# Guide for Syllabus Course Purpose Statement Revision

## Introduction to the Course Purpose Statement

The course purpose identifies the overall goals or aims of the course, as collectively understood by the faculty members teaching in the degree program. The course purpose statement summarizes the following in a manner that differentiates it from other courses offered at NAU:

* The content studied, skills developed, and/or the learning experiences provided, and
* The role the course plays in the academic programs it serves. Examples:
  + “foundation for [BLANK] type of future work in the degree program”
  + “builds upon what you did in [BLANK] course so that you can do [BLANK]”
  + “builds toward your ability to do [BLANK] in [BLANK] future course”
  + “addresses the [BLANK] Distribution Block of the Liberal Studies Program by examining [BLANK].”
  + “addresses the [BLANK] Diversity Requirement by examining [BLANK].”
* For topics courses, consider identifying what all class sections will do, and what the particular class section will do. (see examples in the document).

*Rationale*

Understanding and articulating a course’s overall goals or aims accomplishes a number of things. Most importantly, it clarifies for students who may know little about the discipline or program, the boundaries of the course, summarizing what and how students will learn within the course, and expresses the future opportunities students will be prepared to achieve upon completing the course. It requires the program’s faculty to come to agreement upon the purpose of learning, the boundaries of learning, and the future opportunities students will be prepared to engage in upon completion of the course.

The clear identification of the overall goals and aims of the course assists faculty in determining the learning outcomes that will lead to the achievement of the course’s purpose. Finally, the purpose is meant to guide and focus faculty instructional decisions as they design the course to achieve the course’s learning goals.

## The course’s purpose statement must adequately summarize the content studied, the skills developed, and/or the learning experiences provided.

The phrase “the content studied, skills developed, and/or learning experience(s) provided” ensures the purpose statement includes a summary of the essential learning outcomes and associated learning experiences that comprise the course.

*Examples*

*GSP 272: Nature & Society*

*The underlined section identifies the content studied, skills developed and/or learning experiences provided.*

This course serves as an introduction to how humans relate to the nonhuman world. More specifically it will analyze how humans affect nature and how nature affects society. Throughout the semester we will examine what factors coalesce to create environmental problems, how humans relate to those problems and the environment more generally, and what role values play in addressing and creating environmental harms. The course will survey major topics in environmental studies, using key readings to supplement the textbook. Additionally, this course affords the opportunity to engage with topics, themes, and frameworks that emerge from Geography and other disciplines.

Nature and Society is a liberal studies course in the Social and Political Worlds block. The course focuses particular attention on how political and economic systems have shaped environmental and social outcomes. It will provide insights into different theoretical approaches for understanding and studying human behavior in relation to dominant political, economic and social systems. Critical Geography sheds light on power relations within society and showcases how power differentials render some segments of society more vulnerable to environmental harms than others. Course components, including lectures, assignments, and discussion, develop various skills but focus on effective writing essential skill.

*CIT 610: Principles of Information Technology Project Management*

*The underlined section identifies the content studied, skills developed and/or learning experiences provided.*

This course examines the underlying principles of project management such as project management theory and project management frameworks, the roles of project managers and staff, challenges associated with project management, ethical considerations, and how those concepts are applied to the domain of information technology.  The application of project management to the domain of information technology is important because projects are frequently technology-focused which tends to increase project complexity. In addition, this course is a first in a series that introduces students to the Project Management Institute’s PMBOK® framework, knowledge areas, and process groups. This course targets skills associated with project initiation which is a necessary first step in project management. Students will apply their knowledge and skills to create a project charter for an information technology project following the specifications outlined in the Project Management Institute’s PMBOK® framework. Students will build upon this course during the remainder of their program by exploring additional Project Management Institute PMBOK® framework components.

