

CHAPTER 8

8. INSTRUCTIONAL AND STUDENT POLICIES

8.1. Curriculum

8.1.1. University Catalogs

Course descriptions and degree requirements are specified in the undergraduate and graduate catalogs, which are published every two years. Instructors should be familiar with the catalog descriptions and prerequisites for the courses they are teaching.

8.1.2. Course Numbering System

Range of Numbers Level of Course

001-099 Refresher (noncredit) 100-199 Freshman 200-299 Sophomore 300-399 Junior (upper level) 400-499 Senior (upper level) 500-599 Graduate credit, with undergraduate credit awarded in some departments 600-699 Graduate 700-above Graduate, Ph.D. level

8.1.3. Changes in Catalog

A change that originates in an academic department or program that involves undergraduate programs and that affects catalog copy will become effective and may be implemented only when the following procedure has been completed: the proposed change has been recommended by the academic department or program, reviewed and approved by the dean of the college, and approved by the provost. Proposed changes will be referred to the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee of the Faculty Senate for review and recommendation. Changes affecting the graduate program originate in an academic department or program. Such changes are reviewed and approved by the dean of the college and the graduate dean and are approved by the provost. Proposed changes will be referred to the graduate dean for consideration by the Graduate Council.

Changes that do not originate within an academic department or program but that do affect undergraduate degree requirements can be proposed to the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee of the Faculty Senate for approval.

8.1.4.Changes in Curriculum

Proposals for undergraduate curriculum changes or new undergraduate programs are initiated in the department or program. The proposals are reviewed by the dean and then forwarded to the Provost with recommendations. Proposals then are referred to the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee of the Faculty Senate. Proposals for graduate curriculum changes or new graduate programs are initiated in the department or program. The proposals are reviewed by the college dean and then forwarded to the graduate dean for consideration by the Graduate Council. The provost should be notified if a proposal for a new program or degree is being contemplated. All curriculum changes are approved by the provost.

8.1.5.Exceptions to Academic Requirements

For specific general education requirements identified with academic departments (e.g., English composition, western civilization, mathematics, foreign language), refer to the chair of the department responsible for required courses that are involved (e.g., English composition to English Department, western civilization to History Department).

For requirements that are less well-specified or involve combinations of disciplines (e.g., mathematics/science, social sciences, mixed language options), refer recommendations of the student's advisor (and/or department chair) to the appropriate dean. For an exception to be granted, all the deans of colleges involved must concur with the recommendation of the student's advisor and/or department chair.

For exceptions to university-wide regulations applicable to all students such as residence requirements, 30 percent upper-level rule, total hours, grade-point average, etc., recommendations must be made by the chair of the student's major department, concurred in by the dean of the college, and approved by the provost.

8.2.Classes

8.2.1.Scheduling of Classes

A timetable of classes for fall and spring semesters is made available prior to early registration. Schedule timetables include the time, room assignment, and instructor for each course. The schedule for each department or program is prepared by the chair or coordinator and forwarded to the dean of the college to allow for resolution of class conflicts between departments. The timetable is then reviewed in the Office of Provost to resolve scheduling problems among colleges and to assure scheduling patterns convenient to students. Deviations from the published schedule (additions, deletions, time changes, etc.) are recommended by the chair or coordinator, with approval of the dean and notice to the provost and the associatevice president for enrollment services.

8.2.2.Academic Advising

Faculty members may be expected to perform advising duties at registration and throughout the academic year. Faculty advising assignments are made by the department or program chair. Faculty members who serve as academic advisors should be familiar with current university requirements and policies. Basic information can be found in the university catalog.

8.2.3. Faculty Class Attendance

Faculty members are expected to conduct each of their classes as scheduled. Notify the Department Chair before missing scheduled classes, in advance, where practicable. Make prior arrangements for the conduct of a missed class if possible. Classroom work missed because of a faculty member's absence has to be made up as soon as possible and in the manner deemed most appropriate by the instructor in consultation with the chair or coordinator. Planned cancellation of classes requires the prior written approval of the Department Chair.

