

**Revised Format for
Appendix: Special Topics Document Template
Reflects OA Changes
All Items are Required**

Special topics courses should be used for curricular development where the educational outcomes appear to be predictable. The proposal for offering a special topic is similar to that for the offering of a new course, since many Special Topics courses are developed into new courses following the allowed two offerings. It is thus easier to provide the OA material at the time the topic is developed than to wait until the later point.

**APPENDIX – SPECIAL TOPICS
Department of XXXXX**

**## Title of Existing Special Topics Course
hours and credits of course**

**Bulletin description of generic special topics course as it currently listed
Prerequisites of Existing special topics class**

**Title of Topic being proposed
Semester which the Special Topic will be offered**

Description for the special topic
Prerequisite: Special Prerequisites if any for this topic.

Projected enrollment: 25 students per year

Clearances: Specify 'None' or list the departments from whom clearances have been obtained.

Rationale: A rationale is needed for each new topic. The academic need for the topic should be concisely explained. The explanation must include, but need not be limited to, an explanation of how the topic serves the department's goals for student learning. Thus, in the case of a special topics rubric permitted in the major, Rationale will take the form of linking the proposed course's learning outcomes to the overall program goals for majors; in the case of other courses it will explain how the proposed course's learning outcomes relate to the department's mission.

Program/ Department Goals Addressed by Course:

Objectives of Course:

Outcomes Anticipated for Course:

Course Outline: *A fourteen week syllabus that refers back to objectives and outcomes specified, and how the outcomes will be assessed. .*

Method of evaluation: *Specify how students will be evaluated (e.g., exams, term papers, student projects, etc.). Note that all classes must have a final exam unless a waiver has been obtained from the Committee.*

Method of assessment: *Specify how course objectives and outcomes will be compared to each other.*

Bibliography: List possible texts as well as other relevant bibliographic information that the students will be expected to utilize..

How to Complete the Revised Course Form

Some Basic Definitions from the Outcomes Assessment Resource Manual (OARM) pp. A-4 ff:

“Goals: Broad statements concerning student learning in a particular area.

Objectives: What faculty **intend** students to learn in a particular course or courses.

Outcome: Degree to which students **have in fact learned** what faculty intended, made visible in a completed assignment (learning activity).

Assessment: Comparison of objectives and outcomes. These should be listed in each course outline and correspond to the objectives and outcomes being addressed.”

The essay “Teaching Practices and Assessment” (pp. 4-9, OARM) offers a useful discussion of the similarities and differences between evaluation (grading) and assessment. For examples of goals, objectives and outcomes from a variety of disciplines, please see pp. A4-14 of the OARM.

Goals Addressed by course:

Each program/department has developed its own set of common goals, and each course in a program/department should address one or more of these goals.

Objectives of this course:

One or more of the objectives should address the program/department goals. As a rule of thumb, you should have no more than 3-5 content objectives and 3-5 generic general education objectives for a course.

General education objectives may be found in the OARM and are listed under each of the 32 general education goals. The generic general education goals in the OARM are a good source for general education objectives.

Outcomes for this course:

Each objective has a corresponding outcome. An outcome states what a student will be able to do in order to demonstrate mastery of both content and general education objectives.

Assessment of this course:

The proposal should suggest how each objective will be compared to each outcome. In practice, no more than one or two common outcomes for a course will be assessed by a department during any given semester; faculty in that department will decide on the focus and process of common assessment. Faculty should share with students in their course outline how they plan to assess student mastery of the course objectives of a particular course.