**GUIDELINES IN PREPARING COURSE DESCRIPTIONS**

**A. Course Preparation Specifications** The following guidelines should be followed in writing course descriptions:

1. Course descriptions describe course content. If a complete sentence is used, there is a tendency for repetition in such a statement as “is studied,” “is discussed,” “is covered.” Therefore, verbs are to be omitted. Such phrase as “the purpose of this course is to” and “an advanced study of the” are superfluous.

2. Repetition of the course title is not to be included in the description whenever possible. If “seminar" is part of the course title, the description should not repeat the word "seminar." Use adjectives sparingly. "A basic introduction to ..." can be stated "an introduction to...”

3. Course descriptions are to be written in the present tense if the use of a verb is necessary.

4. Class activities and requirements are not to be included in the description. Statements such "a research paper is required" are inappropriate.

5. The word "prerequisite" precedes the statement of all course admission requirements.

6. Use the word unit instead of semester hours or credit. Explanatory prerequisites such as "senior standing" or "major standing" or "may be taken concurrently with" are acceptable. If approval has been granted, then list "may be repeated more than once." If the course does not carry major credit, the statement is "not for major credit."

7. The official statement concerning permission to take courses is “consent of instructor” “consent of Chairperson” or “consent of coordinator.” Terms such as “permission” or “approval” are not to be used.

8. Any variation from regular grading (A-F) is to be noted; for example, "S/U grading only."

**B. Special Topics Courses**

The following apply to special topic courses:

1. The purpose of a special topics course is to allow a department to grant academic credit for the classroom study of selected important issues in the discipline without establishing a permanent course in the topic.

2. Each time the course is offered, it will be titled "Special Topics in (or another appropriate title)” followed by a subtitle identifying the topic to be covered. A topics ID number will be assigned by the Registrar.

3. Special topics courses may not be accepted for University Core requirements. Any department can set a limit on the number of special topics hours a student can apply toward the major.

4. Departments may establish procedural safeguards and standards for enrollment in special topics courses (e.g., prerequisites, required cumulative average in the discipline, etc.)

5. Responsibility for scrutinizing the professional and academic nature of special topics offerings (that is, particular topics being offered) shall rest with the individual departments. A department wishing to offer the same topic for the third time in four years, must submit the topics to the Curriculum Committee as a new course proposal.

**C. Prerequisites**

Prerequisites are requirements imposed by academic departments for certain courses within the curriculum. Such requirements may include, but are not limited to, other courses, a specific quality point average, or class standing, (e.g., junior, senior). Prerequisites may also include successful completion of screened requirements, where acceptable, or successful completion of a specific test or examination, either standardized or departmental, where applicable. Prerequisites may also include departmental or instructor permission, in addition to, or in lieu of, specific course, testing, or standing requirements.

**D. Repeatable Courses**

Normally, students may not receive credit for more than one attempt of a course. However, certain courses may be taken more than once for credit.

For repeatable courses to be applied toward a degree must include the following wording “May be attempted for a maximum of (number) of credits.”

**E. Non-Used Courses**

The University Curriculum Committee and the Graduate Studies Committee have charged the Registrar with notifying chairs of courses within their programs which fall into the following categories:

1. Any course which has not been offered during a five-year period.

2. Any course which was scheduled but not offered due to lack of enrollment during a five-year period.

The Associate Vice President for Enrollment Management will ask program chairs to submit material to either (a) delete the course.