8.2.4. Student Class Attendance

Each instructor should announce specific expectations concerning student attendance at the first class meeting. Education at UAH depends upon the cooperation of students and faculty. Students are held responsible for the full work of the course in which they are registered, including participation in the discussion and work of the class at each class meeting. A student's final grade in each course is determined on the basis of identified course requirements.

8.2.5. Course Withdrawal

8.2.5.1. Initiating Withdrawal

Through the tenth (10th) week a student may withdraw from any course. After the tenth week a student may withdraw from a course only under extenuating circumstances. The student must initiate a formal request for withdrawal through the Office of the Registrar. The student must file a late withdrawal form and receive approval beginning with the instructor, the student's department chair and the dean of the college in which the student is enrolled. Class nonattendance does not constitute withdrawal nor does notification to the instructor. Any student failing to follow established procedure for withdrawal will continue to be enrolled in the class and may receive a failing grade in that course.

8.2.5.2. Recording Withdrawals

If the withdrawal process is completed during the first two weeks, the withdrawing student's name will not appear on the final rolls of the class from which the student withdrew, and that course will not appear on the student's permanent record. If the withdrawal process is completed after the first two weeks, then the withdrawing student's name will be on the final rolls of the class from which the student withdrew, and that course will be recorded on the student's permanent record with a final grade of W. It is the responsibility of the Office of the Registrar to inform each instructor in a timely manner and in electronic format when a student appearing on the instructor's final class rolls withdraws from that course. The university does not use grades of W to compute grade point averages.

8.2.5.3. Justification and Approvals Needed

The University does not require that the student justify any course withdrawal completed before the end of the seventh week. After the seventh week, the student must give evidence of extenuating circumstances to justify withdrawal from a course. Avoidance of an undesirable grade does not justify course withdrawal. It is the duty of the dean of the college in which the student is enrolled as a major to verify that the circumstances justify withdrawal from a course.

8.2.6.Syllabi

During the first week of a class, the instructor must provide each student with a written outline of the administrative information for the course. Such an outline should include: goals/ objectives of the course, course content, text or other materials required or recommended, methods of evaluation (including values of each assignment and mechanisms for determining final course grades), any modifications of student code of conduct, faculty office location and scheduled office hours and location. For the student code of conduct, consult the *Student Handbook* (http://www.uah.edu./student_life/handbook/).

8.2.7.Office Hours

A faculty member is expected to maintain office hours in order to be available to students, other faculty members, and administrative officers at regular places and times. A regular schedule of office hours and electronic availability (email) should be established for each course taught known to students, advisees, and the departmental office. Office hours should be posted in the departmental office and outside the faculty office.

See the department chair or program coordinator for building use policy and availability of keys, locks, lights, office equipment and off-hours heating and cooling.

8.2.8.Copyrighted Materials

The bookstore will assist faculty members in securing copyright clearance for classroom materials to be included in course packs. For information about the practical application of the "fair use" doctrine under federal copyright law, see the pamphlet, *Questions and Answers on Copyright for the Campus Community*, (<http://www.nacs.org/public/copyright/>) available in the Bookstore. Legal advice in this regard is available from the Office of Counsel.

8.2.9.Field Trips

Certain courses lend themselves to field trips for demonstration purposes. In general, such trips are permissible if they do not interfere with attendance in other classes. The proposed trip should be cleared with the department chair (or equivalent) and the dean of the college. For assistance regarding the need for signed releases for participating students, contact the Office of Counsel. Such contact should be made as soon as possible to facilitate timely preparation and completion of releases, if required. All due caution should be taken on such trips to safeguard the students. If car pools are used for transportation, they should be required to return to the campus at the completion of the trip.

8.3.Grading Policies and Examinations

8.3.1.Grading System

The grading system at UAH includes grades of (A, B, C, D, F, I, X, W, S, U, P, AU, and N). Instructors have the option of augmenting the course grades of A, B, C, and D with the symbols "+" and "-" signifying, respectively, high and low achievement within the assigned letter grade. These augmented letter grades become part of the student's permanent record and appear on transcripts, but augmentation of a letter grade does not affect its value for the purposes of GPA computation.

