## SMU Course Descriptions
### Style Tip Sheet

Last revision: 12/2/15  
URL: [http://www.smu.edu/~media/Site/catalog/PDF/CatalogStyleTipSheet.ashx?la=en](http://www.smu.edu/~media/Site/catalog/PDF/CatalogStyleTipSheet.ashx?la=en)

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<th>Topic</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Examples</th>
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| **Colons**                   | Introduce lists with a sentence followed by a colon or (preferred) with a phrase without a colon. (The word *includes* or *include* indicates a partial list.) | **Like this:** Topics include the following: integrals and vectors.  
**Not this:** Topics include: integrals, vectors, and derivatives. |
| **Commas & Semicolons**      | • Commas between each element and before the final conjunction in a series of three or more elements.  
• Semicolon between elements when there is internal punctuation in any element. | Covers multimedia applications, radio frequency (RF)\*, packaging, and Quality of Service\* (QoS)\*.  
Includes models; applications; and the design, use, and maintenance of systems. |
| **Cross-listed or Equivalent Courses** | • Courses can be set up as equivalent courses in my.SMU as usual.  
• Course equivalency information appears in print or digital catalogs **ONLY** when that information is included in the catalog description. | Analyzes structural relationships among important participants in the U.S. Prerequisite: FINA 3320.  
Students may not receive credit for this course and ECO 3355. |
| **Numbers**                  | • Figures for units of measure.  
  o Units of measure include hours and credit hours.  
  o Also days, weeks, years, feet, miles, etc.  
• Spell out numbers one to nine if not used with a unit of measure. | Prerequisite: 3 credit hours of math.  
Includes a 2-week fieldtrip, 3 hours of lecture, and one 2-hour laboratory.  
One of six core courses required for the M.A.\* in history.\*\*  
**IMPORTANT:** When relevant, use *credit hours* not TCH, term credit hours, or 6 credits (for example). |

### Notes for all catalog text
- **Abbreviations**  
  In general, spell out terms on first reference and in lower-level courses, without putting the abbreviation/acronym in parenthesis. See the SMU Editorial Style Guide for exceptions: [http://smu.edu/brand/editorialstyleguide/a.asp](http://smu.edu/brand/editorialstyleguide/a.asp).
- **Capitalization**  
  Most major style guides and SMU’s style guide favor a “down” style of writing.  
  Verbs – including “is” – and prepositions with four or more letters are capitalized.
- **Degrees: First Reference**  
  B.S., M.B.A., M.Ed., bachelor’s, Master of Science in Entrepreneurship (then M.S. Ent.)
- **Majors, Minors, Etc.**  
  M.S. in physics, Ph.D. in English
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| Parentheses  | • End with campus info if not the main campus.  
• Begin with unusual offerings not listed on the course update form or in my.SMU.  
• Rare: Use with complex numbered lists.                                                                                               | (SMU-in-Taos)  
(spring term of even-numbered years)  
Explores 1) DNA structure ...                                                                                                        |
| Quotation Marks | Around the usual: book titles, court cases, words as words etc., and word(s) normally in italics or not in an English dictionary.                                                                                                                  | Close reading of “The Inferno” and “The Purgatory.”                                             |
| Requisites   | • Courses can be set up with system-enforced requisites in my.SMU as usual.  
• System-enforced requisites appear in print or digital catalogs **ONLY** when that information is included in the catalog description.  
• When relevant, system-enforced requisites and requisites that are not system enforced are usually combined in one list.  
• Omit repeating the subject area abbreviation (ANTH, SPAN, etc.) whenever possible to save space.                                   | Prerequisites: Graduate standing or C- or better in ECO 3301 and 3302, MATH 1309 or 1337, and one of the following: STAT 2301, 2331, 4340.  
Prerequisites: ECO 3301, 3302; MATH 1309 or 1337; STAT 2301, 2331, or 4340; or graduate standing.  
Prerequisites: MATH 2320, 2142, 2143; CEE/ME 2320; CSE 2320 or 2321. Prerequisite or corequisite: CEE 2101.  
Prerequisites: Overall GPA of at least 3.000  
and ENGL 2130, 2230.                                                                                                                        |
| Sentences    | • *This course* is usually omitted. (Never use *class* or *section.*)  
• Sentences and/or fragments are fine.  
• Preferred: Third person, present tense, and active voice.  
• Semicolons and/or commas (not periods) to separate a list of topics.                                                                    | **Like this:** Guest lecturers discuss current topics in research.  
**Not this:** Current research is discussed by guest lecturers.  
**Not this:** We use current research …  
**Not this:** Integrals. Vectors. Derivatives.                                                                                           |
| Titles       | • Colons or commas are preferred over dashes to separate phrases.  
• En dash (no spaces) instead of *to* when possible.  
• No abbreviations or ampersands.                                                                                                       | Introduction to Western Art I: Prehistoric Through Medieval Postwar European Cinema, 1945–Present |

### Notes for all catalog text

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<tr>
<th>▲ GPA</th>
<th>Three decimal places: 4.000, 3.500 (except for Dedman Law)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hyphen with a prefix</td>
<td>For <em>non, post, pre, re</em>, etc., usually no hyphen with a word starting with a consonant.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>What can be included in a course description?</strong></td>
<td>• Only the course abbreviation and number when referring to another course. (Exception for Dedman Law courses.)&lt;br&gt;• A partial or complete list of topics covered.&lt;br&gt;• Benefits such as skills and personal/professional goals students can obtain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is omitted from a course description?</strong></td>
<td>• Credit hours for the course.&lt;br&gt;• Typically offered.&lt;br&gt;• Course titles (except for Dedman Law).&lt;br&gt;• URLs.&lt;br&gt;• Contact info.&lt;br&gt;• Ampersands.&lt;br&gt;• Assumed knowledge.&lt;br&gt;• Abbreviations on first reference, usually, but exceptions are generally OK for high-level graduate courses.&lt;br&gt;• When <em>we</em> could refer generally to all human beings or to the discipline, the course description should be reworded or recast to avoid ANY use of a pronoun with a vague (or missing) antecedent or that could be an assumed knowledge situation for an ESL student.</td>
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