

500/700 Course Syllabus Differentiation Guide

Submitted by the 500/700 Graduate Council Subcommittee

The following document indicates areas of focus for 500 & 700 level course syllabi to ensure there is a clear differentiation between 500 and 700 level educational experiences. It is recognized that various departments on campus use slightly different syllabus formats. The following is only intended to be a guide, highlighting critical areas where clear differentiation between 500 and 700 level courses should be explicitly stated in the syllabus. In many cases, it is very possible that individual instructors are actually implementing practices which differentiate instructional experiences between 500 and 700 level courses; however, it is imperative that each syllabus explicitly convey those differences to SACS reviewers. A Graduate Council Subcommittee will be reviewing all 500/700 syllabi to ensure adequate differentiation prior to the SACS campus visit. Specifically, SACS reviewers will be looking to ensure the following mandate is met:

“The content, outcomes, and instructional methodologies required in graduate courses are regularly reviewed by departmental, college, and University committees to ensure a depth of knowledge consistent with graduate instruction. Syllabi for those courses in which both graduate and undergraduate students may enroll are carefully reviewed to ensure that appropriate educational experiences are provided to both undergraduates and graduates.”

The following four areas of the syllabus should be considered during syllabus development to ensure adequate differentiation between educational experiences for both 500 and 700 level students:

1. **TEXT AND SUPPLEMENTAL READINGS**

Not all courses will have different readings for 500 and 700 level students. However, if there are additional or different readings required for 700 level students, they should be clearly stated in this section. In addition, it is recommended that additional or different readings required of graduate level students demonstrate content that indicates a depth of knowledge consistent with graduate instruction. Quality of readings is stressed over quantity of readings when differentiating between 500 and 700 level reading requirements.

Example of Format Acceptable to SACS:

Required Texts, 500 and 700 Students:

1) *Appalachian Cultural Competency: A Guide for Medical, Mental Health, and Social Service Professionals*. (2005). Susan E. Keefe, ed. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press.

2) Selected Articles as assigned. These will be made available on reserve – if possible through e-quest.

3) *Icy Sparks*. (1998). Gwen Hyman Rubio. New York, New York: Penguin Books.

Recommended text, 520 and 720 Students:

Health in Appalachia, Proceedings from the 1988 Conference on Appalachia, The Appalachian Center, University of Kentucky, Lexington, KY, 1989. (can be purchased directly from U.K.)

Required text, 720 students only:

Authorized to Heal: Gender, Class, and the Transformation of Medicine in Appalachia, 1880-1930. (2000). Sandra Lee Barney. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press.

2. ***COURSE OBJECTIVES***

In some cases, course objectives will not be different between 500 and 700 level courses. However, if there are objectives specific only to either 500 or 700 level students, those objectives should be clearly distinguished as being specific to either 500 or 700 level students.

3. ***COURSE REQUIREMENTS***

This is the primary area in which faculty must clearly draw distinctions between the requirements for 500 and 700 level students. Faculty are required (by SACS) to “ensure that appropriate educational experiences are provided to both undergraduates and graduates”, and to “ensure a depth of knowledge consistent with graduate instruction” for 700 level courses. It is recommended that faculty clearly define in writing the assignments and course requirements that are different for graduate students. ***Emphasis should be placed on the quality of assignments/experiences rather than quantity of assignments.*** In other words, simply having graduate students do a higher quantity of the types of assignments required of undergraduate students does not meet the mandate to provide educational experiences consistent with graduate instruction. It is recommended that faculty clearly define the types of educational experiences that are required of graduate level students. For example, graduate students often are required to analyze, synthesize, or critically review or evaluate information. If they are required to do these types of activities, it should be clearly defined in the syllabus.

Examples Not Acceptable to SACS:

- (500 Level) Students will be required to write a 5-page term paper on a topic of their choice.
- (700 Level) Students will be required to write a 10-page term paper on a topic of their choice.

- (500 Level) Students will be required to submit three (3) responses to assigned journal articles.
- (700 Level) Students will be required to submit six (6) responses to assigned journal articles.

Examples Acceptable to SACS:

- (500 Level) Students will be required to write a 5-page term paper on a topic of their choice incorporating information from 3 separate references from professional trade journals.
- (700 Level) Students will be required to write a 10-page position paper on a current topic that includes synthesizing the results of at least 5 research studies from refereed journals that support the stance taken by the student.
- (Addressing Both 500 & 700 Level) As this course consists of undergraduate and graduate students, different requirements and assessment techniques will be used for each group. First, while both groups of students will be required to take two take-home exams, graduate students will be expected to answer five questions while undergraduate students will be expected to answer four questions. The additional question given to the graduate students will require more detailed, critical answers than the four questions given to both levels of students. Secondly, while each student is required to complete a term paper in this class on a program designed to deal with school crime, the requirements for graduate papers will be different than the requirements for their undergraduate colleagues (see paper guidelines). Graduate papers will require students to demonstrate a depth and breadth of knowledge and critical understanding of the topic commensurate with graduate level coursework.
- (500 Level) The 500 level paper will show the ability to synthesize academic research by integrating literary criticism into one's own literary argument.
- (700 Level) In addition to showing the ability to synthesize academic research by integrating literary criticism into one's own argument, 700 level papers must also demonstrate how literary theory informs one's critical approach.

4. *COURSE EVALUATION*

When appropriate, separate grading scales may be used for undergraduate and graduate students that are reflective of the types, and amount of work they are doing. If separate grading scales are used, faculty must clearly define points that are assigned for graduate assignments, and points that are assigned for undergraduate assignments. One area of emphasis under grading/evaluation is the need for faculty to clearly define different standards to which 500 and 700 level students are held. It is common for faculty to state that "graduate students will be held to higher standards." However, this does not convey exactly what those standards are, or how those standards differ from those for undergraduate students.