A Superior achievement: Four quality points given per semester hour.

B Above average achievement: Three quality points given per semester hour.

C Average achievement: Two quality points given per semester hour.

D Passing work: One quality point given per semester hour.

F Failing work: No credit given; no quality points assigned.

I Incomplete: Assigned by the instructor when a student, due to extenuating circumstances, has not satisfied a course requirement. The deadline for a student to remedy a grade I is the last day of class of the next semester enrolled or one calendar year from the date of the grade, whichever occurs first. If the grade of I is on a student's record past the deadline or at the time of graduation, it is treated as an F.

X Excused absence from Examination: Assigned by the instructor when a student completes all course requirements except the final examination. This grade becomes an F unless the examination is completed by the time of the announced deferred examination date at the beginning of the semester of the next regular enrollment of the student. **W Withdrawal:** Recorded by the Office of the Registrar when a student withdraws from a course.

S Satisfactory work: Applicable to noncredit courses and to some specified credit courses. Will not be counted in the GPA.

U Unsatisfactory work: Applicable to noncredit courses and to some specified credit courses. It will be counted as an F and computed in the GPA for undergraduates, but not graduate students.

P Passing work: Assigned in some courses. See Pass-Fail Option in the Catalog. **AU Audit:** No credit given; no quality points assigned.

N No grade: Assigned by the Office of Student Records when a grade is not reported by the instructor.

8.3.2. Confidentiality of Student Records

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 is a federal law that protects the confidentiality of student educational records. To implement this law, the university has formulated and adopted a written institutional policy governing the handling of these records. A student's privacy interest in his or her records is further protected by FERPA against unauthorized disclosure. The university may not, without the student's written consent, release educational records or any personally identifiable information contained in them to other individuals or agencies. Disclosure to the following parties, however, is specifically excepted by the Privacy Act from this rule: (a) administrative and academic personnel within an institution who have a legitimate educational interest; (b) officials of institutions in which the student seeks to enroll; (c) persons or organizations to whom the student is applying for financial aid; (d) accrediting agencies; (e) organizations conducting studies relating to tests, student-aid programs or instruction; (f) certain federal and state government officials; (g) any person where the

disclosure is required for compliance with a judicial order or proper subpoena; (h) appropriate persons where a health or safety emergency affecting the student exists; and (i) parents of a dependent student. As to some of these parties, additional conditions must be met in order for the disclosure to be allowable in the absence of a written consent from the student. Personally identifiable information will be transmitted by the university to a third party only on the condition that the recipient not permit any other party to have access to it without the student's consent. The university may release directory information to others without the necessity of obtaining permission from the student. For a description of what constitutes directory information, see the *Student Handbook* (http://www.uah.edu/student_life/handbook/). Questions about the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act should be directed to the appropriate dean or to the Office of the Provost.

8.3.3. Students with Disabilities

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the university must provide reasonable academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. Any student who has a documented condition that substantially limits his or her learning activities can request coordination of appropriate academic support services through the university's Disability Support Services (DSS) office. The function of DSS is to collaborate with students, faculty, and staff to ensure appropriate services are provided to students registered with the DSS office. If a student self-identifies to a member of the campus community, the student must be given a referral to DSS.

The university relies on faculty to provide access to all of its programs and activities to student with disabilities. As members of the campus community, you are required to adhere to relevant disability laws. The university accepts only those students who are qualified for admission regardless of their disabilities. Accommodations are provided for eligible students in order to provide equitable access so that students with disabilities have an equal opportunity to succeed in their academic pursuits. Students must submit an application and appropriate medical documentation of disability to be eligible for services.

Instructors are to announce procedures for arranging academic accommodations at the beginning of each semester and include the information in the course syllabus. DSS is available to provide consultations via email or phone to any faculty member. The "Information for Faculty" section of the DSS website has been developed to support faculty as they work with students with disabilities. Legal advice concerning disability laws may be obtained from the Office of Counsel.