*NUR 605: Graduate Research Seminar*

*The underlined section identifies the content studied, skills developed and/or learning experiences provided.*

The purpose of this course is to reinforce prior learning of the translation of scientific research findings into an evidence-based leadership project. Learners will be introduced to the parallels of project development, and that of the nursing process. In this course, students will initiate or design their project, as well as a proposed implementation plan. Key project deliverables will include: the identification of a specific and measurable leadership problem, the significance of the problem as well as identified best practices as found in the scientific and academic literature, the purpose statement, as well as project SMART goals. Learners will be expected to identify internal and external stakeholders that will serve as facilitators for the project implementation plan, and assess congruence of the proposed project outcomes with the organizations strategic mission and plan. Upon successful completion of this course learners will be provided the opportunity to implement their capstone project proposal in an actual organizational setting through the supervision of a joint organizational and faculty mentor.

*NUR 650: Advanced Nursing Assessment*

*The underlined section identifies the content studied, skills developed and/or learning experiences provided.*

The purpose of this course is to provide the graduate nursing student with an expansion of acquired basic health assessment and physical examination skills. Advanced cognitive and psychomotor skills allow students the opportunity to practice using a diagnostic reasoning process. In this course, students will learn techniques and theory underpinning the biophysical an psychosocial findings in patient-centered care in health, well-being, and illness across the lifespan. Additionally students will integrate comprehensive health assessment and physical examination findings as a foundation for clinical decision making. Using information technology and systems, students will document and communicate patient data, they will then synthesize this data along with clinical judgment, supported by current evidence into patient plans of care for health promotion and improving patient outcomes. Finally, students explore the image and roles of the advanced practice nurse integrating advanced assessment and diagnostic reasoning in primary care, rural healthcare, health promotion, and patient education. Key learning strategies include systematic acquisition of psychomotor techniques learned through reading, watching video, and through participation in face-to-face skills lab practice. Understanding of clinical reasoning is supported through comprehensive patient case presentations which take place via asynchronous group discussions. The scholarly project for this course consists of the student being evaluated, either live or via video, for performing a comprehensive head-to-toe physical examination of a ‘patient’. This course prepares graduate nursing students for advanced roles in nursing that include education, administration, and clinical practice.

## The course’s purpose statement must adequately summarize the role the course plays in the academic programs it serves.

The purpose of articulating the role the course plays in the academic programs it serves is to address an important concept of Backward Design. Backward Design recommends that faculty design a course’s curriculum by first setting the goals of the course, then working backward to develop approaches to instruction and topic/skill progression that will achieve those goals. The “goals” of the course are typically defined through identifying the role the course plays in the academic programs it serves. For example, if the course is an introduction to the discipline, it will most likely establish the discipline’s key theories, historical debates, and/or key concepts. Junior Level Writing courses focus on writing. Capstone courses provide culminating experiences.

*Examples*

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## For topics courses, it’s clear what is required of all courses, and what can be changed for class sections.

Example:

**Course Purpose & Description:** All sections of ANT 520 serve the purpose of providing students with the foundational knowledge of ethical principles in anthropology required of professional anthropologists. Students will engage with dilemmas encountered in anthropological research. Discussion of the fundamental U.S. laws and Institutional Review Board procedures for conducting research involving human subjects will be included in all sections. In addition, all sections will engage with different strategies for thinking through ethical dilemmas in anthropological research. Specific ethical issues discussed in any particular section will vary according to current events in anthropology but for all sections the discussion of ethics in anthropological research will be approached from a four-field and applied perspective. Students will be able to summarize and discuss ethics and the ethical codes employed in anthropology, and identify and reason through real-world examples of ethical dilemmas. Class time will consist of lecture and discussion.

This section of Ethics in Anthropological Research will focus on ethics in ethnographic research, the ethics of working with, or for marginalized communities, the “war on terror” and the ethics of anthropologists working with the military, U.S. archaeological ethics, the ethics of using human remains in research, the role of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act in ethical archaeological research, and global archaeological ethics.