

SDSU Special Topics Course Proposal Form (Regular University) – Instructions

Selected Studies or Topics, Workshop Courses, and Experimental Topics

(296, 496, 596, 696, Latin American Studies 580, Psychology 796, 886)

and General Studies Courses

1. Department. Enter the name and telephone number of department proposing the course.

2. Date of Submission.

3. Indicate Semester to Be Offered.

4. Approvals. If proposed course is approved, sign and date in the space provided and forward to the next reviewing authority. When all endorsements are completed, the course will be included in the appropriate Schedule of Classes.

If a proposal is not approved at some stage it should be returned to the originating department with a reason for denial and constructive suggestions for revision.

5. Department Abbreviation. Enter approved departmental abbreviation.

6. Course Number. Enter the proposed course number. (See catalog “Course Numbering System.”)

7. Units. Enter the semester units of credit to be given for the proposed course.

8. Course Title. Enter title proposed for the course. Do not abbreviate title.

9. Grading. Indicate if course is to be available for Cr/NC only or if letter grades will be given. 500-level courses cannot be offered for credit/no credit.

10. Print in Class Schedule. Indicate whether or not you wish to have the course description publicized in the back of the Class Schedule.

11. Course Prerequisites and Description. State the course prerequisites and description you wish to appear in the Class Schedule. Using the format of the catalog, include the topics covered, experiences obtained or activities engaged in and the principal objective of the course. State all prerequisites or concurrent courses. Limit length to 40 words. Use sentence fragments. Omit “This course covers” and “A study of,” etc.

If a course meets more than one hour per week per unit, you should so indicate, i.e., two lectures and three hours of laboratory.

All upper division courses should have prerequisites or a justification should be included on proposal form as to why department feels they are unnecessary.

12. Mode of Instruction. Indicate number of units allocated to each mode of instruction, i.e., lecture, laboratory, activity. You should also list the appropriate staffing formula for each type of instruction. The “faculty staffing formula” designates a C number to describe the way a course is being taught and an S number for supervision assignments. Please *designate the C/S number for every course being proposed*. This is essential for processing courses and will avoid delay. Refer to the “Course Classification System” in the Curriculum Guide for a definition and listing of C/S numbers.

13. Enrollment Estimate. Give estimate of enrollment per section and number of sections to be offered.

14. Submission of previously approved course proposal. A copy of page 1, as previously approved, may be submitted with *current* date and signature of department chair and college dean.

15. Permanent Course Proposal. Indicate if proposal will be submitted or is being processed to make this a permanent course in SDSU catalog.

16. Student Learning Outcomes. Succinctly describe the three most important competencies or capabilities students will develop in this course, numbered sequentially.

In framing learning outcome statements, consider the appropriate scope of each statement and whether the list as a whole will reflect the overall purpose and themes of the course. Consider the appropriate degree of discretion the course should grant to instructors regarding the scope and context of the learning outcomes.

Outcome statement allowing more discretion: “Analyze contemporary political affairs.”

Outcome statement allowing less discretion: “Select appropriate statistical tests for determining the statistical significance of differences between group means for typical comparative or causal comparative research studies.”

Examples of Student Learning Outcomes Statements

Define and identify examples of major terms and concepts in sociology.

Analyze environmental policy.

Use models and theories to predict results of simulated structural stress.

Summarize research questions for a proposed experiment and identify their origins in previous research findings.

Describe types of human error commonly associated with cognitive overload.

Write in English the gist of video or audio recordings of simple Arabic conversations.

Demonstrate appreciation for art by maintaining an art journal describing the influence of art works on his/her thoughts and feelings.

Writing Component. Consists of a variety of assignments, e.g., term papers, book/journal article reviews, summary reports of exhibits, essay and/or take-home exams. If a writing requirement is not considered appropriate for a specific course, justification must be given (implementation of Senate recommendation for Student Literacy, 5/11/82).

