

**YEATES SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

***REPORT TO SENATE, JUNE 5, 2012***

1. YSGS Graduate Course Management Policy (for approval)

**Motion:**

“That Senate approve the revised YSGS Course Management Policy (Senate Policy 151), as approved by YSGS Council at its April 12, 2012 meeting.”

Submitted by:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J Mactavish', with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

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Jennifer Mactavish, Dean  
Chair, Yeates School of Graduate Studies Council

**RYERSON UNIVERSITY**  
**GRADUATE COURSE MANAGEMENT POLICY**

Policy Number: 151

YSGS Council Approval Date: April 12, 2012

Previous Senate Approval Date: October 10, 2000

Reformatted: February 2002

Implementation Date: Fall 2012

Responsible Committee or Office: Dean, Yeates School of Graduate Studies

## **1 PREAMBLE**

In the Yeates School of Graduate Studies, the pursuit of scholarship and research is a collaborative academic process in which faculty<sup>11</sup> and students come together in an environment influenced by their disciplines and the broader intellectual traditions of the university. An academic course represents a discreet learning endeavor in which an intensive sharing of knowledge, expertise, experience and perspective may occur.

The central purpose of the course management policy is to provide a framework of common understanding for students and faculty concerning the structures, processes, objectives, and requirements that pertain to graduate courses at Ryerson.

Course outlines are required by the University and it is the obligation of faculty members to prepare outlines for their courses that adhere to this policy. It is the responsibility of Program Directors to ensure that course outlines are produced that meet policy requirements.

In creating the policy, we recognize the importance of advanced education, research and scholarship while (a) defining the types of information that both students and faculty need in order to optimize the learning value of any given course, and (b) making clear to students and faculty alike the principles and procedures that have been adopted by the University that affect the operation of academic courses. In a more general sense, the course management policy is intended to reflect principles that are fundamental to teaching and advanced study at the graduate level.

It is recognized that no course management policy can anticipate all possible circumstances and configurations. In cases where a course must vary from approved course management policy, this may be authorized by the relevant program director. Students will be informed in writing of such variances at the beginning of the course, or if they arise during the course, at the earliest possible opportunity.

## **2 COURSE OUTLINES/SYLLABI**

### **2.1 Provision of Course Outlines**

- 2.1.1 Students will be provided at the beginning of every course with an outline, either electronically on the University's Course Management System, or in hard copy, that includes, as a minimum,

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<sup>1</sup> In this document, the term "faculty" includes any person teaching a graduate course.

information on the items specified below. Outlines may be supplemented by more detailed topical or project information periodically during a course.

## **2.2 General Information about the course that must be included**

- 2.2.1 Course name and number; semester and year; and requisites and exclusions, if any
- 2.2.2 Faculty member's name; office location; scheduled student consultation hours; office telephone number; e-mail address; faculty/course web site(s) if available. If any of this information is unknown when the outline is prepared, it will be provided in writing at the beginning of the course. Student consultation hours may be communicated by other means.
- 2.2.3 Method of posting grades and method of returning academic work in a manner which respects the privacy of students.
- 2.2.4 Any instructions or limitations on student use of email for faculty contact, as well as any preference for means of student contact.

## **2.3 Course Description**

- 2.3.1 Calendar course description
- 2.3.2 An explanation of the academic focus and scope of the course, the objectives and/or intended learning outcomes, and topics with their approximate sequence and schedule
- 2.3.3 Texts, reading lists and other course materials and/or equipment
- 2.3.4 A description of the teaching method(s) that will be used (e.g. lecture, laboratory, studio, cases, problem-based learning, seminar, field work, oral presentations, or combinations of these)
- 2.3.5 A schedule of field trips or required activities outside of class time

## **2.4 Expectations/Requirements**

- 2.4.1 A list of all assignments, tests, exams, group and other work to be graded, and a general description of these.<sup>2</sup>
- 2.4.2 A schedule of deadlines for graded work and a close approximation of test dates<sup>3</sup>
- 2.4.3 The penalty for not meeting submission deadlines.
- 2.4.4 The weighting of each assignment, test, and/or other unit of evaluation

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<sup>2</sup> Specific and appropriately detailed information on the format of tests, exams, and assignments, including group work, will be provided by the course instructor as early in the course as possible. Save for extraordinary circumstances, this will be at least three weeks before the evaluation in question.

