. The contributions of recent movements such as logical empiricism, linguistic analysis, phenomenology may be studied.

PHY 2190 Introduction to Research in Physics

Prerequisite(s): PHY 2350.

Preparation for undergraduate research. Includes an introduction to research techniques, identification of a research supervisor, and completion of a research prospectus.

PHP 2105 Premedical Professional Development

Prerequisite(s): Sophomore standing and completion of either PHP 1105 or PHP/MH 1106 with a grade of "B" or higher.

Professionalism within healthcare including appropriate personal attributes and expectations, integrity, interpersonal communication, and self-appraisal.

PSY 4355 Psychology and Aging

Prerequisite(s): PSY 1305 or consent of instructor.

Normal and abnormal changes in behavior that occur between early maturity and later maturity, with emphasis on changes in sensation and perception, intelligence, learning, and personality, as well as other areas of a more social psychological nature such as social roles and the impact of environmental change on older people.

REL 4300 Special Topics in Religion

Prerequisite(s): REL 1310 and 1350; and upper-level standing.

Special topics of study in the discipline of religion, especially in areas not covered in the regular curriculum. The course may be repeated once when content differs.

STA 2381 Introductory Statistical Methods

Prerequisite(s): A grade of C or above in MTH 1321.

Parametric statistical methods. Topics range from descriptive statistics through regression and one-way analysis of variance. Applications are typically from biology and medicine. Computer data analysis is required.

TED 4671 Internship Physical Education Part II

Co-requisite(s): TED 4670.

Prerequisite(s): Grade of B or better in TED 3670 and 3671.

Planning and preparing lessons and materials for full-time teaching. Includes completion of content modules, conferencing with mentor teacher and university instructor, written lesson reflections, observation of lessons taught by master teachers, and preparation of web-based portfolio.

THEA 2375 Theater History II

Historical investigation of theatre practice, performance, and dramatic literature from the Renaissance through the nineteenth century. Emphasis on Europe and North America.

UNSC 4302 Senior Thesis

Prerequisite(s): UNSC 4101 or consent of instructor.

Completion of thesis and approval by assigned committee.