

HOW TO: CHOOSE A UNIVERSITY WIDE ELECTIVE

SO, WHAT IS A UNIVERSITY WIDE ELECTIVE ANYWAY?

A university wide elective is any course here at UNC for which you:

1. Meet all requirements (See "Watch Out for Restrictions" to learn more about the various course requirements you may come across in the UNC catalog).
2. Have not previously earned credits (including courses you've taken at UNC and those you've transferred, i.e., from other institutions, AP, IB, CLEP, etc.).



IF I CAN TAKE ANY COURSE AS A UNIVERSITY WIDE ELECTIVE, HOW DO I KNOW WHAT TO CHOOSE?

Electives provide an opportunity to personalize your degree plan; through your electives you can explore your interests, develop skill sets intended to benefit your future career goals, expand your world view, and enhance your overall college experience. That said, selecting courses to fulfill your elective credit hours can often feel a bit overwhelming. This guide has been designed to help simplify the selection process by outlining some key ideas to keep in mind when deciding which elective courses to take.



FIND WAYS TO CREATE A MORE BALANCED SEMESTER

Planning out a balanced semester can help create a more manageable workload. Your elective credit hours play an important role in creating this balance. For example, if you are taking a number of writing-heavy courses, you can use your elective credit hours to register for courses which emphasize different skill sets and require different deliverables; this could be accomplished by incorporating more creative or project-based classes into your schedule.



TAKE FORMAT AND LOCATION INTO ACCOUNT

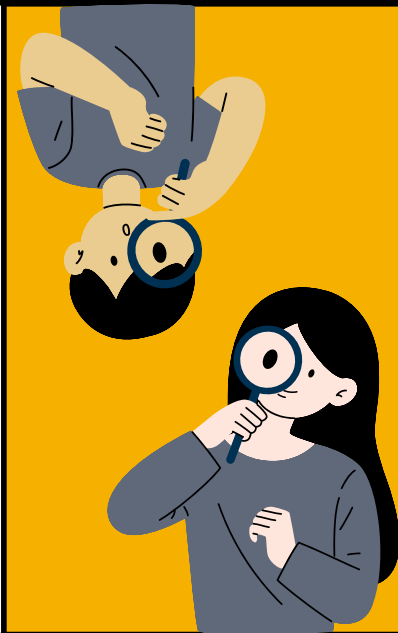
Your choice of elective courses can create an opportunity to add logistic balance to your schedule as well. Would you rather take all your classes on Tuesday and Thursday, or do you like your classes to be spaced evenly throughout the week? Are you more engaged in the afternoons, or are you a morning person? Do you prefer in-person, hybrid, synchronous, or asynchronous classes? These details can help determine which electives will be the best fit for your schedule. As you're finalizing the details, make sure you have time to transition between locations.



CONSIDER YOUR INTERESTS

Electives are an excellent opportunity to explore your interests. For example, if you are pursuing a degree in Criminology and Criminal Justice (CRJ) and find yourself particularly interested in working with juvenile offenders, consider taking SOC 340 (Juvenile Delinquency) as an elective. Not only will you gain a broader understanding of the juvenile justice system and the experience of juvenile offenders, but you will also have the opportunity to explore these topics through a sociology framework, allowing you to consider issues through a different lens than you might use in a CRJ course.

You may also be interested in fostering a more global perspective; electives are the perfect chance to immerse yourself in the study of different languages and cultures.



EXPLORE MINORS, MULTIPLE MAJORS, AND CAREER PATHS

Electives are a great way to try out courses in different fields of study and evaluate whether that subject is something you may be interested in pursuing further.



GRAD SCHOOL OR CAREER PREP

Do you plan on enrolling in a postgraduate program after completing your bachelor's degree? Use your electives as an opportunity to prepare for future course work or admissions requirements. For instance, if you plan on attending law school, PHIL 221 (Basic Logic) is excellent prep for the LSAT. Similarly, STAT 150 (Introduction to Statistical Analysis) will help you to become more comfortable with statistics prior to beginning a research-oriented graduate program. Electives can also help you to develop skills and expertise tailored towards your career goals; the knowledge gained in ECON 205 (Principles of Microeconomics) would be invaluable for any entrepreneur starting their own business. COMM 100 (The Basics of Public Speaking) could be an asset for anyone entering a public-facing profession.



1 CREDIT COURSES

If you only need one elective credit hour for the semester, there are a number of course offerings available to help you meet your requirements. Search for courses with the prefixes SES and MUS for a variety of one credit elective options. BREW 320 (Sensory Analysis of Beer) is another popular 1 credit elective course.

OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Is there a certain professor that you enjoy? Are they teaching any courses you could use for elective credit? Think about choosing their course when selecting your classes for the semester.
- Are you taking a number of challenging classes this semester? Don't add additional pressures with your elective credits. Instead, register for an introductory level class that sounds interesting to you.



WATCH OUT FOR RESTRICTIONS

You may encounter different restrictions while registering for elective courses. For example, if you try to register for FILM 310 (Film Theory and Criticism), you'll see that there is a **prerequisite requirement** for FILM 120 (Introduction to Film). You will need to complete this course with a passing grade before you can enroll in FILM 310. A course may also have restrictions based on student classification; if this is the case you will only be able to enroll in the course if you fall under the criteria listed in that course's **Class Restriction** (status as a freshman, sophomore, junior, or senior) and/or **Major/Minor Restriction** (program of study). These restrictions are often seen in internship courses. Finally, you might encounter errors regarding **corequisite requirements**, or two courses that must be taken at the same time in order to successfully register. This happens most often in the natural and physical sciences when a lab must be taken in conjunction with a lecture, but this can occur in other subject areas as well; for instance, FILM 120 has a corequisite of FILM 121 (Screening for Film 120).

RESOURCES

- Use the [Undergraduate Catalog](#) to explore different course offerings and program information. The "[Course Description](#)" section of the catalog will allow you to view all of UNC's courses grouped together by their subject area, giving you a better idea of what might be available.
- The [LAC Current Offerings site](#) is another great starting point when searching for electives. For example, if you are particularly interested in taking a class in the visual arts, but you do not what classes are offered, a quick review of the LAC Arts & Expression courses can help you to get a sense of your options. Just remember to select the upcoming semester under the term filter before starting your search.



ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

If you need any additional support searching for electives or navigating the registration process, you can contact your [Academic Advisor](#) or reach out to the [HSS Student Resource Center](#) to make an appointment with one of our Success Coaches.