

## Benefits of Special Topics Courses

1. **Curricular Flexibility**
  - a. Allow departments to respond quickly to emerging trends, technologies, or scholarly debates.
  - b. Enable faculty to teach niche subjects aligned with their research interests.
2. **Exploration and Innovation**
  - a. Provide a space for testing new course ideas before formalizing them.
  - b. Allow students to explore topics outside the traditional curriculum.
3. **Student Engagement**
  - a. Often more interactive and discussion-based.
  - b. Can be tailored to student interests, increasing motivation and participation.
4. **Skill Development**
  - a. Encourage critical thinking, interdisciplinary approaches, and research skills.
  - b. Often include project-based or experiential learning components.
5. **Customization of Degree Plans**
  - a. Help students tailor their academic experience to career goals or graduate study interests.
  - b. Can fulfill elective requirements or count toward major/minor with approval.

## Best Practices for Using Special Topics Courses

1. **Integration with Curriculum**
  - a. Ensure the course complements existing offerings and doesn't duplicate content.
  - b. Clarify how it fits into degree requirements (e.g., elective, capstone, major credit).
2. **Documentation and Assessment**
  - a. Keep records of syllabi, student evaluations, and learning outcomes.
  - b. Use assessments to determine the course's impact and potential for future inclusion.
3. **Student Input and Feedback**
  - a. Consider student interests when designing topics.
  - b. Use feedback to refine future offerings or develop permanent courses.
4. **Faculty Expertise and Passion**
  - a. Courses should be taught by faculty with deep knowledge or active research in the topic.
  - b. Passionate instruction often leads to higher student engagement.
5. **Clear Learning Outcomes**
  - a. Define specific goals and competencies to ensure academic rigor.
  - b. Align outcomes with departmental and institutional standards.
6. **Advising and Communication**
  - a. Advisors should inform students about the value and applicability of special topics courses.
  - b. Promote offerings early to ensure adequate enrollment.

### NOTE:

If a special topics course is used for grade replacement, that final grade will need to be adjusted manually through the Registrar.

## SPECIAL TOPICS SYLLABUS CONTENT

Follow [Syllabus Guidance for New Courses](#).

Additional considerations for Special Topics courses are listed below.

### Course Description

Keep the official course description general enough to cover future topics.

- What is the focus of the course?
- Why is it relevant or timely?
- What themes or questions will be explored?

### *TTU Course Catalog Examples:*

- Investigation of problems in agricultural education or extension education of special interest to the student. May be repeated for credit. F, S, SSI, SSII.
- Study of a specific topic pertinent to the family and consumer sciences education profession. May be repeated (different topics) for a maximum of 12 hours credit.
- Prerequisite: Junior or senior standing. Consideration of selected topics in rhetoric. May be repeated for credit.
- Topics may cover musicology, music theory, applied music, applied arts, and other areas from multiple periods and genres. May be repeated under different topics.
- Advanced music topics may cover musicology, music theory, applied music, applied arts, and other areas from multiple periods and genres. May be repeated under different topics.

### Learning Outcomes

Anchor course outcomes to the program's Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) so each version of the course remains aligned with the program's overarching goals. Special Topics SLOs might also address aspects of workforce development or new innovations within the degree-related career fields.

List outcomes that fit any version of the course, such as:

- Analyze complex issues from multiple perspectives
- Conduct independent research
- Communicate ideas effectively in writing and discussion

### Schedule of Topics

Include a flexible Schedule template. This lets future instructors or coordinators plug in new readings or activities easily.

Structure a generic week-by-week outline, such as:

- Week 1: Introduction to the topic and key questions
- Weeks 2–5: Foundational concepts and frameworks
- Weeks 6–10: Case studies or applications
- Weeks 11–15: Student projects and synthesis