

Guidelines for Banner Course Descriptions

Please observe these best practices for course descriptions when proposing new courses.

Purpose of course descriptions

The course description requested in section nine of the Course Number Registry Form (CNRF) and published in the Banner catalog is distinct from material that may appear on a particular syllabus for the course and will generally be less detailed. Banner course descriptions represent a course over its lifetime. Descriptions should indicate the general content and outcomes associated with a course rather than supply details that might reflect a specific instructor's approach or historically specific teaching contexts.

Guidelines for Course Descriptions

- Descriptions should observe the 125-word limit specified in the CNRF.
- Descriptions should be written in the present tense.
- Descriptions should use verbs indicating particular student actions or course outcomes (e.g., courses might *introduce* material, students might *develop* knowledge or *practice* skills) rather than more passive or general actions (e.g., students will be *exposed to* or *explore* material).
- Descriptions should avoid lists of specific works, authors, or topics to be covered. Descriptions should not specify materials or topics that may change over time or with instructors.
- Descriptions should avoid specifying student tasks or requirements, since these may change over time or with instructors.

Examples of Conforming Course Descriptions

AFAM 4663 – Early African American Literature

Surveys the development and range of black American writers, emphasizing poetry and prose from early colonial times to the Civil War.

ECON 1293 – European Economic History

Covers European economic history from ancient times to the twentieth century. A brief survey of early Greek and Roman economic life provides the context for more in-depth analysis of medieval, mercantilist, and modern economic institutions. Emphasis is on the role of technology, trade, and natural resources in the development of modern European economies.

ENGL 2100

Examines Greek, Roman, and biblical literature (in translation) as background for literary study. Emphasizes the development of myth, genre, and theme. Readings include Homer, Virgil, Ovid, the most influential parts of the Bible, and Dante.

POLS 1140 – Exploring Politics and Political Science

Introduces students to basic concepts and principles in politics and political science. Combines a study of contemporary political events with appropriate readings that provide a conceptual and theoretical context for understanding the political world.