

Academic Course Credit Policy and Declaration Form

Adopted by the Gettysburg College Faculty in December 2011

Implemented in Academic Year 2012-2013

Students who successfully complete academic courses at Gettysburg College earn one course credit, the equivalent of four semester hours. In computing academic credit, the following standards (in accordance with Federal and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania standards) are employed:

- One hour of class time typically requires two hours of student preparation or homework outside class.
- Each course should claim an average of 12 hours of student time per week (four hours of class dedicated work and eight hours of preparation or homework) over the course of the semester. The length of each semester is equivalent to 15 weeks of instructional time. **Note:** *See below for equivalent information on half-unit and quarter-unit courses.*
- “Class time” is normally scheduled in the official listing of courses, **but may also include structured time as described below.**
- “Preparation and homework” are defined as unsupervised activities, including reading, studying, problem-solving, and short assignments, which are assessed.
- In all calculations, “1 hour” = 50 minutes (an “academic hour”), per Federal Standards.

Since all full-credit academic courses at Gettysburg are officially scheduled for a minimum of three hours per week, we need to document how each of our courses meets “the fourth hour” and its related out-of-class time requirement. We expect all faculty members in each department/program to complete the following form for each course taught within the department/program. Department chairs, program coordinators, or other designated faculty members in each academic unit will ensure that the requisite form is completed for each and every course offered by that unit.

Beginning in the first year of implementation (Academic Year 2012-2013), the attached form must be completed for each scheduled course. Please submit a completed form for each course to the Provost’s Office within two weeks of submitting your department’s/program’s schedule for the subsequent academic year to the Registrar. Please submit a syllabus for each of these courses to the Provost’s office by the end of the first week of classes in each semester. For courses not offered in the subsequent academic year, the requisite documentation should be submitted the next time the course is scheduled to be taught following the same sequence outlined above.

All completed forms for previously approved courses will be reviewed on a semester-by-semester basis by a joint faculty committee consisting of members from both the Academic Program and Policy Committee (APPC) and the Committee on Learning Assessment (COLA). Should a department/program decide to change the fundamental way in which any course meets “the fourth hour” requirement, an updated form must be sent to the coordinator of this joint faculty committee prior to the start of the semester in which the change would be implemented.

A completed form is also required for each new course submitted for acknowledgement or curricular approval by the Academic Program and Policy Committee (APPC).

Note: *Half-unit courses (.50) are the equivalent of 2 semester hours and are expected to claim an average of 6 hours of student time per week—the total of in-class time and preparation plus “homework” in a 15-week semester. In all calculations, “1 hour” = 50 minutes (an “academic hour”). Quarter-unit courses (.25) are the equivalent of 1 semester hour. In lecture-discussion courses, an average of 3 hours of student time per week is claimed—the total of in-class time and preparation plus “homework” in a 15-week semester. For example, in music ensemble courses earning a quarter-unit, rehearsal time plus preparation and concerts averages 2-6 hours per week. Applied study earning a quarter-unit meets or exceeds the standard of an average of 3 hours of work per week in a 15-week semester.*

Academic Course Credit Declaration Form

All sections of (Course prefix, number, and title)

_____ taught in the _____ Department/Program

meet “the fourth hour” requirement as follows:

- OPTION #1: The course has four or more hours of instruction officially scheduled each week of the semester.**

- OPTION #2: The course has a fourth (or more) hour officially scheduled in a required laboratory, film screening, or other activity each week of the semester. Students may not receive course credit without registering for this component.**

- OPTION #3: The course, although officially scheduled for three hours each week, has additional structured activities that meet special criteria. Such activities must satisfy each of the following:**
 - Required of all students and set forth clearly in the course syllabus.
 - Structured so as to serve the declared learning goals of the course and to result in a product that is to be evaluated by the instructor.
 - Instructionally supervised, iterative, interactive, and directed toward higher skills of self-reflection, critique, evaluation, synthesis, etc.
 - At minimum, arranged to claim time averaging at least one hour per week of student time across the semester.
 - Arranged so as to presume additional preparation time, homework, or other activities on the part of the student.
 - Examples of **acceptable experiences** include the following: research; paper, performance, or presentation development; and attendance at events or participation in experiences that result in a product to be assessed.

Note that if an unsupervised assignment does not yield a product that is evaluated, then that assignment **does not satisfy** the criteria for the fourth hour.

NOTE: If you selected Option #3, a copy of the syllabus and a short description of the activities or assignments which meet “the fourth hour” criteria must be provided to the Provost’s Office no later than the end of the first week of classes in each semester.

Instructor Signature _____

Department Chair/Program Coordinator Signature _____

Date _____

Please send all completed forms to the Office of the Provost (Campus Box 410).