Guidance for preparing conjoint (400/500 level) courses at WSU


“Quality graduate programs offer rigorous course work to their students. The graduate classroom experience should be qualitatively different than in undergraduate programs. Departments and programs should avoid all practices that may dilute the classroom experience for graduate students, including the practice of offering conjoint courses. Consequently, conjoint courses should be only offered in rare circumstances.

The total number of graded credit hours from conjoint courses allowable on a student’s program of study is determined by each graduate program. The number of conjoint courses in the program curriculum and the extent of their use on the program of study will be a factor in the Graduate School’s overall evaluation of the quality of the graduate program. When absolutely necessary, departments may submit, as a major curricular change, a request to establish a 500-level graduate course having the same two final digits as a currently offered or newly requested 400-level course. The courses must meet the usual graduate standards with respect to content level, uniqueness, and appropriateness. The two component courses of each conjoint listing must be scheduled together in the same classroom, with the same instructor, and the same basic meeting times. The 400-level course of a conjoint listing shall not be offered for graduate credit and students may receive credit in only one component of a conjoint listed course.

Additional graduate-level work is required of students enrolled at the 500-level. This work may include additional readings, papers, class meetings, or other items as may be appropriate for work at this level. An introductory statement to the effect that conjoint courses have separate requirements for the 500-level listing will be included in the catalog description and course syllabus.

To obtain conjoint listing, the department should submit the Major Curricular Change Form for courses with a detailed course syllabus, which indicates the specific requirements for 500-level enrollees and those for 400-level enrollees. The different requirements should be summarized on a separate sheet and approved by the department chair and dean of the college. The small class enrollment requirement will be fulfilled by enrollment of either five graduate students or ten students total. The Dean of the Graduate School and Provost may approve exceptions. (Senate 5/10/79; amended Graduate Studies Committee 12/17/79). To obtain approval from the Graduate Studies Committee for 500-level credit in a conjoint course, the course application must detail how the additional work required of graduate students will provide additional depth in several of the areas covered in the course and how the course will provide for significant time for graduate students to interact with the instructor.”
The Faculty Senate Graduate Studies Committee is responsible for reviewing course syllabi and passing these materials, including those for conjoint courses, to the Faculty Senate for review and approval. Programs proposing conjoint courses need to develop a persuasive argument concerning the rare instances that a conjoint course is needed. Please understand that this information needs to be evaluated in the context of the entire offering of graduate courses by the degree granting area (department or school).

To assist the committee with the review process, please provide a narrative with the following course-specific information:

- Assurance that the course being offered is not a survey or introductory topics course.
- A summary of the course components that reflect the effort and quality expected for graduate level education. This should include a description of additional written, speaking and presentation requirements for the graduate students, and when these activities will occur during the course of the semester (such activities should be interspersed throughout the duration of the course).
- Justification for a conjoint format rather than offering the course as a 400-level course to graduate students (please check limitations on total allowable credits for this category), or by encouraging undergraduate students to take a 500-level version of the course. This should include a description for why this particular course is integral to the graduate program.

Please provide the following degree-program specific information:

- Number of faculty involved with the degree-program.
- Number of graduate courses “on the books” for the degree program.
- Number of conjoint courses, how often they are taught and the approximate ratio of undergraduate to graduate students in each conjoint course.
- For the past three years, please indicate the percentage of graduate-degree programs-of-study that include conjoint courses and the average number of conjoint credits that are listed.