FAU

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University Graduate Programs Committee
Florida Atlantic University

October 28, 2008

Re: Graduate seminar courses in Mathematical Sciences

Dear Committee:

The Department of Mathematical Sciences is proposing two new graduate seminar courses: Graduate Seminar - MAT 5XXX and Advanced Graduate Seminar - MAT 6XXX. These courses would be offered as satisfactory/unsatisfactory for variable credits 1-4 and would be repeatable for credit.

There are a variety of situations in which a seminar course is desirable over a traditional topics course or directed independent study course. Topics courses are confined to a certain subdiscipline of mathematics and both of these types of courses are given for a letter grade. The purpose of a seminar course is to encourage participation and discussion of topics by students of various levels of knowledge with faculty supervision, and in such circumstances the assignment of a satisfactory/unsatisfactory grade, as is the case in MAT 7878 Advanced Research and MAT 7980 Dissertation, in most appropriate. Some examples of cases where a seminar course is preferable might be:

[1] We would like to offer weekly seminar course where faculty in different disciplines in the department give introductory talks about their research so that students are aware of the research opportunities available with different faculty — this type of seminar worked well a number of years ago, and we are thinking of reviving it.

[2] Next semester we would like to offer a seminar to advanced students working on their PhD dissertations in cryptology where students would be exposed to current research in subareas of cryptology different from their dissertation topics to expand their breadth of knowledge in their area – again a traditional topics course with a letter grade is not appropriate.

Sincerely,

William D. Kalies
Mathematics Graduate Coordinator

Spyros Magliveras
Mathematical Sciences Chair

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