

Hood College

Curriculum Committee & Graduate Council

Joint Memorandum on Course Numbering Policies and Guidelines

March 8, 2021

Overview

The following guidelines have been approved by the 2020-2021 Curriculum Committee and the 2020-2021 Graduate Council. The guidelines were originally drafted and/or modified by the 2018-2019 and 2019-2020 Curriculum Committees. The 2019-2020 Committee elicited feedback from Department Chairs during spring semester 2020. The 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 Committees worked closely with Graduate Council to ensure seamless course numbering from 100-600. The 2020-2021 Curriculum Committee recommends implementation by this Committee, Graduate Council, and the Office of the Registrar to ensure courses are numbered for curricular coherence and consistency. Like the 2019-2020 Committee, the current Committee suggests that future Committees apply these guidelines to all proposals for new courses and programs coming before the Curriculum Committee, disseminate these guidelines to the full faculty and students, and list them on the online and printed course catalog, beginning Fall 2021.

The Curriculum Committee, Graduate Council, Office of the Registrar, and the Provost will continue to work collaboratively with academic departments to accommodate the pedagogical preference of faculty while also following the guidelines recommended in this document.

Rationale

Hood College's current course numbering policy dates back over three decades. Given that we have made significant changes to our curriculum during the intervening years and many programs have educational mandates from accreditors, it has become necessary for the College to establish guidelines to clarify and inform course numbering and associated considerations. Our current model is limited to three-digit course numbers that cannot be repurposed, limiting the Registrar in assigning new course numbers. We want to ensure curricular programs have an outlet for creating new courses. At the same time, we endeavor greater transparency to these course numbers to eliminate any uncertainty about the expectations, rigor and appropriateness of any course within the curriculum.

Standard convention suggests that course numbers loosely correspond to class "level," with 100, 200, 300, and 400-level classes corresponding to first-year, sophomore, junior and senior-level classes, respectively. At the graduate level, 500-level courses correspond to master's level and 600-level courses to doctoral-level courses. While some Hood courses and programs adhere to this convention, many do not. Similarly, learning outcomes and student expectations across course levels seem quite disparate with no clear or consistent framework upon which students can build.

The Committee remains committed to respecting the autonomy of faculty and departments to determine the best approach for their respective discipline. Rather than conduct a full review of existing programs and courses to ensure compliance with the guidelines below, the Committee recommends that all future proposals for new courses and majors before the Committee adhere to these guidelines. For existing courses, the committee recommends that departments conduct a comprehensive course audit as part of their scheduled Academic Program Review. The purpose of this audit would be to confirm coherence to these course numbering guidelines.

Purpose and Objectives

The primary purpose of course numbering policy is to facilitate curricular coherence and transparency across the undergraduate and graduate programs at Hood College. More specifically, the three main objectives of the policy are the following:

- To assist students in their course selection by improving the accuracy of their expectations for prerequisites, course content, workload, and evaluation standards, and through a rational system of course numbering that maintains a reasonable consistency across departments and programs;
- To help faculty in their development of new courses and revision of their curricula, by having a uniform policy statement that clarifies the nature of coursework at a given level of the undergraduate or graduate experience; and
- To aid college assessment responsibilities.

Guidelines

Course numbers should be determined by the general characteristics that best describe the course content or by the structure of the department's curriculum. Assigning a higher number to a course should reflect some combination of greater difficulty, more abstraction and/or synthesis of information, higher workload, or more independent work by students. Alternatively, it may reflect the way in which courses in a curriculum build on each other. The descriptions in the table below represent various roles or various standings that a course may have in the College's curriculum. A single course at a given level may not have all of the indicated characteristics, but it should have several of them. This should not be considered an exhaustive checklist that must be met for each course, but rather a guide to inform the most appropriate course level.

General Considerations

All new course proposals should be prepared according to the guidelines below. Any proposed departures from the guidelines should be clearly justified. Although existing course numbers need not be revised, departments may wish to review the numbering of their courses for consistency and logic.

Course Number	Nature of the course content and demands on the student	Place of the course in the curricular structure
Below 100	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remedial or developmental courses; may be prerequisite courses needed to meet certain conditions of admission. • These courses do not apply toward any degree requirement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developmental coursework determined by placement exam, advising, transcript analysis or department recommendation • Does not count towards graduation credit.
100-199	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to a broad field • Course content and assessment appropriate for students with the level of sophistication of the typical first-year student as commonly observed by discipline or for students with no prior background in the discipline • General survey course, covering a broad range of topics and approaches in one or several related fields • Foundation course that teaches basic skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No prerequisites or related prior knowledge • Assumes college level skills • First course in a sequence; nonmajors may enroll • Courses offered in the first year of a required 4-year sequence for the major
200-299	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intermediate level or introduction to a sub-discipline or to interdisciplinary subject matter • Course content and assessment appropriate for students with the level of sophistication of the typical sophomore in the discipline • Students move beyond summary skills and begin to develop analytical skills • Appropriate for majors and advanced non-majors • Explores or surveys a broad area of the discipline with some depth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With or without prerequisites • Intended for students familiar with the basic concepts of a discipline and who have college level reading, writing, and critical thinking skills • Offered in the first year of a required three-year sequence for the major • Not acceptable for application to graduate degrees. • Under current College policy, unable to be dual-listed with graduate courses

