

GUIDELINES FOR COLLEGE-WIDE DEFINITION OF COURSE LEVELS

Preliminary Remarks: This document should help clarify for both faculty and students the general guidelines for course structure, organization and degree of difficulty or sophistication at each of the 100, 200, 300 and 400 levels.

The 100-, 200-, 300- and 400-level course numbers should have a college-wide meaning which can be defined in general terms. There is a basic distinction in the numbering system used by highly structured "building block" disciplines (where a "102" follows and presupposes a "101" or a "250" is more advanced than a "210") and almost totally unstructured ones (in which course numbers within a level are not indicative of any particular sequence), which is within the jurisdiction of each department. Absolute uniformity of standards is impossible to achieve and not necessarily desirable. We therefore propose the following general criteria for course levels which we believe can satisfy the needs of the various academic departments of the college. Since the course level criteria are general, specific course prerequisites, co-requisites, etc., if any, should be clearly stated under each course description.

The differentiation between lower and upper division Courses shall be as follows:

Lower-division courses comprise all 100-level courses and all 200-level courses.

Upper-division courses comprise all 300- and 400-level courses.

000-level course designation

Remedial courses; placement determined by college-wide testing of entering students.

100-level course designation

Courses with no prerequisites, or survey courses, or courses defining basic concepts or presenting the terminology of a discipline.

Assumptions and Expectations:

- 1. that students possess writing ability sufficient to compose definitions, paragraphs, or essays where appropriate;*
- 2. that they possess reading skills sufficient to comprehend college-level material in text- book and monograph form. Where specified, completion of remedial course work should be a prerequisite.*

200-level course designation

Courses of intermediate college-level difficulty; courses with 100-level course(s) as prerequisite(s); or survey courses devoted to particular areas or fields within a discipline.

Assumptions:

- 1. that students will have completed expository writing (ENGL 120) or the equivalent;*
- 2. that they possess general skills such as recognition, reading, appropriate quantitative skills, and varying degree of fluency in writing and articulateness in expression;*
- 3. that they are acquainted with the basic language, terminology, or methodology of the subject itself;*
- 4. that they are, in that subject, at a stage of understanding where they can progress towards some significant conclusions, experiments, or explorations.*

Expectations:

- 1. that students can proceed at a reasonable pace without encountering basic difficulties or comprehension;*

2. *that they can cope with assignments involving reading and comprehending a specified amount of material, or preparing organized papers;*
3. *that they will accomplish a substantial amount of work, for example: study a number of books or work through a comprehensive textbook, write a number of papers, or demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of the material covered.*

300-level course designation

Courses of advanced college-level difficulty taken by majors and upper division students; these are often considered to be courses in the Major, offered for students clearly interested and qualified in a subject.

Assumptions:

that the students are at ease and comfortable in the field; that they have acquired an adequate general knowledge in the area to pursue some study in depth, with the proper methodological tools.

Expectations:

1. *that the students have the ability to do research, or to obtain relevant information in the field through the proper use of libraries;*
2. *that they are fluent in the language of the field so as to read and assimilate relevant information;*
3. *that they are able to combine the results of the research, or the reading, into cohesive (and possibly original) statements;*
4. *that they are able to produce some substantial work, such as a paper of "term-paper" length, or a creative or experimental project,*

400-level course designation

Advanced upper-division courses; and/or seminars, tutorials and honor courses for majors and upper-division students.

Assumptions:

1. *that students have completed a substantial amount of work on the 300 level, and, for seminars, tutorials and honor courses ,*
2. *that they have the capacity to work independently under the guidance or supervision of an instructor.*

Expectations:

that students complete research project or paper.