Course Description Style Guide

In the interest of presenting course descriptions in a consistent fashion, please consider the following guidelines when drafting course descriptions (note that prerequisites have been omitted from examples in the interest of brevity). Any questions may be directed to Official Publications: officialpublications@ttu.edu

• Limit course descriptions to 25 words or less (not counting addenda such as prerequisite and corequisite listings, writing intensive denotations, core curriculum denotations, etc.).

• Refrain from using “this course” in the description, as the phrase is implied.

• Use active voice when possible, e.g.:

  HIST 4383.
  History of Central Asia (3). Explores the history of Central Asia from ancient nomadic empires to the present. Topics include nomadic pastoralism, Mongols, competing imperialisms, everyday life, Islam, and politics. (Writing Intensive)

• Course description should describe A) what the course IS, or, B) what the course DOES, e.g.:

  GEOL 4318.
  Geology of Texas (3). A comprehensive study of the structure, stratigraphy, and economic geology of the state of Texas and parts of adjacent states.

  EMC 3358.
  International Electronic Media (3). Examines the social, political, and economic effects of international media and other topics related to the globalization of media companies.

• Abbreviations should not be used, though topic-specific acronyms are acceptable.

• Oxford comma use is optional and up to the discretion of the course description author. Official Publications may insert an Oxford comma to remove ambiguity from a list if none is present.

• The initial sentence in the description should be complete, but incomplete sentences may be used subsequently so long as the meaning of each sentence is clear and the subject relates back to the initial sentence, e.g.:

  RHIM 4313.
  Legal Aspects of Hospitality Industry (3). A study of the laws applicable to restaurants, hotels, and associated businesses. Includes duties, rights, and liabilities of institutions and guests.

• Semicolon use should be judicious and primarily used to separate different aspects of a course when one of the characteristics is itself a series, e.g.:

  MATH 6332.
  Geometric Mechanics. (3). Geometric concepts in classical mechanics; Euler-Language equations, Legendre transform, and Hamilton’s equations; symplectic manifolds; group actions; momentum maps; Hamiltonian and Lagrangian reduction.