What do numbers mean, anyway?
Cartoon by Gwen Gettliffe, Pratt 2010
The Chronicle, March 20, 2009
Current Numbering Scheme in Arts & Sciences
(Undergraduate Bulletin 2008-2009, p. 119)

- 0 – 99  Introductory-level
  [1 – 49 primarily for 1st year students]
- 100 – 199  Advanced-level
- 200 – 299  Seniors and graduate students
- 300 – 399  Graduate students only
So what’s the problem?

- **Running out of numbers…**
  - Growth in faculty/programs → more courses
  - Greater interdisciplinarity → more cross-listed courses,
    more numbers needed
    → suffixes ad absurdum
    → over-reliance on Special Topics courses

- **Lack of transparency / curricular coherence**
  - Inability to clearly indicate course levels and sequencing
  - 200-level is used differently across departments/schools (see below)
  - Transcript issues: can appear as if Duke students taking all lower-level courses (the norm for undergrad in U.S. higher ed is 100 to 400-level)

- **Confusion in nature of 200-level courses: grad or undergrad?**
  - Some are “career plan” undergrad; some “career plan” grad
  - Some for seniors only; some for grad/undergrad; some grad only
  - Some in Grad Bulletin, some not; some in Undergrad Bulletin, some not
And the solution is....

- Create a new course numbering scheme that will
  - be comprehensible and transparent to students, faculty, and outside world
  - allow departments / programs to more clearly indicate course levels, sequencing, and logic of curriculum
  - be consistent across departments, programs, and schools in Arts & Sciences (including Nicholas, Public Policy, Pratt, and Graduate School)
<table>
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<th>Process and Timeline</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Spring 2009</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Fall 2009</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Spring 2010</strong></td>
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<td><strong>2010-2011 academic year</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Fall 2011</strong></td>
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New Numbering Scheme

0 – 99: Advanced Placement credit; House Courses; First-Year Seminars; First-Year Writing; Registrar / Department special purpose

100 – 199: Introductory-level undergraduate courses; basic skills / activity courses; foundation courses; Focus program courses

200 – 399: Undergraduate courses above introductory level

400 – 499: Advanced undergraduate, senior seminars, capstone courses, honors thesis courses

500 – 699: Graduate courses open to advanced undergraduates

700 – 999: Graduate only courses (not open to undergraduates)
General Principles

- **Curricular Coherence**
  - Course numbers should reflect a clear logic (levels, sequencing, categories) within particular department or program.
  - With the exception of the important distinction between intro and non-intro courses, and between undergrad and advanced undergrad/grad, students generally should not assume that courses have been arranged in ascending order of difficulty or specialization.
    
    (e.g. 300-level not necessarily more advanced than 200-level; 280 not necessarily more advanced than 220)
  - Logic behind any department / program numbering scheme will be specific to department / program.
General Principles

- **Transparency and consistency across departments, schools, programs**

  - Reserved and assigned course numbers (e.g. for Special Topics courses, Independent Studies, Beginning and Intermediate Foreign Language courses, Transfer courses, Senior Honors Thesis courses)

  - Consistent use of suffixes: letter suffixes used ONLY for the following: seminars (S), labs (L), discussions (D), tutorials (T), preceptorials (P), Focus (FS), Duke-administered study abroad/away (A)
General Principles

- **Consistency + Flexibility**
  - Designated number for Special Topics (x90), but..
  - Allow to distinguish different categories within single course number, e.g.
    - ENGLISH x90S-1. Special Topics in Criticism, Theory, or Methodology
    - ENGLISH x90S-2. Special Topics in Feminist Studies
  
  -------------------
  
  - POLSCI x90-1. Special Topics in American Government
  - POLSCI x90-2. Special Topics in Comparative Government
  - POLSCI x90-3. Special Topics in Political Theory
  - POLSCI x90-4: Special Topics in International Relations
Clarity of “mindsets” re. undergrad / grad

- 0 - 499: undergrad (career plan in Peoplesoft)
- 500 - 999: graduate (career plan in Peoplesoft)

