
Guidelines for the Conduct of Special Studies Courses

(Approved by the Irvine Division December 10, 1970)

1. Special study courses for individuals: These courses are usually numbered 199, but by historical accident occasionally have different numbers in some departments. Such courses are designed to provide the student with the experience of working independently on topics proposed by him and approved by a member of the faculty who then becomes the director of the course for that student. The course fulfills various functions in various programs.

Particularly on a small and developing campus, or in small departments, such courses are often offered to individual students in order to provide work in areas in which the department is not able to offer a specific conventional course. This may come about as the result of special requirements the student must fulfill in order to proceed to a graduate school; it may come about simply as the result of a department's having insufficient staff to expend on upper division courses that a student may need to graduate. In larger departments the usual practice is to make available intensified advanced study in subjects in which students, by dint of earlier work, wish to obtain more specialized training. In all such cases the department may set such limitations upon the offering of such courses as is consistent with its overall program. Departments should ensure that students are properly prepared to embark on the course of study they propose. To register in such a course the student's proposed program of study must be approved by the faculty member to whom it is submitted and by the chair of the department or program. The faculty member is then responsible for supervision of the student's course of study; the subject matter of the course should be related directly to the field of competence of the faculty member involved. It should be the policy that a faculty member accepts only a few such students annually, for one of the aims of such courses is intensive study.

2. In the future, small group study in special topics should not be carried on under the number of the course described above. Instead, the Committee on Educational Policy suggests that the number 198 be employed for directed group study on special topics. In group study courses on special topics the faculty member in charge is responsible for supervision and evaluation of each student's work. The offering of a 198 course which consists essentially of a program of study set up and conducted by someone other than the sponsoring faculty member is improper.

3. The Committee suggests also the adoption by departments and programs, for which it is appropriate, of courses to be numbered 197: individually arranged field study. Under this number a student plans a field study program with a faculty member. The student is expected to have sufficient background to undertake the field study, and the area of study should be within the competence of the sponsoring faculty member. As in 199 and 198, each individual plan must be approved by the departmental or program chair. It is expected that there will be regular individual meetings between faculty member and student and that the student will prepare a written report relating the field experience to his or her academic training.