Proposals for New Courses and for Changes in Existing Courses

Proposals for New Courses

Proposals for new Yale College courses are submitted in CourseLeaf CIM and reviewed by the Course of Study Committee. Previously taught courses returning to the curriculum after an absence of more than seven years are treated as new courses.

To propose a new course, after logging into CIM click the green “Propose New Course” button and fill out the form in the pop-up window. Click the “Save and Submit” button at the bottom of the form to begin the workflow for the course review process.

Most helpful to the Course of Study Committee in understanding the nature of a proposed course are:

• The title and a brief description of the course suitable for publication in the YCPS;
• An expanded description of the subject matter and purposes of the course, including the level of the course and examples of the bibliography, and any other material that might explain the nature of the course;
• The NetID or name of the proposed instructor. Anyone teaching in Yale College for the first time is asked to attach to the CIM form a curriculum vitae and a provisional syllabus for the proposed course;
• A specific indication of the nature and amount of work required of the student. Note that the Course of Study Committee requires instructors to provide students with feedback on their academic progress by around midterm and expects every course to conclude with a final examination, term essay, or similar demonstration of proficiency in the course material. In addition, instructors may assign no more than 20–25 pages total in graded writing assignments. For more information on coursework guidelines, see Midterm Feedback in Courses, Final Examinations, and Course Requirements;
• The meeting time pattern. Information about standard time patterns is available under Standard Meeting Times. Specific days and times are not required in the CIM form.

The CIM form includes a question regarding academic integrity, to be included on the course syllabus. The question is designed to ensure that instructors are prepared to address issues of cheating, plagiarism, inappropriate collaboration, and the like within the context of the proposed course. Information about teaching these matters is available on the Writing Center Website. The CSC strongly recommends that all instructors include a link to the section on understanding and avoiding plagiarism on every syllabus.

Changes in Existing Courses

An existing course that undergoes a significant change (see below) must be reviewed by the Course of Study Committee. All other course changes are reviewed by the University Registrar’s Office before they are published in online course information systems. Both types of proposals are made using the same CourseLeaf CIM form.

To propose changes for an existing course, after logging into CIM enter the course number or title in the search box and click the green “Search” button; use an asterisk before and after the search term as a wildcard if necessary. Select the course from the list of search results and click the “Edit Course” button. After making the changes to the course information, click the “Save and Submit” button at the bottom of the form to begin the workflow for the review process.

The Course of Study Committee must approve an existing course if:

• The course format changes. For example, a course that was originally approved by the CSC with a lecture format (with a standard lecture time pattern and required work appropriate for a lecture course) that is changing to a seminar course (with limited enrollment, a standard seminar meeting time, and a different pattern of work expected of the students) must be resubmitted to the committee. Conversely, a seminar becoming a lecture course must also be resubmitted.
• A department requests the addition of a graduate or professional school number to an undergraduate course. All courses requesting joint undergraduate/graduate status must answer two questions on the CIM form that explain why a dual level would be appropriate.
• The instructor of the course requests a non-standard meeting pattern.

Course Titles and Course Descriptions

The Course of Study Committee and the editors of the YCPS also have within their charge the editing of course titles and course descriptions to conform to a consistent standard.

The title of a course should be both descriptive and succinct. Course titles need to make evident the focus or method of the course, whether to students searching online databases for keywords, to colleagues in other departments serving as advisers, or to graduate admission committees, fellowship commissions, or potential employers seeking to establish the nature of the student’s program of study. Titles with two parts joined by a colon are strongly discouraged. Instructors sometimes propose titles with an ornamental or metaphorical initial phrase followed by a colon and an explanatory second half; the Course of Study Committee generally discards the first half of such a title before it approves the course. Titles longer than thirty characters, including spaces, must be abbreviated to fit in online course information displays and on transcripts. A sample of appropriately descriptive titles of thirty or fewer characters includes the following:
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The Art of Chu China; Ethics and the Media; French New Wave Cinema; General Ecology; History of Japan to 1868; Human Evolution; Local Flora; Royal Maya Cities; Shakespeare’s Political Plays; Stars and Their Evolution; and Theoretical Fluid Dynamics.

Course descriptions should be relatively short. Ideally, the course description should run from three to five lines in the YCPS, a length that may not be able to do a course full justice. But within the necessary limits, a well-written course description can provide a pithy introduction for students trying to identify the courses they might like to take. Course descriptions should focus on what will be taught in the course rather than on observations or general statements about a field or discipline. Descriptions are routinely edited for brevity and cogency. In keeping with YCPS style, questions are rephrased into statements, future tense is changed to present tense, and jargon is removed.