**BUT**

- All 500- and 600-level courses must be open to advanced undergrads (no 500- or 600-level for grad students only)

- All 700+ are grad only; undergrads may take 700+ only with special permission from program and academic dean (as per current 300-level)

- All PhD students may take any level undergraduate course for credit (Grad School allows PhD programs total freedom in determining which courses graduate students can take for credit and count for program)

- MA students limited to two undergrad courses for credit to degree
General Principles

- **Clarity of Purpose reflected in Undergraduate and Graduate Bulletins**
  - All courses 0 – 699 in Undergraduate Bulletin
  - All courses 500 – 999 in Graduate Bulletin

- **Clarity of course approval process**
  - all 500- and 600-level courses require approval of both undergrad and grad schools
## Reserved and Assigned Course Numbers

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<tr>
<th>Course Numbers</th>
<th>Course Type</th>
<th>Special Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>0-19</td>
<td>Advanced Placement Credit</td>
<td>Reserved for Registrar</td>
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<tr>
<td>20 - 29</td>
<td>House Courses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing 80</td>
<td>First-Year Writing: Other first-year non-major courses</td>
<td>(formerly Writing 20) (formerly 20-credit courses)</td>
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<tr>
<td>81-88</td>
<td>First-Year Seminars</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>895</td>
<td>Department Special Use</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>50, 100, 200, 300, 400</td>
<td>Transfer Course Credit</td>
<td>For transfer courses with no Duke course equivalents</td>
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<tr>
<td>101 – 199</td>
<td>Introductory courses: basic skills or activity courses; foundation courses; Focus program courses</td>
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<tr>
<td>190, 200, 300, 400</td>
<td>Special Topics Courses: Undergraduate; Graduate / Advanced Undergrad</td>
<td>These numbers reserved for courses that have variable topics each semester (may use dash + digit to indicate subcategories, see guidelines) [add suffix A for Duke-administered Study Abroad or Domestic Away]</td>
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<tr>
<td>590, 690</td>
<td>Special Topics Courses Graduate only</td>
<td>These numbers reserved for courses that have variable topics each semester</td>
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<tr>
<td>790, 890, 990</td>
<td>Special Topics Courses Graduate only</td>
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<tr>
<td>201 – 202</td>
<td>Independent Study Undergraduate Graduate</td>
<td>Independent Studies spanning two or more semesters use numbers in sequence</td>
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<td>391 - 392</td>
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<tr>
<td>491 – 492</td>
<td>Research Independent Study Undergraduate Graduate</td>
<td>Research Independent Studies spanning two or more semesters use numbers in sequence</td>
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<td>593 – 594</td>
<td>Honors Thesis courses</td>
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<td>495 – 496</td>
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<tr>
<td>101, 102 – Beginning level 111 – Intensive beginning 203–204 – Intermediate level 212 – Intensive intermediate 300+ – Advanced level</td>
<td>Foreign Language Courses Beginning and Intermediate Advanced</td>
<td>Language departments do not use 201, 202 (all courses above the intermediate level taught in the FL must be at the 200-level or above)</td>
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<td>501-502, Reading knowledge only courses (grad courses for academic research - may not carry FL code)</td>
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<td>Suffixes: Any course number with S, ES, L, D, T, P, A, F</td>
<td>For seminar (S), Focus (FS), Labs (L), Discussion (D), Tutorial (T), Preceptorial (P), Abroad/Army (A)</td>
<td>Please refrain from using any other suffixes, and from using these suffixes for anything other than their stated purpose</td>
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Instructions and Guidelines (to be provided in full)

- Use this as opportunity to review course offerings and curriculum as coherent whole
- Use numbers in a way that reflects levels, categories, topics – your department/program numbering scheme should be transparent and meaningful
- Do not think of this as a simple mechanical process, but rather, try to look at each course anew, determine where it best fits in your curriculum
- You will be provided with a template (excel spreadsheet) containing your current courses and cross-list information, as well as a full set of detailed instructions and guidelines
Course Re-numbering Committee

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  Associate Prof. of Practice, Germanic Languages and Literature

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