

### Guidelines for Special Topics Courses

A "special topics" course is a credit-bearing course wherein the subject matter or content may vary across specific sections during instructional terms, delineated by the course's title and description within the department's course inventory. These courses serve temporary strategic purposes, including:

1. Addressing emergent issues within a field of study not encompassed by the current roster of approved courses.
2. Evaluating the demand for new courses or areas of study.
3. Facilitating topical courses led by guest lecturers with limited availability.

Departments and their faculty must submit new course proposals for topics that should be taught regularly during the Annual Curriculum Review process. A special topic is only permitted to be offered once. Prior to the second offering, the course should be proposed with a permanent number and approved through the Annual Curriculum Review and, subsequently, the Committee on Instruction. Special topics status can only be given to electives – not to required courses in the program. A proposed special topics course cannot be advertised until it is approved.

### Special Topics Title and Course Numbering

All special topic course names will begin with the preface Special Topics, followed by the topic. For example, Special Topics: Pharmaceuticals; Special Topics: Sports Betting. Following the preface would be an identifiable subject content area. There will be no standard course number across programs; programs can assign course numbers in course management where appropriate.

### Special Topics Variable Credit

It is proposed that the Special Topics designation carry variable credit. A Special Topics course may be offered for one to three credits. However, each special topics offering must be offered for a designated number of credit. Everyone who enrolls for the course must enroll for the same amount of credit. The number of credit will be related to the amount of instructional time. For each nonlaboratory course, there must be at least 12.5 hours of classroom instruction (instructor-delivered activity), and 30 hours of supplemental work per semester and credit hour. Please view our credit hour policy when designing courses by [clicking here](#).

### Online Delivery

Programs that propose and approve a Special Topics course to be offered online will be provided with a Special Topics Course Template in Canvas. Faculty will not be paired with an instructional designer (ID) to assist with the design of the course, but are encouraged to schedule [pedagogical consultations](#) with an ID as needed.

### Special Topics Approval Process

1. **Course Preparation:** The faculty member initiates the process by preparing two key documents:
  - a. [SPS Special Topics Course Development Syllabus Narrative Cover Page](#)
  - b. [SPS Syllabus Template](#)

2. **Program Curriculum Committee (PCC) Review:** The Program Curriculum Committee (PCC) takes the lead in ensuring that special topics courses align with the program's pedagogical design.
  - a. The PCC makes a decision to either:
    - i. Approve the course for the initial offering, or
    - ii. Reject the course proposal if it does not meet program criteria.
3. **Second Term Offering (If Applicable):** If a course is to be offered for a second time, it must go through a formal review and approval process by the Committee on Instruction (COI). To gain formal approval, the faculty member and the PCC must follow the specific process outlined by the COI.