

Guidelines for Stanford Continuing Studies Course Descriptions and Biographies

Course descriptions should be one or two paragraphs in length, and between **175 to 220 words**. Biographies should be **no more than 80 words (40 - 65 words is the ideal length)**. In the biography, we're looking for a few words about your relevant teaching experience, any advanced degree information, any books you've published or publications you've contributed to, as well as your professional title. You are also welcome to include any research interests.

If your course is accepted, the description and biography will ultimately be used in our printed course catalog and on our website to publicize your course. Please avoid using bulleted or numerical lists as the catalog is printed in a newspaper-style column format. You may find it helpful to read through a few examples of published Continuing Studies course descriptions as you develop your own:

<https://continuingstudies.stanford.edu/courses/courses-by-department>

Ideal course descriptions typically include the following:

- 1) A sharp, interesting opening that will capture the reader's interest, inspire them to keep reading, and help get them excited about the course.
- 2) A summary or overview of what the course will cover, including:
 - some sense of the specific topics or works to be covered and/or what the course's trajectory will be over time, (i.e. we will begin with x, continue to y, conclude with z).
 - a couple specific, concrete examples of interesting or memorable cases, situations, or scenarios that will be addressed.
- 3) A description of what the major assignments or homework will be, and what the main textbook or readings will be (if applicable).
- 4) An explanation of what will happen in the "classroom" (whether on campus or online) or as part of class-related activities, i.e. what will the experience be like for students and what will they be expected to do?
- 5) A description of who you envision the audience for this course might be, and if any prior knowledge or experience is expected, encouraged, or beneficial.
- 6) What students can expect to learn, do, or come away with after taking this course. Please only consider these as general guidelines. If it's not possible to hit on everything, the main goal is simply to give readers a clear, concise, compelling description of what to expect if they sign up for the course.