School of Graduate Studies  
University of Toronto  

GRADUATE SEMINAR SERIES COURSES  
Guidelines for Graduate Units  
August 18, 2010  

Introduction  
Attendance at a seminar series is regularly part of requirements in graduate degree programs as well as in collaborative programs. The requirement varies from required attendance to attendance plus other activities or attendance plus evaluated activities. These guidelines offer graduate units and collaborative programs the opportunity to choose from one of two graduate course types for seminar series. Units may wish to convert existing seminar series courses to one or the other of the two course types, where appropriate.

Seminars are viewed as distinct from “graduate seminars”. Seminars at the graduate level are generally defined in the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) Policy and Guidelines on Graduate Courses and Other Academic Activities (see http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/Assets/governance/policies/graduatecourses.pdf); this set of guidelines addresses seminar series courses in detail. Seminars which are not part of a “series” are commonly understood to involve smaller classes where the learning format may involve both lecture and student presentations. These more traditional courses are usually graded with a letter grade and weighted in the normal manner. Such graduate seminar courses are distinct from graduate seminar series courses which are the topic of these guidelines.

All graduate courses are subject to the University Grading Practices Policy as well as the SGS Graduate Grading and Evaluation Practices Policy.

Background and Rationale  
These guidelines provide a framework for recording seminar series courses on the graduate student academic record in a consistent way while facilitating the various practices within graduate units.

In the past, required attendance at a seminar series was not regularly recorded on the student academic record and was simply tracked at the graduate unit level. In some cases, regular graduate course codes have been used, thus indicating a kind of activity that does not necessarily reflect the actual requirement. There is a range of possible activities associated with participation in a seminar series requirement, yet the options for recording that activity on the academic record are limited.

More recently, graduate units are seeking to have all elements of program requirements recorded on the student academic record through the Repository of Student Information (ROSI), including participation in seminar series when it is a graduate program requirement. This is in accordance with the SGS and University view that all program requirements should be on ROSI. However, weighting and grading of these requirements are not managed consistently across graduate studies.

These guidelines propose to standardize the recording of seminar series requirements into two types, and include clarification of course weighting and grading for each type. More consistent handling of seminar series will lead to a clearer presentation and interpretation of program requirements on ROSI and the transcript. Graduate units should consider which type is most appropriate to meet program requirements.
Graduate seminar series course types

**TYPE 1: CR/NCR Seminar Series (Universal Designator) - required attendance only and/or non-evaluated activity**

This type of seminar series requirement is established as a "universal" graduate course and would appear on student academic record on the Repository of Student Information (ROSI):

- SRM 3333 H or Y Master's Seminar Series - Compulsory Attendance
- SRD 4444 H or Y Doctoral Seminar Series - Compulsory Attendance

These courses would be graded CR/NCR (no letter grades). The weight for this type of course is 0.0 FCE. Graduate units may add a subtitle for the specific name of the seminar series. The universal designators would be used for seminar series requirements where attendance only is required and may include non-evaluated activity. “Activity”, including attendance, is defined at the graduate unit or collaborative program level and may include activities such as student presentations at seminars or active student participation in discussion following the seminar. Similar, but slightly varying SRM/SRD numbers may be established to identify seminar series courses that run for the academic year, extend beyond a year, run continuously through a student’s program, etc. The graduate unit tracks attendance.

**TYPE 2: Letter Grade Seminar Series (Graduate Unit Designator) - required attendance plus evaluated activity**

This type of seminar series requirement is established as a graduate course with a graduate unit or collaborative program course code and specific title (that is, the graduate unit-specific title would replace the words “Graduate unit seminar series”, and “required attendance plus evaluated activity” would be retained in any such course title). Graduate unit seminar series courses are assigned a course weight (.5 FCE, for example). Grading for the course is established as letter grades at the time the course is proposed. In this course type, evaluated student activity is required in addition to attendance. A graduate faculty member is responsible for evaluation and assignment of grades. The graduate unit tracks attendance.

**Procedures**

**Type 1 CR/NCR Seminar Series (Universal):**

- The universal course type may only be used when the seminar series has been approved through graduate governance as a program requirement.
- Submit a request for a universal course designator to SGS via the Faculty Graduate Dean’s Office in an e-mail addressing the following components:
  - Request to use a Type 1 CR/NCR Seminar Series (Universal) course
  - Name the graduate unit involved

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1 Graduate unit administrators enrol students in this type of course following ROSI manual instructions
2 Student enrolment in seminar series courses that are continuous is automatic after the first session; in master’s programs in which students may “stop out”, administrators delete enrolments during “stop-out” sessions.
- Name of program in which the universal course code will represent an approved program requirement
- Confirm that Compulsory Attendance is required and that the graduate unit will track attendance
- Identify any other required non-evaluated activity
- Confirm that course evaluation will be CR/NCR
- Confirm that course weight will be 0 FCE
- Explain if course will run for a term, the academic year, extend beyond a year, run continuously through a student’s program, etc.

- Once the course request has been reviewed by SGS, Graduate unit administrators will enrol students according to ROSI manual instructions.
- Attendance is tracked by the graduate unit.
- At completion, graduate units enter a grade (CR/NCR) on ROSI for each student.

**Type 2 Letter Grade Seminar series (Graduate Unit):**
- Graduate units propose a new graduate course with a graduate unit course code following established graduate governance procedures.
- If the seminar series requirement is a new program requirement, it is approved via graduate governance procedures.
- Students enrol in this course type via ROSI.
- Attendance is tracked by the graduate unit.
- When evaluation is complete, graduate units enter a grade on ROSI for each student.