

**New Course Proposals/Course Modifications Checklist**  
**Revised December 2010**

1. **Course title:** Make sure that the proposed course title makes clear what the topic of the course will be; avoid jargon or terms that would not be comprehensible to students considering the course.
2. **Course Numbering:** Check with the Registrar's Office first to make sure that the planned course number is actually still available and has not been used before. Does the number fit into the pattern created by other courses?
3. **Course Description:** The course description is what will be listed in the bulletin, so it should be comprehensive but brief. Convey the course content/approach succinctly; avoid unnecessary words and repetition. Make it student-centered (e.g., "students explore" rather than "course covers" to indicate course content).
4. **Prerequisites:**
  - a. Should align with other courses in the department, e.g., all 300-level courses require completion of the introductory course in the field.
  - b. Rationale for prerequisite should be apparent.
  - c. Prerequisite should not create an unreasonable bar for students, e.g. requiring four courses in the major before taking a 200-level course (in this example, either the prerequisites need to be changed or the course needs to be a 300 or 400 level class). Courses that are used as prerequisites should be offered frequently.
5. **Implementation Date:** Plan for at least a year for course approval – courses submitted in fall should not be offered until the fall of the next academic year. Generally, the dates by which the proposal must reach the university curriculum committee are mid-November and mid-March.
6. **Rationale:** The rationale should address
  - a. The reasons for developing/changing the course. These can include changing courses to take best advantage of the addition of new faculty, program changes that require new or modified courses, changes within the discipline, "closing the loop" on assessment measures that indicated a change needed to take place, student demand, etc. In discussion in the curriculum committee, questions may arise whether course content overlaps with other existing courses.
  - b. How the new/modified course fits into the curriculum. Indicate if it satisfies a requirement or elective in established degree programs, or if it will satisfy core curriculum requirements.
7. **Syllabus:** The syllabus should be as complete as possible. Specifically, it should include
  - a. Statement about course content; if the course satisfies a requirement in the core or the major, this should also be included in the syllabus.
  - b. Description of course objectives and expectations for the students.
  - c. A list of books/readings assigned in the course.
  - d. **Specific** descriptions of course assignments along with a statement of their relevance to the course content and objectives.
  - e. A grading scale or other indication of how work will be assessed and grades assigned. Rubrics may be included in the syllabus. NOTE: If there is a "participation" grade, the means by which participation will be assessed **must** be spelled out in the syllabus.
  - f. A schedule of reading assignments throughout the semester and the due dates of all exams, quizzes, and other assigned work.
  - g. The course should not be so specialized that if the person proposing the course leaves USI, it would be unlikely to be able to find someone else able to teach it.