

## Course Description Assignment #2

**Goal:** Writing an effective course description will set the stage for developing a meaningful course syllabus. It has many of the same parts that a syllabus has. The goal is to implement elements of your teaching philosophy into 3 course descriptions. Use the following questions to more deeply reflect upon what will add breadth and richness to a course description at any level.

What is the enduring value of the course?  
What is the greatest goal?  
How will this goal be achieved?  
Through what steps and stages in learning will the goal take us?  
What are the outcomes (the objectives) of the course?  
What will be accomplished by the successful completion of the course?  
What methods will be integral to the course and how will assessment occur?  
Is there a seminal text that the course will examine?  
What essential questions does the course call forth?  
What are some of specific examples of topics, designers, or applications the course will embrace?  
How does my course description run in tandem to my teaching philosophy?

A good course proposal provides a precise and complete overview of the topics to be covered. It includes:

A sense of the scope and importance of the course.  
Describes how the course fits into the institution's and or departmental's overall educational objectives.  
Positions or places a context for the course?  
Identifies the expected audience.  
Explains how the course will function. (Sheridan Center: Creating a Course Proposal.)

### Objective:

3 effective course proposals; one of which will be developed into a syllabus.

Embedding goals and objectives and methods into each course proposal.

Creation of three distinctly different courses that reflect and integrate your discipline's needs as well as your individual knowledge and passion.

### Methods:

1. Read a range of course proposals from other institutions that represent the subject you will be teaching.
2. Read course descriptions in past seminars participants on risdcollegiateteaching.
3. Adapt aspects of your teaching philosophy into your course descriptions.
4. Write 3 course descriptions: a beginning course, an advanced course, a course of your choice.
5. Add corollary information around the course description: title or title and subtitle, instructor's name, meeting time and location, credits, lab fee or estimated costs of materials, elective or required, pre-requisites, level: either or both undergraduate and graduate, etc.

### Assessment or Competency Benchmarks:

*Basic:* Information is conveyed about the topic. Goals and objectives are streamed together. Some indication of the overall structure of the course is given, but there remains a vagueness in the particular plan for the semester. Little effort in creating the supporting material around the description is seen. Methods and assessment are only briefly touched upon.

*Advanced:* A compelling voice for the course is conveyed. Questions are at the core of the learning experience and lead the goals of the course. The structure of the course is clear so a reader gets a sense that the course will advance one's thinking and application in progressively more complex and varied ways about the topic or medium. The underlying structure and range of content has logic. The outcome or learning objectives of the course are clear and reasonable. The methods used to achieve the learning outcomes are introduced through specifics or examples around critiques, readings, number of projects, and visitors.

