

Course Description Guidelines

Assigned Course Numbers

Each course must have a separate number. You may not use letter suffixes to differentiate among separate courses except for seminars, special topics, workshops, and other listings in which various options are designated by letters under a single course number. Use “L” for lab sections and “H” for honors sections. The following are reserved numbers:

100, 200, 300, 400, 500, and 600 - (double zeroes): transfer credit that is acceptable credit, but does not have an ISU equivalent.
290 - Independent study
393 - Workshop
398 - Cooperative Education
490 - Independent study
493 - Workshop
499 - Undergraduate research, seminars, or senior projects (not completely standardized)
590 - Special topics
593 - Workshop
599 - Creative component
690 - Special or advanced topics
699 - Research

College of Human Sciences:
417 and 418 - Student Teaching

College of Engineering:
397 - Engineering Internship
298 and 498 - Cooperative Education

Computer Fees

Computer fees are not allowed for individual courses. See Special Course Fees.

Course Descriptions

Be concise when writing your new course descriptions. Provide the reader with an understanding of the general purpose and content of the course, but do not include detailed course content or outlines. Whenever possible, avoid jargon, highly technical terminology, and special symbols.

Credit toward Graduation (Graduation Restrictions)

If your department determines that two or more courses are so similar that credit for both should not be allowed toward graduation, indicate that information in the Graduation Restrictions field.

Credits and Contact Hours

Make sure the number of credits for courses is consistent with the number of contact hours and outside assignments. See <http://catalog.iastate.edu/informationaboutcourses/> for specific information.

Cross-Listed Courses

All courses that are taught by one department but allow students to earn credit under another department/designator are considered cross-listed. In the catalog listings, all cross listed courses should have identical course numbers and descriptions. Complete descriptions will appear under all cross listed courses, including the minor teaching departments. The major teaching department is responsible for the course description. Cross-listed departments will be informed when the course description changes.

Dual-Listed Courses

If your department allows either undergraduate or graduate credit for a course, the course can be dual-listed. Course numbers should coordinate; for example, Pol S 476 and 576 are dual-listed. New dual-listings must be approved by the Graduate College using the dual list approval process. See http://www.grad-college.iastate.edu/common/forms/faculty_forms.php.

Experimental Courses

You may not include nor refer to experimental courses (designated by X following the course number) in your catalog copy.

Field Trips

If a field trip is required, state “Field trip.” after the course description.

Honors

An honors section is identified as a topic H

Instructor Names

Listing the instructor’s name with a course is not allowed since conditions may change by the time the course is offered.

New Courses

New courses proposed for the catalog should have been offered experimentally (or be scheduled for experimental offering) by the previous fall semester. The following are two exceptions in which courses may be approved for inclusion in the catalog without a prior experimental offering:

1. The new course will be required of students in a particular program
2. A new faculty member who has experience teaching the proposed course at another university has joined the department.

New Course Numbers

Do not use 100, 200, 300, or 400 for new course numbers. *Also see* also Reusing Old Course Numbers.

New Course Titles

Make new course titles reasonably brief but also informative. The title appears in the *Online Schedule of Classes* and on the student transcripts and can accommodate 19 letters and spaces. Therefore, it’s important that course titles be meaningful outside of the university. The Office of the Registrar will abbreviate course titles longer than 19 letters/spaces.

Nonmajor Graduate Credit

Indicate “Nonmajor graduate credit” by checking the appropriate box for all undergraduate courses that may be taken by graduate students for nonmajor graduate credit. You may not offer 490 for nonmajor graduate credit unless your department does not offer 590.

Prerequisites

Do not list “Or Permission of Instructor” as an alternative to stated prerequisites. “Or Permission of instructor” is always understood, as indicated in the statement of prerequisites at <http://catalog.iastate.edu/informationaboutcourses/>. List only the highest course number in a sequence of required prerequisites. **All** graduate courses should include prerequisites.

Repeatable Courses

Courses that can be taken more than once for credit toward a degree must be noted. Review the repeatable field to make sure the proper repeatable information is included with the course description. It is assumed that 490, 499, 590, 599, and 690, and 699 are repeatable.

Reusing Old Course Numbers

You must wait at least four years before reusing an old course number unless you are reinstating a previously dropped course. Check with your college curriculum coordinator or an Office of the Registrar catalog editor if you need help determining if an old course number can be reused.

Satisfactory-Fail Courses

Student work in a course must be graded on a regular basis unless a course is selected to be offered on satisfactory-fail grading basis. Student work cannot be graded on a regular basis and on a satisfactory-fail basis simultaneously. Exceptions must be approved by the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee.

Semester Offered (Optional)

Indicate a specific semester only if your department is reasonably sure of its commitment.

Remember to split yearlong courses into two separate course descriptions whenever possible. Courses offered in alternate years are listed with the year, if known. It is understood that students should check with the department or the *Schedule of Classes* for the specific term of offering when one is not listed. Do not include semester of offering for seminars, special problems, or special topics.

Special Course Fees

Prior administrative approval is required for charging a fee. Special fees are not listed with courses in the catalog, but are listed in the *Online Schedule of Classes*. Computer fees are not permitted for individual courses.

Special Grade Point Restrictions

Do not include new special grade point restrictions of any kind until they have been approved by the appropriate college and university academic standards committees. Check with your college academic standards committee chairperson if you have questions.

Subtopics, Topics

Subtopics, also known as topics, are subsets of the main course and are identified by a letter (A, B, C, etc.) following the main description anchor course. The anchor course does not have a suffix letter and cannot be available for registration. Just as with course numbers, topic letters may not be reused for two catalogs. Avoid individual requirements for each topic (e.g., credits, prerequisites, term of offering, etc.). The letter X is not allowed; use a topic H ONLY for honors sections of a course. Contact the catalog editor if you are unsure about using a topic letter with a course.