

## **Guidelines for Submission of a Proposed Ethics/ Religion and Society Course Prospectus and Syllabus**

Approved by the E/RS Committee, Spring 2007  
Revised Spring 2008 and Fall 2019

These guidelines were carefully developed by the E/RS committee to ensure quality and consistency in the applications for E/RS course status. The committee has asked the E/RS director/s to enforce these guidelines. If your course prospectus and syllabus do not meet these guidelines, they will be returned to you for revisions. The intent is not only to enable the committee to assess the course's appropriateness for the E/RS curriculum, but also to provide the opportunity for faculty to think very deliberately about their course and the E/RS program in a way that can strengthen the program. In the past, faculty have, indeed, felt that the time taken to fill out the prospectus has been very worthwhile.

### **PROSPECTUS**

Please include the following in the prospectus, in the following format:

1. Basic Information: course title, catalog number and number of credit hours.
2. A description of the course including its content, goals and objectives. This description should argue that the course fulfills the course criteria for E/RS status, addressing these criteria fully. The criteria are as follows:
  - a. While preserving the integrity of the discipline from which it comes, the course integrates in a substantive way the ethical and/or religious analysis of a socially significant issue or issues.
    - “Substantive” integration means that the incorporation of moral reflection and/or religious analysis is neither peripheral nor incidental, but rather is central and intentional. Simply devoting one or two classes in the semester to ethical and/or religious analysis is inadequate. Substantive integration is to be demonstrated explicitly in the course's structure, choice of required texts, and assignments.
    - “Socially significant” means that the issue under study constitutes an important dimension of society and has implications that go far beyond its effects upon isolated individuals.
    - “Ethical and/or religious analysis” entails that the course engages in ethical and/or religious reflection in a way that is consistent with the appropriate methods of the discipline in which the course is offered. (In some cases, disciplinary methods cannot be used for ethical and religious reflection. However, the ethical or religious reflection should harmonize with the professor's main discipline. For instance, chemical analyses could be combined with a discussion of whether certain toxins have unjust effects on certain segments of society.)

b. The course is clearly identified as an E/RS course.

- Minimally, this means that the course syllabus clearly states the course's status as an E/RS course and that the course description explicitly describes how the course intends to meet E/RS objectives.
- Ideally, this means that, in addition, the professor of the course regularly draws the students' attention explicitly to the E/RS objectives of the course.

c. The course provides regular and substantive opportunities for critical discussion.

- Although the professor may identify a set of values and principles according to which the social issue can be analyzed, the professor creates an atmosphere in which students feel comfortable to express their judgments.
- By encouraging free discussion and critical reflection, the professor helps students to consider different points of view and to appreciate the complexity of issues.
- A strictly lecture format is discouraged.

d. The course complements, in some demonstrable way, the other required courses that make up the E/RS Focus.

- Minimally, this means that the professor of the E/RS course has some awareness of the content of the three required E/RS courses and makes occasional connections to one or more of them. Descriptions of these three courses can be found at <https://www.xavier.edu/ers/courses>.
- Ideally, this means that the professor has a good grasp of the content of the three required E/RS courses and makes regular and relevant connections to them.

## **SYLLABUS**

Prepare the syllabus as you would if the course had E/RS status. The syllabus should:

1. Clearly state the course's status as an E/RS course and include in the course description an explicit description of how the course meets E/RS objectives.
2. Detail the major requirements of the course: proposed texts, tests, papers, reports, laboratory assignments, book reports or other methods of evaluation. If it is a question of other methods of evaluation, please explain. The syllabus should be in substantial agreement with the course prospectus.
3. Explain how the student's performance will be assessed and what the grading system will be.

### **Some points the E/RS Committee will consider in evaluating new courses**

1. Is the content of the course within the academic domain of the E/RS program?
2. Is the title clear?

3. Is it an undergraduate level course?
4. What need does it fulfil?
5. Has there been prior experience with this course?
6. Have the proposal and syllabus explicitly addressed all the required criteria (see #2 in the section above)?

### **General Guidelines For Submitting Materials to the Ethics/ Religion and Society Committee**

As you prepare materials for consideration by the E/RS committee, please keep the following points in mind:

1. To ensure consideration before the next scheduled E/RS committee meeting, the course prospectus and syllabus must be sent to the E/RS director/s a minimum of one week before the meeting. Please note that if a proposal is submitted less than three weeks before registration for the next semester begins, it may not be possible to grant it E/RS status before students register.
2. New cross-listed courses seeking E/RS status must be submitted to the E/RS committee for approval.
3. Requests to offer an experimental E/RS course should be submitted directly to the Ethics/ Religion and Society Committee before they are sent to the appropriate college dean. A course may be offered experimentally only twice. After that, it should be referred to the E/RS committee for its approval of permanent E/RS status.
4. Sample proposals and syllabi are available on the E/RS website:  
<https://www.xavier.edu/ers/resources-for-ers-faculty/submitting-a-proposal-for-an-ers-elective>