ACADEMIC TERMINOLOGY

Unit: The value given to one 50-minute class meeting weekly for a term. This means that a class meeting Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 9-9:50 a.m. or Tuesday and Thursday from 8-9:15 a.m. will be a 3-unit course. Most classes fit this format. Classes that require laboratory or studio time in addition to lecture time will usually merit an extra unit, becoming 4-unit courses, just as those requiring less class time will merit fewer units. The course description section of the catalog lists the number of units each course carries. Faculty expect students to spend at least two hours reading, writing and doing research outside of class for each hour spent in class.

Unit Load: In a regular fall or spring term, students typically take 15 units (five 3-unit courses). In the Minimester, students may take a maximum of 4 units. In summer, students may take a maximum of 13 units (7 units maximum per session).

To be considered full-time, undergraduate students must be enrolled in a minimum of 12 units each term.

All students in good academic standing may register for a maximum of 19 units in any fall or spring term. Students must ask permission from the Registrar’s Office to take units beyond 19.

Major: A major consists of courses required for a particular discipline. Majors can have both lower-level courses (100-200) and upper-level courses (300-400), within and outside the discipline. All students must complete a major in order to graduate. A grade equivalent of 2.00 or higher is required in all courses taken for the major. Majors are also called academic plans or programs.

Minor: A minor is an institutionally approved set of courses within a major area of study, or a separate, distinct thematic area of study. A minor must have at least 18 and no more than 30 units. At least 30% of the units in the minor must be taken at the upper-level (300-400) and no more than 12 units can be taken outside of the minor or thematic discipline. A grade equivalent of 2.00 or higher is required in all courses completed toward the minor.

Concentration: A concentration is a group of courses representing a specialized area of study within a major. Concentrations are approved by the Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC) and require a minimum of 24 units. Also known as an academic sub-plan.

Track: A track is a group of courses representing a specialized area of study within a major. A track requires between 18 and 23 units. Also known as an academic sub-plan.

Term: The academic year consists of two regular terms (sometimes called semesters), plus minimester and summer. The spring and fall terms are composed of 15 weeks of instruction, including final examinations.

Minimester: A condensed term in January that allows students to take courses that lend themselves to a highly focused format (15 hours of instruction each week) to discuss ideas that interest students or that may fill a gap in their requirements.

Summer: A term composed of four sessions of varying lengths that allow students to complete regular course work in a shorter period of time and fulfill degree requirements sooner.

Prerequisites/Corequisites: Prerequisites are requirements imposed by an academic department for certain courses within its curriculum. Such requirements may include, but are not limited to: other courses, a specific test score, a specific major, or class standing, (e.g., junior, senior).

A student must have earned a C or higher on any course for it to be considered as a course prerequisite, including courses transferred from another institution.

Corequisites are courses that must be taken together, for example a lecture course that has a related lab course. Occasionally a requirement may be stated as either a corequisite or prerequisite, and the student may decide whether to take the courses concurrently or complete the requirement prior to enrolling in the other course.

Most enrollment requirements (prerequisites and corequisites) are enforced automatically when the student registers; however, it is ultimately up to the academic department to enforce enrollment requirements. Some departments make the determination after registration, and students not meeting the requirements will be notified to drop the class. Therefore, students should carefully read course descriptions before registering to make sure they have met any enrollment requirements. Failure to meet published requirements or to withdraw from the course by the published deadline is not a basis for petitioning Academic Standards Committee for an exception to academic policy.