<sup>3</sup> In the case of intensive courses and other courses offered in a rhythm outside the conventional semester pattern, e.g., three-weekend courses, standard schedules cannot apply. In such cases the student must be informed in writing at the beginning of the course what time-lines will prevail for all projects, tests, exams, and other graded and required non-graded work.

- 2.4.5 Specific details on any Information Technology requirements for courses utilizing IT in course work, assignments or exams.
- 2.4.6 Specific requirements for field placement, if appropriate
- 2.4.7 Program and/or class policies on the appropriate use of cellular phones, laptop computers and other electronic devices in the classroom.
- 2.4.8 The requirement for medical documentation/notification for missed work, or other issues as set out in the Graduate Academic Consideration and Appeals Policy.
- 2.4.9 The requirement to adhere to the principles of academic integrity as set out in the Student Code of Academic Conduct<sup>4</sup> which means that such things as cheating, inappropriate collaboration, fraudulent excuses and the like will not be tolerated.
- 2.4.10 The requirement for approval by the Animal Care Committee<sup>5</sup> or the Research Ethics Board<sup>6</sup> of work involving research with animal or human subjects/participants.
- 2.4.11 Other student requirements related to the course.

### **3 ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK ON STUDENT PERFORMANCE**

Timely (normally within ten business days) and constructive feedback in response to student work is an essential element in the learning process. Constructive feedback refers to any type of instructor response that serves to inform, guide, encourage, and/or instruct the student in respect to relevant course work or research.

- 3.1 It is important that all work be graded and returned with reasonable promptness. In the case of work that the faculty member will retain, students should receive feedback on the content in addition to a numerical grade.
- 3.2 Where an assignment or test requires students to build directly on the proficiencies developed through earlier work, they should have the benefit of feedback on the earlier work before the subsequent assessment.
- 3.3 Should a student miss a test or equivalent (e.g. studio or presentation), with appropriate documentation, a make-up will be scheduled as soon as possible in the same semester. Make-ups should cover the same material as the original assessment but need not be of an identical format. Only if it is not possible to schedule such a make-up may the weight of the missed work be placed on the final exam, or another single assessment. If a student misses a scheduled make-up test or exam, with the appropriate advance notification and/or the documentation, the grade may be distributed over other course assessments. If there is no appropriate advance notification and/or the documentation, a grade of zero will be assigned.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol60-fall2009.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/senate/policies/pol52.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.ryerson.ca/content/dam/senate/policies/pol51.pdf>

- 3.4 Final examinations must be scheduled by University Scheduling in the examination week(s) as specified in the Yeates School of Graduate Studies Significant Dates on the YSGS website.<sup>7</sup>
- 3.5 Students who miss a final exam with the appropriate advance notification and/or documentation and who cannot be given a make-up exam prior to the submission of final course grades, must be given a grade of INC, and a make-up exam (normally within two weeks of the beginning of the next semester) that carries the same weight and measures the same knowledge, must be scheduled. If a student misses a scheduled make-up exam, a grade of zero will be assigned.
- 3.6 While it is preferable to post grades electronically on the Course Management system, grades on assignments, tests and exams, including final exams which are posted in hard copy, must be posted by numerically sorted student identification number after at least the first two digits have been removed, Instructors must inform students in all course management documentation of the methods to be used in the posting of grades. Students who wish not to have their grades posted in hard copy must inform the instructor in writing prior to the due date of the first assignment.
- 3.7 All grades during the term on assignments or tests must be posted or made available to students through the return of their work. If work is returned to the student, it must be in a confidential manner consistent with FIPPA requirements.
- 3.8 Final exams, and in some cases final papers, are not returned, but are retained for a period of one year after the end of the semester. Programs must develop procedures to ensure that the disposal of examination papers respects the privacy of the students' work and adheres to FIPPA.
- 3.9 Grades on final exams must be posted. However, as there may be other consideration in the determination of final grades, students will receive their official final grade in the course only from the Registrar. Final official course grades may not be posted or disclosed anywhere by an instructor.
- 3.10 It is the responsibility of the Program to develop systems or determine procedures for the confidential return of graded work. It is the instructor's responsibility to ensure that these procedures are followed.
- 3.11 The assignment of an incomplete grade (INC) normally follows discussion between the faculty member and student concerning the work to be completed and the relevant due date(s). To confirm arrangements that are already mutually understood or to provide the necessary information where prior consultation has not taken place, the faculty member will complete the official INC form that specifies the work to be completed and the due dates. Copies of this INC form must be submitted to the graduate program office, which will in turn provide a copy to the student. It is the student's responsibility to follow up with the graduate program office if a copy is not received.

