

COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Descriptions that appear on Yale Course Search should be relatively short so that readers can skim them quickly. Ideally, course descriptions are between fifty and two hundred words. While this length may not cover the full scope of the course, a well-written course description can provide an informative and interesting introduction for students trying to identify the courses they might like to take. In addition to the course description, instructors are encouraged to provide additional information on Canvas before course registration begins.

The course description ought to indicate the scope and nature of the course, a representative sampling of the topics it will cover, the approach it will pursue, and any special background it presumes. Information about papers or examinations and about the actual mechanics of a course is best conveyed in the syllabus or on Canvas. But any unusual feature of a course that students should be aware of, either in its format or in the background it requires, ought to be included (e.g., prerequisites, auditions, and extended field trips).

Course descriptions and titles are sometimes edited for brevity and cogency. In keeping with YCPS style, future tense is changed to present tense and jargon is typically removed. If the editor queries the meaning or tone of a course description or title, the query is often addressed to both the DUS and the instructor. The DUS may be asked to work with new instructors to ensure clear and concise course descriptions and meaningful course titles.

See also Course Titles and Descriptions under Proposals for New Courses and for Changes in Existing Courses.