

Guidelines for Catalog Course Descriptions

- **AVOID WORDINESS**

Use “telegram style” concision. Incomplete sentences are acceptable as long as clarity is not sacrificed for brevity. (You may use a more wordy version in your syllabus – keep it brief for the Catalog!)

- Example:

Wordy: “This course thoroughly discusses the <issue> from the local, regional, state, U.S., and global perspectives.”

Better: “The issue is discussed from many diverse perspectives.”

- **AVOID SYLLABUS INFORMATION**

Describe what will be presented in the course. Leave out syllabus information; e.g., grading system, books required, classroom presentation style, how many reports or presentations will be required.

- **USE PRESENT TENSE**

- **AVOID JARGON AND USE A STRAIGHT-FORWARD ACADEMIC TONE**

- **AVOID OBVIOUS, REDUNDANT, PROMOTING PHRASES:**

“This course is about...” “This is an intensive course...” “We will discuss...”

- **GOOD BEGINNINGS:**

“Topics include...” “Presents theory of...” “Introduction to...” “In-depth coverage of...” “Principles of...”

“Overview of...” “Analysis of...” “Contemporary methods...” “Theory and practical application of...”

EXAMPLES:

BIOL F115X Fundamentals of Biology I (n)

4 Credits

Offered Fall

Introduction to the principles of biology for science majors, with emphasis on chemistry of life, cell structure, metabolism, genetics and animal form and function. Students for whom this course is required for their major will be given preference when space is limited. Special fees apply. Prerequisites: Placement in ENGL F111X or higher; placement in MATH F151X or higher; CHEM F105X, may be taken concurrently; or permission of the instructor. Recommended: High school biology. (3+3)

BIOL F116X Fundamentals of Biology II (n)

4 Credits

Offered Spring

Continuation of topics addressed in BIOL F115X, with emphasis on evolutionary biology, diversity of life, plant form and function and ecology. Students for whom this course is required for their major will be given preference when space is limited. Special fees apply. Prerequisites: Placement in ENGL F111X or higher; placement in MATH F151X or higher; CHEM F105X, may be taken concurrently; BIOL F115X; or permission of instructor. (3+3)

PS F202 Democracy and Global Society (s)

3 Credits

Offered Spring Even-numbered Years

Examination of the various definitions and types of democracy and the global contexts within which they develop. Cases used draw from a wide range of states, societies and world-historical contexts, and allow comparisons among developed and developing countries. (3+0)