

Group-satisfying Courses at the 300-level

A. Defining the criteria for upper-division status

In general:

1. The course may pursue a specific area that had been included in a lower division survey course.
2. The textbook may serve as a background reference, as it is assumed that students already know the material contained within. Primary reading materials are mostly from a variety of other sources.
3. Papers utilize fundamental research skills and include interpretive opinions based on informed research.
4. The course emphasizes critical thinking and synthesis of concepts
5. Class work requires independent thinking
6. Evaluations stress integration and application of ideas presented

In the social sciences:

1. Specialized subject-matter may be used as lens for considering general problems
2. There is explicit consideration of multiple approaches to a problem or issue
3. There is opportunity for substantial written work, in the form either of essay examinations or, preferably, analytic papers
4. Reading assignments are appropriate in level and amount to upper-division work

In the natural sciences:

1. Courses build on prior mastery of some of the scientific or mathematics principles that are relevant to the course. Typically, this will mean that there is pre-requisite coursework.
2. Courses teach largely from experiments. This does not mean that students must perform experiments, but rather, that they should be given the experimental design and reasoning behind the key concepts presented in the course.
3. Courses include reading and analysis of primary literature. The course may lean heavily on text books, as lower-division courses typically do, but students should also be introduced to excellent, seminal papers, and to the analytical work that is required to understand and criticize them.
4. In some science sequences, upper and lower division courses do not differ much since the workload is extremely "rigorous" at all levels and the course sequence simply progresses throughout the four years.

In contrast, lower-division courses in all areas

1. may follow the format of a general survey course.
2. rely heavily on textbooks as their principal sources.
4. include the teaching of basic writing and research skills and, in arts and letters, the expression of personal opinions in writing assignments.
5. emphasize transmission and understanding of fundamental concepts of the discipline
6. use class work to support absorption of material presented
7. use evaluation methods that test understanding of the material as presented

B. Defining the Criteria for Group-satisfying Status

In general:

1. The definition for group satisfying courses (in Motion US01 – Spring 2001) is satisfactory, but might include the idea that such courses be accessible (if not geared specifically to non-majors.) That is, that no specific background is necessary in order to be eligible for such courses.
2. The course content broadens or enriches the student's in-depth study in the major field
3. The course content provides a broad introduction to ideas and practices of the discipline. ~~That is, if this were the only course a student took, would he/she~~ leave with some tangible knowledge of the discipline? *if this were the only*
4. The course is not designed primarily as a technical foundation for more advanced work within the field
5. The course exposes the student to ways of thinking outside of his/her discipline

The student should

In the social sciences:

Negative criteria: what should not qualify

1. Courses that merely string topics together and fail to offer a coherent overview of the subject
2. Specialized courses on popular subject-matter

In the natural sciences:

Negative criteria: what should not qualify

1. Primary emphasis on laboratory techniques
2. Focus on a narrow range of topics, of most use to professional specialists in that area

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Course Numbering Survey

Ohio State

(A) Courses numbered 000-099 are non-credit courses (except certain seminars and colloquia) for orientation, remedial, or other noncollege-level experiences. These are courses with credit added to graduation requirements.

(B) Courses numbered 100-199 are basic courses providing undergraduate credit, but not to be counted on a major or field of specialization in any department. Courses at this level are beginning courses, required or elective courses that may be prerequisite to other courses.

(C) Courses numbered 200-299 are basic courses providing undergraduate credit and may be counted on a major or field of specialization.

(D) Courses numbered 300-499 are intermediate courses providing under-graduate or basic professional credit that may be counted on a major or field of specialization.

(E) Courses numbered 500-599 are intermediate courses providing under-graduate or professional credit that may be counted on a major or field of specialization and may provide graduate credit only in other departments.

Brown

The ranking description for our courses focuses not so much on their nature or content as it does on the audience for whom they are intended.

Northwestern

100-level courses are primarily for freshmen and sophomores, usually without college prerequisite.

