

# PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The overview or description of a department or a program is intended both for the uninitiated student and for the student majoring in the subject. For the former, it is among the first descriptions of a discipline—its scope, nature, and significance—they encounter at Yale. Thus the program description, if it is well written, can provide an informative short orientation to the department's field of study. The introductory material must be brief, and it will coexist with 80-odd other introductions cast in YCPS prose. For the major or potential major, the program description has a different use. The student reads it to learn what is required, including the number of courses, the prescribed courses or prerequisites, the courses in other departments that may be substituted for the ones needed for the major, and the method of fulfilling the senior requirement. The codified table of requirements at the end of the program description is intended not to replace the prose but to serve as a quick summary of it.

The program description is in a sense contractual. If the requirements of a major should change (with the approval of the Committee on Majors), it is ordinarily expected that students will be held to the requirements in effect no later than the year in which they elected their major. Since many students plan ahead carefully, a department that changes its major requirements should consider making the changes effective only for the first-year class and subsequent classes. A department cannot make new major requirements mandatory for students who will be juniors or seniors in the academic year during which the changes go into effect. However, such majors may elect to complete the new requirements with department approval.

Some departments offer defined concentrations as part of their major and thus have an additional section in their YCPS pages. This information should also be reviewed yearly.

Departments have worked with the University Registrar's Office to establish Degree Audit to track their major requirements. This requires a careful review of the program overview and table of requirements, helping to clarify what is sometimes vague language. Degree Audit provides students, advisers, and deans with a dynamic tool showing a student's progress toward fulfillment of Yale College requirements, including major requirements. If you have questions, contact registrar@yale.edu. (registrar@yale.edu)

Over forty departments have created roadmaps or visual representations of the major requirements and typical course sequences. For more information, contact Beth Baumgartel (beth.baumgartel@yale.edu) in the University Registrar's Office.

For more information, see Changes to Requirements of the Major.