COURSE REQUIREMENTS

When planning the nature and amount of work required for a course, please keep in mind the following guidelines established by the Yale College Course of Study Committee.

During the academic year, classes meet for 13 weeks per term. Course syllabi should include all 13 weeks and no more. Courses that meet during reading period are the exception. Their syllabi should contain 14 weeks and should clearly state that class meetings are held during reading period.

The committee requires instructors to provide students with feedback on their academic progress by midterm. See Midterm Feedback in Courses for more information on this policy.

No more than 20–25 pages of formal academic writing should be required in any term course. If the course requires students to submit more than one paper during the term, the combined number of pages should not exceed 25. Reading responses and other informal writing assignments need not be included in this total.

In consensus with the judgment of the directors of undergraduate studies, as sought in spring 2014, the Course of Study Committee will henceforth use as a guideline in considering proposals for new courses that no final examination should count for more than 50% of the student’s course grade, unless compelling reasons to deviate from this cap are provided by the instructor and accepted by the committee.

The Course of Study Committee uses as a guideline the expectation that class participation should count for no more than 20% of the course grade. Instructors may exceed this limit only if they clearly delineate in the syllabus the evaluative basis for the participation grade and provide students with individual, graded feedback on performance in this area by midterm. The committee understands “class participation” to refer only to the engagement and interaction of students during class time. Written responses of any kind, whether online or on paper, are not included and should be listed as separate elements of the course grade, both on the syllabus and in new course proposals.

Each course proposal must also provide a breakdown of the component value of the different assignments of the course in determining the term grade. The Course of Study Committee uses the following guidelines in reviewing new course proposals: no final examination should count for more than 50% of the student’s term grade, unless compelling reasons to deviate from this cap are provided by the instructor and accepted by the committee; class participation—that is, the engagement and interaction of students during class time, not including formal oral presentations or any written work—should count for no more than 20% of the term grade, except when the instructor explicitly defines the evaluative basis for the participation grade and agrees to provide before midterm graded feedback to each student about his or her performance in this area of the course.