8.3.4. Make-up Exams

Students who are unable to take announced quizzes and examinations because of illness or extenuating circumstances should report to their instructor. The faculty member may require verification of the illness or extenuating circumstance before administering a make-up examination. Absences from a scheduled final examination without prior arrangement with the course instructor (except in extenuating circumstances) will be classified unexcused, and a failing grade may be assigned. An X is to be assigned as a temporary grade in a course in which the student has an excused absence from a final exam. If the faculty member does not wish personally to conduct the makeup of the final examination, he or she must contact Testing Services and provide a copy of the makeup final examination which will be administered by that office. The date is normally the first Saturday following the beginning of the next semester or summer term and is noted as the Deferred Exam Date on the official calendar.

8.3.5. Final Exam Policy

The university expects each faculty member to give such an examination unless the nature of a particular course precludes the administering of a final examination. The semester calendar distributed to each faculty member specifies the schedule of final exams. Any change to the final exam schedule must be approved in writing and in advance (where practical) by the Department Chair. If changes are approved, the Department Chair will notify the Office of the Registrar of the schedule change.

Students have the right to review their final examinations with faculty members. For this reason, final examination papers must be kept on file for one calendar year. Continuing full-time faculty and graduate teaching assistants may keep these papers in their offices. Part-time faculty should turn in exam papers to the departmental office. In addition to the final examination, other examinations are administered and outside work assigned in a manner deemed appropriate by the instructor. Sufficient work should be assigned and evaluated prior to midterm to permit students to assess clearly their progress in the course.

8.3.6. Final Exam Rescheduling for Students

Any student whose final examination schedule is such that he or she is scheduled to take three examinations during a single day has the right to have the middle examination rescheduled. The date and time of the rescheduled examination must be by mutual agreement between the student and the affected faculty member and must be agreed upon by the end of the thirteenth week of classes. It is the student's responsibility to notify his or her instructor of the conflict, and it is the instructor's responsibility to verify that the conflict actually exists. If a student is scheduled to take four examinations during a single day, then the same procedure applies except that the student then has the right to have both the second and the third examinations rescheduled.

8.3.7. Reporting of Grades

Final grades are filed electronically by faculty members or designee, as required by FERPA. Faculty must meet the grade report deadline.

Faculty are required to submit mid-term grades for 100-and 200-level courses in the current grading system.

8.3.8.Changing of Grades

A student is permitted to request a change of course grade no later than one semester from the date a grade is assigned. As a rule, grades may be changed only by submission by the instructor of a Change of Grade form containing a written explanation of the error. Grade changes for X or I to a letter grade are also submitted on a Change of Grade Form. The Change of Grade form must be approved by the chair of the department or equivalent and received in the Office of Student Records no later than two semesters from the date the original grade was assigned.

8.3.9.Public Posting of Grades

Instructors are neither required nor encouraged to post grades publically. If they choose to do so, FERPA guidelines must be followed.

8.3.10.Auditing Courses

Students may on occasion desire to register for a course as an “audit.” No credit is given for an audit and no quality points are assigned. Auditing a course gives the student permission to attend classes, to listen to the instructor’s presentations and lectures, to participate in class discussions, as appropriate, and to receive handouts associated with the presentations and lectures. Students auditing a course are permitted to ask to participate in graded activities, such as homework, group projects, laboratories, and exams. The instructor is not required to grade any written assignments that may be submitted by an auditing student. A student who elects to audit a course may not at any point after electing to audit, change to “for-credit,” i.e., graded status. Through the fourth week a student may elect to change the grading status for any course from credit to audit. The student must initiate a formal request for change to audit through the Office of the Registrar. Any student failing to follow established procedure for change to audit will continue to be enrolled in the class for credit and may receive a failing grade in that course.

8.3.11.Class Records

Faculty members must maintain grade records. Upon termination of services with the university, the faculty member is to turn in grade records to the department chair or program coordinator, who maintains such records in accordance with institutional policy and the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

8.4.Policy Formation

The university must preserve the primacy of shared academic governance in planning, development, and implementation of policies. Faculty should have direct influence and control over departmental and institutional priorities as well as the institutional mission, including curriculum planning, faculty hiring, and scholarly activities.