

Undergraduate Course Numbering Guidelines
Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education

Guiding Principles

Since 2007, undergraduate courses numbering 494 and above were defined and adopted for consistency among departments and decanal units. The following document completes that process with university-wide guidelines for all course numbering:

- 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;
- To help faculty in their development of new courses and revision of their curricula, by having a uniform policy statement that describes the nature of coursework at a given level of the undergraduate experience; and
- To aid university assessment responsibilities.

These were approved October 15, 2012 by the Associate Deans' Council and the Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, and are effective immediately.

Guidelines

Course numbers should be determined either 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, 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 University's curriculum. A single course at a given level will not have all of the indicated characteristics, but it should have several of them.

Process

All new course proposals should be prepared according to the guidelines. 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	Examples
100-199	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to a broad field • Appropriate for students with the level of sophistication of the typical freshman or for more advanced students with no prior background in the discipline • General survey course, covering a broad range of topics and approaches • Foundation course that teaches basic skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No prerequisites or assumes university level skills • First course in a sequence; non-majors may enroll • Courses offered in the first year of a required 4-year sequence for the major 	<p>PSY 101 – Introduction to Psychology; MTH 121 – Survey of Calculus and its Applications; ENG 101 – Writing 1 BIO 129 -- Perspectives in Human Biology; ECO 181 – Introduction to Macroeconomics; UGC 111 – World Civilizations I</p>
200-299	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intermediate level or introduction to a sub-discipline • Appropriate for students with the level of sophistication of the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With or without prerequisites • Intended for students familiar with the basic concepts of a discipline and have university 	<p>AAS 293 – Race and the Law; PHY 207 – General Physics III;</p>

	<p>typical sophomore in the discipline</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate for majors and advanced non-majors • Explores or surveys a broad area of the discipline with some depth 	<p>level reading, writing, and critical thinking skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offered in the first year of a required 3-year sequence for the major • Not acceptable for application to graduate degrees. 	<p>MGA 201 – Introduction to Accounting; UGC 211 – American Pluralism; ENG 211 – Books of the Environmental Movement</p>
300-399	<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 • Appropriate for students with the level of sophistication of the typical junior or senior in the discipline • 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 may include: university-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 3-year sequence for the major • Typically not acceptable for application to graduate degrees • Under current UB policy, unable to be dual-listed with graduate courses 	<p>AHI 320 – Northern Renaissance Art; EE 310 – Electronic Devices and Circuits; PSC 308 – Organizational Theory in Political Institutions; MTH 311 – Introduction to Higher Mathematics; PHY 301 – Intermediate Mechanics I; ARC 328 – Historic Preservation; NUR 348 – Introduction to Nursing Research HIS 391 – China and the World</p>
400-493	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For upper-division students: advanced, sophisticated and demanding • Specific, focused subject matter • Appropriate for students with the level of sophistication of the typical junior or senior • Students are expected to master a topic, solve problems, and apply principles • Course requires independent initiative and work • Focus on student-initiated projects, research, and learning • Seminars, directed readings and research, and practica 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate for students 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 UB policy, able to be dual-listed with graduate courses 	<p>DMS 403 – Advanced Documentary Production; GLY 407 – Geological Field Training; NMD 401 – InVivo Studies III; APY 443 – Advanced Physical Anthropology PHI 465 – Ancient Philosophy MGO 403 – Fundamentals of Strategic Management ENG 435 – Advanced Creative Writing</p>
494 Senior Capstone Course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lecture or seminar format • To be completed at end of the major, integrating information and skills from earlier coursework in the major • Focus on student-initiated projects, research, and learning • Integrative in nature, providing a culminating experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prerequisites include successful completion of years 1-3 of the major 	<p>INF 494 – Informatics Senior Capstone</p>

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 QPA; A- or better in course in which the student will assist; and permission of instructor 	ECO 495 – Undergraduate Supervised Teaching
496 Internship or practicum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hands-on experience in the field • 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, 2 or more courses within the discipline, or special prerequisites 	COM 496
497 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 	GLY 497 – Departmental Honors Thesis
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. 	ECO 498 – Undergraduate Research
499 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 university. 	<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 work specific to each student. 	

In addition to the foregoing university guidelines for course levels, the following should also be considered by when assigning a course number:

- 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 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. Examples are MTH 121 & 122 and MTH 121 & 221.
- 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.