

Writing a Course Description

Course Descriptions should be brief; forty words or less. The only essential element is a sentence fragment to generally describe the course content. Example:

GE 3850 Geologic and hydrologic factors controlling the occurrence, movement, and development of subsurface water. Quantitative methods for analyzing groundwater systems are introduced.

Optional items that may be included:

- A more specific sentence ("Topics include..." [2 or 3 should suffice] or "Emphasis on...")
- Recommended equipment ("TI-85 recommended" or "Students must provide their own bow.")
- Course is only a half-semester course, if applicable, and what half it is offered ("Course is offered second half of Spring semester.")

What not to include:

- Entire course content. Save the detailed descriptions for the syllabus.
- Wasted words:
"Introduction to" or "Advanced study of" if they duplicate the course title

Introductory phrases such as "Students enrolled in this course will perform..." or "Students will be introduced to..."
- Vague words:
"empower," "state-of-the-art," "issues," "intensive"
- Cliches:
"unique experience," "today's global society," "the twenty-first century"