FAQ about L&S Course Designations

What are “L&S Course Designations”?  

These are codes assigned to courses by the L&S Curriculum Committee; they are used to facilitate degree audit for L&S students. Course designations include:

- “C” or Liberal Arts and Science (LAS)
- “T” or “twenty-credit rule” courses (being phased out)
- L&S Level: E, I, A, D (D=I or A)

Although each school and college may define specific courses to meet Undergraduate General Education Requirements, many schools / colleges that have more focused course arrays than L&S also use the L&S Breadth codes assigned to “C” courses to facilitate degree audit.

What are “C” courses?

“C” courses are UW-Madison courses that have been evaluated by the L&S Curriculum Committee using the L&S Criteria for Liberal Arts and Science Courses. These courses contribute to a Liberal Arts and Science (LAS) education. L&S students must complete at least 108 degree credits in LAS courses; the “C” designation is used to help L&S students identify courses that count toward that requirement. The “C” appears in the Course Guide and Schedule of Courses (and formerly appeared in the geBLC column of the Timetable). In general, “C” courses meet one of the following conditions:

- offered by L&S departments and programs;
- required to complete L&S majors;
- cross-listed with L&S subject listings; or,
- on request of the department/program offering the course, reviewed by the L&S Curriculum Committee and found to meet the LAS criteria.

What are “T” courses?

Under the 1971 L&S BA/BS degree requirements, there arose a category of courses that were considered to be not quite like L&S courses - but still of value to L&S students. L&S students could take up to 20 credits of these courses, which were designated with a “T”, and eventually, some of these courses were allowed to carry “breadth” designations, too.

When the L&S BABS07 requirements were implemented, the “T” designation was replaced by a more liberal allowance (12 credits of any UW-Madison credit-bearing courses, vs. 20 credits of a small number of L&S-approved courses). The “T” designation was retained for a five-year “teach-out” period, to serve those students who were completing the 1971 requirements.

Since fewer than 10% of L&S students remain subject to the 1971 requirements, the “T” designation will be retired, effective Fall 2012. When the “T” designation is retired, the “T”
(and any L&S breadth and level designations), will be removed from all courses that currently carry the “T” designation.

**How do non-L&S departments and programs convert “T” or non-C courses to “C” courses?**

This process applies to all non-L&S courses for which an L&S Breadth designation is requested.

The L&S Curriculum Committee will review departments' requests to apply the “C” designation to courses that meet its criteria for Liberal Arts and Science Courses. Requests to review non-L&S courses may be forwarded to the L&S Curriculum Committee by the Divisional Executive Committee office or by the department. Requests should include the following information:

- A cover letter explaining the course's contribution to liberal education. Successful proposals usually cite the *Criteria for Liberal Arts and Sciences* and draw connections between the LAS Criteria and the course syllabus.
- A course change form requesting LAS designation.
- A detailed syllabus that includes weekly lecture topics and subjects covered by them, readings, and method of student evaluation.
- If breadth designation is sought, an explanation of the course's contributions to general principles important to understanding the world through the Arts, Humanities, or the Social, Natural, Physical, or Biological Sciences.

**Can L&S “Breadth” and “Level” designations be added to non-L&S courses?**

Any Liberal Arts and Science course may also carry L&S Breadth and Level designations. At this time, non-LAS courses may not carry these designations.

**Can courses have “Level” but not “Breadth”? Can they have “Breadth” but not “Level”?**

All LAS courses should carry a “level” indicator. Please remember that departments usually designate course level in the context of the programs they offer – thus, there is a “disciplinary context” for level that presumes that a certain amount of familiarity is attained before reaching Intermediate and Advanced levels. For this reason, all Intermediate and Advanced courses have prerequisites.

Some courses do not carry “breadth” indicators. These usually include directed/independent study, thesis, and “topics” courses, since subject matter in these courses will vary from instructor to instructor. In other cases, courses taught by several instructors may vary too much to justify breadth, since each instructor may bring a different disciplinary focus to the material.

Thus, a course may have “level” but not “breadth”, but not vice-versa.

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