Course descriptions are broad, summary statements that communicate course content. Generally written in phrases rather than complete sentences, they clearly identify the course focus and the key content areas. Information about teaching methods and procedures are not included in a description.

Employ the following guidelines when creating course descriptions:

1. Write the description with the following criteria in mind: relevant content, accuracy, clarity, and proper emphasis of main topics to be addressed.

2. Make the description student oriented (i.e., help the student understand clearly what the course is really about).

3. Avoid acronyms, technical jargon, and other technical terms when possible, especially in beginning level courses (see technical term format requirements below).

4. Avoid the use of ampersand (&) in the course description as well as the course title and prerequisites. 5. Use plurals when referring to students or others instead of "his/her."

6. Only use brand names if required course software or equipment is an essential component of the course.

7. Course Descriptions and Learning Outcomes should align.

Format for Writing a Course Description
In general, all course descriptions should contain the following components:
• Introductory Statement

• "Includes" Statement

• "Also Includes" Statement(s) [optional]

1. The opening phrase describes the basic premise of the course.

2. The second required phrase describes the essential subject matter of the course. It is recommended that the subject matter included in this phrase come from the key points in the course outline but need not be a comprehensive list. The phrase begins with an inclusive word such as: Includes, Contains, Involves, Encompasses, or Comprised of. "Includes" is most commonly used.

Note that commas are used after each item including the next to last one. If the phrases have commas in a grouped topic in string, use semicolons. The third phrase is optional but may be helpful to break up a long second phrase, to delineate content that complements the key points, or to set off a different type of list from that of the second phrase. It should begin with the word "Also" followed by the same inclusive word used in the second sentence

Technical Terms
When using acronyms or abbreviations in the course description, spell out the entire phrase first, followed by the acronym in parenthesis. Acronyms or abbreviations that have become common language may be allowed at the discretion of Instructional Services. • Example from CIS 174 Wireless Local Area Networking…This course provides a hands-on introduction to Wireless Local Area Networking (WLANs)