

SELECTED TOPICS AND SPECIAL TOPICS COURSES

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POLICY

I. GENERAL

It is the goal of Thompson Rivers University (TRU) to encourage, support and offer, on an ongoing basis, Selected Topics and Special Topics Courses.

II. POLICY

Selected Topics and Special Topics Courses are intended to enhance student learning by providing the opportunity to go beyond the usual curriculum and to enrich a program of studies.

Special Topics Courses are not seen as part of a department's regular course offering, but provide an opportunity to capture the special expertise of visiting, short-term sessional or regular faculty. These courses will normally be offered at the upper (300 and 400) level.

Selected Topics courses can be included as part of a department's regular course offerings, and will be identified in the calendar in the form of a 'shell' that defines the broad field of study with titles such as 'Selected Topics in ...' or 'Topics in ...' or 'Studies in ...' The specific content may vary from year to year and from instructor to instructor. In some cases the individual offerings may be clearly defined and offered on a rotating basis [Rotating Selected Topics]. These courses will normally be offered at the upper (300 or 400) level.

Selected Topics or Special Topics courses will not be offered to individual students as this would be defined as a "Directed Study".

REGULATIONS

SELECTED TOPICS COURSES

1. The 'shell' for Selected Topics Courses will follow TRUs' normal Dean, Vice-President, Academic and course approval process (Policy ED 8-2 Course and Program Approvals) and must include:
 - Title
 - Description of the scope of the topic
 - Credits and Vectoring
 - Prerequisites, where appropriate
2. Once a Selected Topics Course has received approval through the normal channels outlined above, individual offerings will need to be approved by the One-Time only approval process (Dean, VP-Academic and Chair of Senate) [except in the cases of defined Rotating Selected Topics] to ensure that specific course outlines are in place and consultation with the library has been undertaken.
3. Given that students can receive credit for two different versions of a Selected Topics Course, such courses will have a 'Sub-Title' description to differentiate one version of the course from another. This will provide for transcript tracking and to avoid enrollment in the same course twice. The Registrar's Office must be informed of the individual 'Sub-Titles' of the Selected Topics courses each time they are offered.
4. Departments may choose to limit the number of credits a student may accumulate in Selected Topics courses.
5. The Selected Topics Course 'shell' will normally need approval at least six months in advance of being offered for the first time. This time frame is needed to:
 - Allow information to be properly included in TRU materials.
 - Disseminate information to Registrar's office and TRU Advisors.
 - Ensure that necessary consultation occurs with TRUs' Library.
 - Ensure the timely ordering of course related materials.
6. For a time frame of less than six months, one-time approval for the first offering of both the 'shell' and the specific content of a Selected Topics course may be granted by the Vice-President, Academic and Chair of Senate under exceptional circumstances. Such circumstances would normally relate to the availability (timing) of visiting faculty.
7. Selected Topics courses will normally be for one semester and carry 3 credits. Under certain circumstances courses may be of two semesters duration and carry six credits.

SPECIAL TOPICS COURSES

1. Special Topics courses will normally follow TRU's regular Dean, Vice-President, Academic and course approval process (Policy ED 8-2 Course and Program Approvals) and must include:

Title

Complete course description (including identification of the program for which it will receive credit).

Credits and vectoring

Prerequisites

However, it is recognized that the creation of a Special Topics course will frequently be in response to the availability at short notice of a unique content expertise, and in these cases the 'one-time-only' approval process will be used.

2. If a Special Topics course is repeated because of the continued availability of the faculty member, and is likely to be repeated a third time, the course will need to be converted to a Selected Topics course format if variability of course content is expected, or to a regular 'defined' course, and will become part of a department's regular set of course offerings and subject to the normal TRU course approval procedures (Policy ED 8-2 Course and Program Approvals).
3. Departments may choose to limit the number of credits a student may accumulate in Special Topics courses.
4. Special Topics courses will normally need approval at least 3 months in advance of being offered. This time frame is needed to:

Allow information to be properly included in TRU materials.

Disseminate information to the Registrar's office and TRU Advisors.

Ensure that necessary consultation occurs with TRU's Library.

Ensure the timely ordering of course related materials.

5. For a time frame of less than three months, 'one-time-only' approval for a Special Topics course may be granted by the Vice-President, Academic, and Chair of Senate, as long as necessary consultation occurs with TRU's Library and the Registrar's Office.
6. Special Topics courses will normally be for one semester, and carry three credits. Under certain circumstances courses may be of two semesters duration and carry six credits.