

Upper-Level Courses and Courses with Upper-Level Designation

Suggestions for a Successful Proposal

As you decide whether a course is upper-level or prepare a proposal, please consider these suggestions:

- When reading proposals to **create a new** upper-level course, the committee pays special attention to question six on the [proposal form](#). When reading proposals to **renumber an existing** course or to **give upper-level designation** to an existing course, the committee pays special attention to question eight on the [proposal form](#). Please provide thoughtful, detailed answers to these questions.
 - In particular, note that 300- and 400-level courses and 200-level courses designated upper-level are expected to operate at an “advanced undergraduate level of difficulty” and to engage students with skills at the “synthesis” and “evaluation” levels. Describe, in detail, how your course will do this.
 - If you feel that “synthesis” and “evaluation” do not adequately describe what students do at the upper-level in your program, explain what skills and knowledge are considered appropriately advanced for upper-level work for your major. How will your students acquire, practice, and demonstrate those skills in this class?
 - **NOTE:** The committee puts the greatest emphasis on this aspect of the proposal. Though it can be helpful to demonstrate that the course is often offered at the upper-level on other campuses or that it has a prerequisite, neither will guarantee a successful proposal. ***The key question is what this class does on this campus to ensure that our students have an advanced undergraduate experience.***
- The sample syllabus is also very important in this process. All new courses require a sample syllabus. The committee considers renumbering/upper-level designation to be a significant change and we require a sample syllabus for those proposals as well. The syllabus should provide enough detail to allow the committee to see opportunities for students to engage at the advanced undergraduate level. If the assignments are not described in detail on the syllabus, please include a description of or instructions for those projects. (For example, if your syllabus simply refers to a research paper or a final project but you give detailed instructions to the students via OnCourse, submit those instructions as well.)
- Please do not tell us that Course X should be upper-level because it is just like Course Y, which is also upper-level. We consider each proposal that we receive independently, so each proposal should contain a clear and detailed description of what this particular course requires of students that accords with the demands of an advanced undergraduate experience.
- The committee recognizes that some programs might desire to renumber or apply for upper-level designation because of pressures created by the requirement that students complete 45 credits at the upper-level. However, those pressures do not factor into the committee’s decision, which is based solely upon evidence that the course provides an upper-level experience for our students.
- With the permission of the authors, we are sharing a couple of model proposals.
 - [Proposal form](#) to renumber MUTY 216 to 314.
 - [ARTS 285: Upper-level designation](#) (includes proposal form, syllabus, and several sample assignments)