Tips for Reading the HGSE Catalogue

The Harvard Graduate School of Education offers courses to degree candidates and several categories of nondegree students, as well as to students enrolled in other Harvard faculties through cross-registration. The Catalogue is the primary printed resource for course information for the academic year 2013-2014. Updates and additions to the Catalogue are available on the HGSE website: www.gse.harvard.edu/academics/catalogue/.

In designing an academic program, HGSE students are encouraged to review the entire set of course listings, since courses that might be of interest are likely to be listed in different sections. When selecting courses, degree students should also consult the Program Offerings section of this book to be sure they take into account the specific requirements and recommendations of the program in which they are enrolled. Finally, students should be aware that course offerings can change from year to year.

Most HGSE courses carry four units of credit and are equivalent to four semester hours for a period of thirteen weeks. HGSE also offers two-credit modules. A module usually meets for only a portion of the semester (typically six to seven weeks) and provides either an introductory overview of a particular field or an intense period of study focusing on specific skills. Two HGSE modules provide the four units of credit that are equivalent to one course.

Courses are presented in five major categories: “A-” courses, “H-” courses,” “L-” courses, “S-” courses, and “T-” courses (A number of courses have double prefixes, e.g., AH-, AT-, HT-.) These prefixes reflect a longtime convention used at HGSE: “A-” for administration, planning, and social policy courses; “H-” for human development and psychology courses; “L-” for the Doctor of Education Leadership degree courses; “S-” for schoolwide courses; and “T-” for learning and teaching courses. While these prefixes may serve as a guide, students are strongly advised to use subject-area listings and lists of program-specific course requirements and recommendations—as well as to consult with advisors and program directors—to locate courses of interest. Within each major section of the Catalogue, each course has its own three-digit number. The initial digit usually signifies a course’s broad substantive grouping. The middle digit indicates the course’s relative level of advancement among courses within a grouping. Middle digits of 0 and 1 identify introductory courses; 2 through 5 identify intermediate courses (that often require previous study of the subject); and 6 through 8 identify advanced courses on special topics (that usually require substantial student preparation). A middle digit of 8 or 9 with a suffix of 7, 8, or 9 indicates a special type of course: -87, -97, and -99 for field experiences/internships and -99 for an independent study. Modules are identified by the presence of a 10 as the last two digits, followed by a trailing letter after the course designation (e.g., A-710B, T-210L).

If a course title is enclosed in brackets, [ ], it means that the course will not be offered during the 2013-2014 academic year.

If a course title is preceded by an asterisk, *, it means that enrolling in the course requires permission of the instructor or that the course is limited to students in a specific program. Instructors list admission criteria for selecting students at the end of the course descriptions in the Catalogue and on the course websites.

Students wishing to enroll in a limited-enrollment course must obtain permission from the instructor before enrolling. When planning courses for a given semester, students should not assume that they will be able to enroll in any course listed with an asterisk. It is highly advisable that students have alternative options.

The courses and class meeting times listed in the Catalogue are current as of early August 2013. The most up-to-date information can be found in the online course listing at www.gse.harvard.edu/academics/catalogue/. In late August 2013 and in January 2014, the Registrar will issue supplements to this Catalogue that reflect any changes since it went to press, including a small number of additional courses.
Independent Studies

A carefully crafted and well-supervised independent study can be a powerful learning experience. However, independent studies are designed to augment the HGSE course offerings, not to supplant them. Students wishing to take an independent study should consult the faculty member with whom they wish to work. A faculty member is under no obligation to supervise an independent study—the decision to take on this added responsibility is entirely up to the individual. Faculty members differ in their inclination to participate in independent studies. Some believe it is an ideal vehicle for working with students (especially advanced doctoral students); others may not be able to devote the time necessary to make it a successful endeavor for the student. Please refer to the Student Handbook for guidelines on independent studies, including the number of independent studies each student may undertake.

Field Experience Program

A Field Experience Program (FEP) internship-for-credit course offers the opportunity for students to work in a professional setting related to their educational studies while obtaining academic credit. The work usually has practical application but must always have intellectual content. And while the work may involve research, it can also be of a more applied nature. Contexts range from schools, colleges, public agencies, and museums, to private corporations and nonprofit organizations. With support of the HGSE Career Services Office, students arrange internships in settings related to their academic studies. The student-intern is supervised by someone within the organization, and ideally, the intern learns about the breadth of the organization as well as how to perform new tasks or handle new responsibilities. Teaching fellows support interns through individual meetings, a mid-semester progress meeting, and a required five-session seminar conducted under the guidance of the FEP director. Please refer to the Field Experience Program website (www.gse.harvard.edu/fep/) for more information and to the Student Handbook for FEP guidelines, including limitations on the number of FEP credits each student may take.

Course Evaluation at HGSE

HGSE places a great deal of importance on the evaluation of its courses and programs. Course evaluations have four purposes: (1) to help instructors improve their courses and strengthen their teaching; (2) to provide information about courses to current and future students; (3) to encourage students to reflect on their own learning; and (4) to contribute to the professional review process for faculty members.

It is an institutional requirement that students complete online course evaluations for each course in which they are enrolled. Students may view their final grade in a course online only if their evaluation for that course has been submitted. Furthermore, continuing students who do not complete all of their course evaluations will be prevented from registering for further courses until they fulfill this requirement. Graduating students who do not submit all course evaluations will have their diplomas withheld. Instructors are not given access to summary evaluation reports until grades have been submitted to the Office of the Registrar.