200-level courses are primarily for freshmen, sophomores, and juniors, sometimes with the prerequisite of a 100-level course in the same or a related department.

300-level courses are primarily for upperclass students, with the prerequisite of junior standing or a 100- or 200-level course in the same or a related department.

400-level courses or seminars, in which the major art of the work is not research, are primarily for graduate students; they may be open to advanced undergraduate students with permission.

500-level courses or seminars are graduate courses in which the work is primarily research.

Michigan State

001-099 Non-Credit Courses

Courses with these numbers are offered by the University to permit students to make up deficiencies in previous training or to improve their facility in certain basic skills without earning credit. For information about remedial-developmental-preparatory courses, consult the *Undergraduate Education* section of this catalog.

100-299 Undergraduate Courses

Courses with these numbers are for undergraduate students. They carry no graduate credit, although graduate students may be admitted to such courses in order to make up prerequisites or to gain a foundation for advanced courses.

300-499 Advanced Undergraduate Courses

Courses with these numbers are for advanced undergraduate students. They constitute the advanced portion of an undergraduate program leading to the bachelor's degree. A graduate student may carry 400 level courses for credit upon approval of the student's major department or school. In exceptional cases, a graduate student may petition the dean of his or her college, in writing, for approval of a 300 level course for graduate credit.

North Carolina

In our new numbering we did away with lower and upper division. Faculty say they don't teach those levels. We now distinguish course level by introductory, intermediate, advanced. I don't know the official designations for those, but the faculty seemed to understand those labels.

Washington

Lower-division undergraduate numbers (100-level and 200-level) are appropriate for survey and orientation courses which provide a general introduction to a field of study and are offered to non-majors. These courses should not require extensive prerequisites aside from preceding courses in the same sequence. Courses at the 100-level should be suitable for college freshmen, while 200-level courses are directed toward sophomores although open to qualified freshmen.

Upper-division undergraduate numbers (300-level and 400-level) are appropriate for courses requiring substantial college-level preparation, specified in terms of prerequisites, credits in a specific area, total college credits, class standing, or permission of the department. Screening for these prerequisites, if desired, is facilitated by the use of departmental entry codes. Courses at the 300-level should be suitable for juniors and seniors and are not ordinarily appropriate for well-prepared graduate students, while courses at the 400-level are directed toward seniors and graduate students although open to qualified juniors.

Penn State

UNDERGRADUATE COURSES (1 to 399):

General courses accepted in fulfillment of requirements for the bachelor's degrees.

ADVANCED UNDERGRADUATE COURSES (400 to 499):

Courses open to graduate students and to juniors and seniors and, with the special written permission of the head of the department or the chair of the program sponsoring the course, to qualified students in earlier semesters.

GRADUATE COURSES (500 to 699):

Courses restricted to students registered in the Graduate School, seniors with an average of at least 3.50, and other students who have been granted permission to enroll by the dean of the Graduate School. These courses are described in the Penn State Graduate Degree Programs Bulletin.

Maryland

We don't have any sort of pedagogically nuanced distinction (see below):

- 100-199 Primarily freshman level courses
- 200-299 Primarily sophomore level courses
- 300-399 Junior and senior level courses
- 400-499 Junior and senior level courses acceptable toward some grad. degrees
- 500-599 Post-baccalaureate level courses
- 600-899 Graduate level courses
- 799 Master's thesis
- 899 Doctoral dissertation

Michigan

Key to Course Listings

Course numbers are part of a University-wide numbering system. Generally, courses numbered 100 to 199 are introductory, 200-299 are intermediate, and 300-499 are advanced (upper-level).

Virginia

100-299 Lower level undergraduate: introductory and survey courses.

300-499 Upper level undergraduate: advanced courses that may have prerequisites or require instructor permission.

500-599 Introductory graduate level: courses for beginning graduate students and advanced undergraduates.