300-397	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content is advanced, concepts are more sophisticated or abstract, and work is more demanding than in lower division courses • Course content and assessment appropriate for students with the level of sophistication of the typical junior or senior in the discipline • Applies and extends foundational skills developed in 100-level and/or 200-level courses, especially those in the core curriculum and major prerequisites • Explores or surveys a narrowly focused area of the discipline in greater depth; teaches how to analyze, discuss, and apply theories and concepts • Readings may include professional journals and primary source material • Requires independent learning, thinking, and writing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prerequisites at the 100- and/or 200-level may include: college-level general knowledge, or an introductory course, or 2 or more courses within the discipline or skill set • Offered in the second year of a required three-year sequence for the major • Typically not acceptable for application to graduate degrees • Under current College policy, unable to be dual-listed with graduate courses
375 Independent Study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individualized student work under the guidance of a faculty member, intended to pursue topics that aren't currently offered through regular coursework at the college. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The prerequisite of this course is the permission of instructor and department chairperson • Individual faculty will need to establish what knowledge, skills and abilities experiences are necessary prior to engaging in the work specific to each student.
399 Internship or Practicum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hands-on, applied experience in the field or discipline • Appropriate for students with the level of sophistication of the typical junior or senior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate for students completing the major or students with some background in the discipline (i.e. 2 or more courses within the discipline, or special prerequisites).

400-490	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For upper-division students: advanced, rigorous, sophisticated and demanding Requires a high degree of synthesis within and/or across disciplines • Specific, focused subject matter • Course content and assessment appropriate for students with the level of sophistication of the typical junior or senior • Students are expected to create, evaluate, and analyze, well as solve problems, and apply principles • Course requires independent initiative and work or intense, focused group work • Focus on student-initiated projects, research, and learning • Seminars, directed readings and research, and practical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate for students in the final stages of completing the major or students with some background in the discipline, 2 or more courses within the discipline, or special prerequisites • Preparation for graduate study, frequently acceptable for application to graduate degrees • Under current College policy, able to be dual-listed with graduate courses • Would not be appropriate for core curriculum
490-498 Senior Capstone Course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecture or seminar format • To be completed at end of the major or program, integrating information and skills from earlier coursework in the major or program • Focus on student-initiated projects, research, and learning • Integrative in nature, providing a culminating high-impact learning experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prerequisites include successful completion of years 1-3 of the major • May include prerequisites for research preparation, experimental design, proposal generation, etc.
495 Undergraduate Supervised Teaching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students participating in this course assist instructors in teaching of a lower level course 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prerequisites: junior status, 3.0 GPA; A- or better in course in which the student will assist; and permission of instructor

498 Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students collaborate with faculty research mentors on an ongoing project in a faculty members' laboratory or conduct independent research under the guidance of a faculty member. • This experience provides students with an inquiry-based learning opportunity and engages them as active learners in a research setting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The prerequisite of this course is the permission of instructor - Individual faculty will need to establish what knowledge and experiences are necessary prior to engaging in the research and creative activity projects specific to each student.
499 Departmental Honors Thesis or Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialized, independent study leading to an Honors thesis or project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prerequisites include acceptance into the Department's Honors Program (minimum GPA and other requirements) and completion of other Dept. Honors Program course requirements
500-599	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides knowledge oriented towards the practitioner in the field or to the preparation for advanced study • Expands the student's specialized knowledge in the chosen field • Knowledge of scholarly writing techniques and of research methodologies appropriate to the discipline • Demands a high level of critical thinking and may focus on theory 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 500 level courses comprise all of the graduate level courses (with the exception of courses offered in the DOL and DBA programs) • Under current College policy, certain graduate courses are able to be dual-listed with undergraduate courses
600-699	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on theory and practice that demands a high level of critical thinking • Intellectual rigor and integration of information into frameworks of knowledge • Sustained, independent inquiry and analysis. • Advanced, scholarly writing skills and a thorough knowledge of the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 600 level courses comprise all of the courses in the DOL and DBA programs

	<p>major research methodologies of the discipline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of a scholarly product appropriate for advanced study in a doctoral program • Prepares Scholar-Practitioners who can apply research methodologies to address issues and challenges in the field of study • Research leads to knowledge creation 	
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Special Considerations

Cross-Listing: All cross-listed or combined courses must have the same title and should carry the same course number (or contain identical last three digits when cross-listed with a different level course). The subject code may be variable for these courses.

Double Numbered Courses: Certain courses have been designated as appropriate for both graduate students and undergraduates. These “double-numbered courses” are identified by numbers in both the 400 and 500 range. Undergraduate students enroll in the 400-level course and receive undergraduate credit. Graduate students enroll in the 500-level course and receive graduate credit. Syllabi for such courses will clearly outline different expectations for graduate and undergraduate students. Students who took a double-numbered class at the 400-level as an undergraduate student may not take the same class at the 500-level as a graduate student for credit.

Departmental Sequencing: Departments should assign the specific number within a given level (such as higher or lower numbers within the 100-level) in accordance with the structure of their curricula, and courses to be taken in a sequence should, if possible, have sequential numbers. Also, when prerequisites are in the same department as the course, the number of a course’s prerequisite should always come before the number for the course.

Courses of similar topics should be grouped together within the appropriate level, if possible. For example, if a department is proposing a junior-level seminar on French history, the course should be numbered at the 300-level, close to junior-level seminars that also address the history of European countries. If History of Spain is 320 and History of Italy is 326, then History of France would also be in the 320’s.

Implementation & Evaluation Guidelines: The Committee will refer to these guidelines when evaluating *new* course proposals and will apply them consistently across departments, while still recognizing special circumstances. Departments and schools are strongly encouraged to follow these guidelines when planning courses and facilitating student registration.

This document is informed by the Hood College Transfer Policy.