17. Audience. Who will take the course? Is it designed for majors, minors, non-majors, etc.? Describe audience.

18. Class Meeting Times. State when the course will be taught (i.e., weekend course-Friday and Saturday; 15 weeks; 7 weeks; etc.). According to university policy, a unit or credit hour represents 50 minutes of lecture or recitation combined with two hours of preparation per week throughout one semester of 15 weeks. Two hours of activity (as in physical education) or three hours of laboratory (as in the sciences) are considered equivalent to one hour of lecture.

19. **Writing Component.** Consists of a variety of assignments, e.g., term papers, book/journal article reviews, summary reports of exhibits, essay and/or take-home exams. If a writing requirement is not considered appropriate for a specific course, justification must be given (implementation of Senate recommendation for Student Literacy, 5/11/82).
20. **Texts.** List anticipated textual materials and relevant references.
21. **Grading Standards.** Describe the grading standards and weights assigned to various coursework components as percentages of the student's final grade.
22. **Special Requirements.**
 - A. For 500-numbered courses, specify any special requirements for graduate students.
 - B. For 500-numbered courses, if grading standards and weights are identical for graduate and undergraduate students, please justify.
23. **Distance Education and Hybrid Course.** Refer to the Distance Education Policy in the Curriculum Guide.
24. **General Education Courses.** If course is being proposed for G.E., indicate which section (i.e., Life Sciences, etc.). Refer to the "General Education" section of the current Curriculum Guide and attach answers to the appropriate criteria questions to the SDSU Special Topics Course Proposal form.

Review of Topics Courses

When reviewing topics courses, the curricular review committees pay particular attention to the following:

Is level of course appropriate, i.e., lower division (100-299), upper division (300-499), upper division also acceptable for graduate credit (500-599)?

Are appropriate prerequisites listed?

Is course description clear and brief?

Is mode of instruction appropriate, i.e., breakdown into lecture, lab, activity?

Is grading method appropriate?

For short-term courses, will students have adequate time for out-of-class preparation and study, i.e., is time frame for course appropriate?

Criteria for Short-Term Courses

Having studied many proposals for experimental courses to be taught for less than a semester's duration, the Committee on Innovative and Interdisciplinary courses and the Graduate Council Curriculum Committee are greatly concerned that all courses taught in other than the traditional semester format be as rigorous as regular courses, numbers of units notwithstanding. They question whether it is feasible to offer effectively certain workshop, weekend, and three-week courses for as many units of credit as would be earned in a regular fifteen-week semester. Likewise, they expect compelling academic rationale for offering such courses at the upper division or graduate level.

The catalog is explicit: "One unit of credit hour represents 50 minutes of lecture or recitation combined with two hours of preparation per week throughout the semester.... Two hours of activity... or three hours of laboratory... are considered equivalent to one hour of lecture." Although a course may be computed to equal the number of lecture minutes allotted in a regular semester (e.g., 750 minutes per fifteen-week, one-unit course), this computation does not include that greater portion of self-disciplined, individual, and private study required for successful, lasting assimilation of course content and experience.

Thus, a one-unit lecture course extended over a semester would allow not merely fifteen or so hours of classroom presentation but also thirty or so hours necessary to complement the lectures and discussions with research and analysis. The lectures of the same one-unit course might be compressed into a five-hour-per-day weekend seminar, but this would concomitantly require ten hours of daily study, which, the review committees submit, is patently impractical. Even if a student could devote these forty-five hours to the course, they suspect that the ordeal could be so exhausting as to preclude the leisurely contemplation of content which is essential to that intellectualization expected in university coursework.

The university-wide Topics Review Committees therefore urge: first, that you give careful and honest attention to the type, level, and content of the courses which are proposed and that for experimental as well as regular courses you convincingly document this rigor with organized syllabi, relevant bibliographies, class schedules and formats, and intelligible rationales; and second, that departments, colleges, and deans exercise their responsibilities to scrutinize such courses with all their appropriate expertise.