The due date set by the faculty member will be no later than the end of the following semester, but will normally be earlier than this.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.ryerson.ca/graduate/dates/index.html>

#### **4. CHANGES TO AN ANNOUNCED EVALUATION SCHEME**

- 4.1 During the semester, it is sometimes necessary or desirable for a faculty member to revise the plan of student evaluation contained in the course outline. When this is the case, the faculty member will:
  - 4.1.1 inform the class of changes;
  - 4.1.2 make such revisions as early as possible in the course;
  - 4.1.3 confirm the changes both orally and in writing (handout or posting to course website);
  - 4.1.4 submit a copy of the revision to the graduate program director for approval.
- 4.2 When such a change involves only the extension of a deadline, a minimum of one week's notice is normally required. In the case of other changes (e.g., in the number, mix, and/or weighting of methods of evaluation) students will be given as much notice as possible, normally at least three weeks, in order to adjust their course work plans.
- 4.3 Once students have begun work on a particular component of the evaluation scheme, changes will be made to that component only under extraordinary circumstances. When such changes must be made, students will, if at all possible, be given the opportunity to complete the evaluation(s) as initially set out and with the same course weight, if they so wish.
- 4.4 When changes are made to the plan of student evaluation or to the nature of a particular assignment/test to accommodate the needs of an individual student or of a group within the class, the nature of the accommodation will be outlined in writing with a copy retained by the student(s) concerned and the faculty member(s).
- 4.5 In the case of emergencies such as faculty illness, the director of the graduate program is responsible for restructuring the evaluation scheme, if required, in such a way as to maintain course integrity while not creating undue disadvantage for students. Normal periods of notification may be waived in such circumstances.

#### **5 RECORD KEEPING**

Instructors are required to:

- 5.1 Submit a copy of all course outlines and any revisions, in the requested format, to their graduate program office at the beginning of each term;
- 5.2 Only assess the work of officially registered students
- 5.3 Maintain a grade calculation sheet, all final examinations and in some cases final papers for each class taught for a period of one year after the end of the term.
- 5.4 Records no longer required at the end of the required holding period must be disposed of in a manner consistent with FIPPA.

#### **6 RELEVANT POLICIES**

Instructors and graduate students are required to adhere to all relevant University policies, including those related to courses and research. All policies can be found at:

<http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies>

### Plagiarism

Instructors should emphasize to students the importance of the policy on plagiarism in the Ryerson University Code of Academic Conduct: <http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol60.ppdf>

Plagiarism is defined in the policy as “claiming the words, ideas, artistry, drawings, images or data of another person as if they were your own. “ There are many different types of plagiarism, including but not limited to:

- Purchasing an essay
- Using work from a website, book, article, text without citation or with incorrect citation
- Making minor changes to an author’s words or style and then presenting the material as your own
- Reusing work you have already submitted
- Omitting quotation marks
- Paraphrasing too close to the original work
- Working with another student but failing to credit that student on the final product
- Having a third party re-write or edit your work

Students should be encouraged to inquire if in doubt.

Other policies include, but are not limited to, the following:

Academic accommodation of students with disabilities:

<http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol159.pdf>

Examination Policy: <http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol135.pdf>

Religious Observances: <http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol150.pdf>

Ethics Review of Research: <http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol51.pdf>

<http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol52.pdf>

Official University communications via e-mail <http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol157.pdf>

Academic Appeals: <http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol152.pdf>

Student Code of Academic Conduct <http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol60-fall2009.pdf>