COURSE DESCRIPTION AND CONTENT STYLE GUIDELINES

Bowdoin uses the ***Chicago Manual of Style*** (17th edition) as the style guide for publications and certain written content and communications, including course descriptions.

CONTENT

- Ideally not to exceed **700 characters**
- Provide a **content summary, but not rationale or intended goals**
- Should **not serve as a syllabus**; does not need to include background on course subject matter
- May include **lists of works to be read**, but should offer only a sampling, and be ordered alphabetically by authors' last names

STYLE

- **Avoid content/sentences phrased in the form of a question**, particularly a series of questions
- Write descriptions in the **present tense**; e.g., write "Explores fields of study such as…"
- Should be in the **third person**; e.g., do not write "we," "our," "you"
- **May use phrases**, rather than full sentences, e.g.:

  Examines Fyodor Dostoevsky's later novels. Studies the author's unique brand of realism, which explores the depths of human psychology and spirituality. Emphasis on the anti-Western, anti-materialist bias of Dostoevsky's quest for meaning in a world growing increasingly unstable, violent, and cynical.

- **Capitalization of Departments and Programs:** Each department and program has only one name, the formal name, which is capitalized. All other versions are informal and therefore written in lowercase unless words within the name are proper nouns (e.g., Latin, Romance languages and literatures, English, Africana, Asian, etc.). Areas of study are also lowercased in the context of majors and minors.

  Department of Biology (formal name) versus biology department (informal)

  Africana Studies Program (formal) versus Africana studies (informal)

- **"Above" vs. "Higher":** When referring to courses with specific numbers higher than a particular number, use "higher." When referring to the relative level of a course, use "above."

GRAMMAR

- Use **only one space after punctuation**, including periods, commas, semicolons, colons, etc.
- Use the **serial comma**, e.g.:

  An auditioned ensemble of students, faculty, staff, **(serial comma)** and community singers. At least one of the semesters features a large-scale work for chorus and orchestra. Recent tours have included all the major cities of New England, Serbia, Bulgaria, **(serial comma)** and Greece. Rehearsals are Thursday and Sunday evenings. Sight reading ability is desired but not required.

- **Spell out numbers** under one hundred in running text, except when used with percentages.
- Spell out **percent** (e.g., "10 percent") in running text. Do not use the percentage symbol. If the number begins the sentence, always spell it out, even if used with a percentage.
- When a **level of course modifies another word** (such as "1000-level course"), the level is hyphenated. When a level of course stands on its own, it is not.
- **Centuries** are spelled out (e.g., "in the twenty-first century") and never appear as numbers. When the century is modifying another word (e.g., "the preferred twenty-first-century literature") a hyphen conjoins the numbered century in question with the word "century."

COURSE INSTRUCTOR NAME

Names appear in accordance with information provided directly from Academic Affairs. They include first name or initial, middle name or initial, last name. Nicknames are discouraged. Exceptions may exist.

COURSE TRANSCRIPT/ SHORT TITLE

Cannot exceed thirty characters, including spaces.

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REQUIREMENTS AND RESTRICTIONS

- **Half-credit courses:** The sentence "One-half credit." appears at the end of the course description, before the cross-listing.
- **Credit/D/Fail:** Courses graded on this basis are noted with the sentence "Grading is Credit/D/Fail." at the end of the course description, before any mention of credits.
- **Courses that may be repeated for credit:** The sentence "May be repeated for credit." appears at the end of the course description, before any language about grading.
- If a course **"Does not count towards the major or minor."**—this sentence appears at the end of the course description.
- If **students are excluded from a course** if they have taken another, that is noted with "Not open to students who have credit for ___."
- Descriptions may include **special requirements**, e.g.:

  Repertory students are required to take Dance 2221 concurrently. Repertory classes are an opportunity to learn and perform new choreography or historical reconstructions created by faculty or guests. Class meetings conducted as rehearsals. Additional rehearsals may be required. Attendance at all classes, studio and stage rehearsals, and performances required.
- **Notes** may be included at the end of the course description and/or in the Class Comment field on Polaris depending on the content.

SOFTWARE RESTRICTIONS

- **Italics:** Banner software does not permit italicized text. Anything that would grammatically be italicized should appear within double quotes.
- While **em dashes** are not preceded/followed by spaces, Banner software does not accommodate em dashes. As such, em dashes should be written as two concurrent hyphens.
- **Accent Marks:** Banner software does not accommodate most accent marks. The spelling of certain names/words should be adjusted if Banner's automatic deletion of the accent mark/symbol obscures the meaning.

QUESTIONS?

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