

## Guidelines and Criteria for Course Levels

**100 level courses** are intended for students in their first or second year of study with no or minimal background in the area. They are survey courses that introduce a student to a discipline and the range of topics and viewpoints in that discipline. They begin at the most basic level.

Common examples might be: Introduction to Chemistry, Business Law I, Introduction to Sociology.

**200 level courses** are intended for students who have had a general introduction to the concepts, theories, skills and the principles of the discipline, and have achieved basic skills in reading, writing, analytic thought and literacy in the discipline. The 200 level course explores an area or specialty in the discipline in more complexity and depth, building a firmer foundation of knowledge by extending the complexity of reading and assignments, and by requiring more critical thought.

These typically require the introduction course as a prerequisite and expand an area such as: Organic Chemistry, Business Law II, Social Psychology.

**300 level courses** are intended for the more intellectually prepared students who are ready to pursue a more narrowly focused topic in greater depth. These students have sufficient background knowledge and skills (2 or more courses within that discipline, writing courses, collateral courses in supportive discipline) to learn, analyze, discuss, and write about the topic in greater depth, complexity, and specificity. The 300 level course emphasizes depth in a narrower area, rather than the breadth of earlier courses. These courses may require greater application of concepts, principles, skills or theories to a confined topic area. They emphasize greater precision in the use of language, reasoning and thought. They make greater use of professional journals and primary source material. They foster greater independence in learning through literature research, projects and papers. 300 level courses have one or more prerequisites and a research component.

**400 level courses** are generally thought of as integrative in nature. They tend to further extend the student's knowledge and performance in one or more disciplines by providing a "culminating experience" which reviews and applies earlier learning in a deeper way. These courses tend to be less classroom-focused. They typically require student initiated projects, papers, presentations, and or research utilizing primary source material, field experience, and professional interaction. The student is expected to work more independently under the guidance and supervision of faculty. The student will master a topic in depth or be able to demonstrate an ability to solve contemporary problems using principles, skills, concepts and theories. The student must be able and willing to assume the role of a more independent learner and performer. 400 level courses have one or more prerequisites and a research component.