Advising Information for Satisfactory – Unsatisfactory (S/U) Grade Option in History Coursework Spring and Summer 2020

The campus deadline for undergraduate students to exercise the S/U option has been extended to Friday, April 30th at 5:00pm.

The UMSL Department of History will accept coursework completed this Spring 2020 semester and Summer 2020 on the S/U grading basis for requirements leading to the BA major in History, the minor in History, and Latino Studies, and 2+3 Dual Master's.

This applies to HIST designated courses, HIST Directed Research, courses taken in other departments that are pre-requisites for history courses.

Making these decisions can feel complicated, in light of everything else happening this semester. Work closely with your academic advisor(s) to make decisions that work for you. History majors are encouraged to contact Rachael White, CAS staff advisor for History majors, at whiterac@umsl.edu.

Question: How does this impact my GPA and hours towards graduation?

- **Answer**: A satisfactory grade “S” is recorded when an instructor assigns the grade of A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C or C-, and has no numerical value in computing students' cumulative grade point average. Thus, your GPA is not affected in any way by courses taken as S/U. Your GPA does not go up with a S or down with a U grade. “S” grades satisfy credit-hour-for graduation requirements.

- **Answer**: An unsatisfactory grade “U” is recorded when an instructor assigns the grades of D+, D, D-, or F. Courses assigned a “U” grade will not satisfy credit hours for your psychology major/minor/certificate or for graduation. A course assigned a “U” grade would not be accepted as a prerequisite for psychology courses.

**Question**: If I decide to change to S/U for this semester, can I do this for one or two classes, or do I have to change all of my classes to S/U for this semester?

- **Answer**: You could change one or two classes to S/U, without having to change all of your courses to S/U.

**Question**: Do my instructors learn that I’ve changed their course to S/U?

- **Answer**: No, your instructors are not notified of this, unless you communicate that information to them directly (i.e., you email or message them about this, or tell them during a Zoom session). There is no reason for you to tell your instructors that you have selected this option, as it is not intended to affect how they grade your work. Course instructors grade the work of all students in the course just as they normally do, and submit letter grades. The S or U grade then shows up in MyView and in your transcript afterwards.
Question: I am currently doing very well in classes, and expect to get an A or a B. Why would I consider moving to S/U for any of these courses?

- **Answer:** If you are currently passing your courses with an A or B, we recommend not switching to S/U. Grades of A and B help you boost your GPA. On the other hand, if your work or personal life is extremely stressful right now, and/or your personal situation is undergoing lots of changes, you may have specific concerns about finishing out the semester strong. Some students in those situations may wish to consider the S/U option.

Question: I am currently struggling in some of my courses, and worry that I may get a D or an F in a course. Would changing to S/U for any of these courses help me?

- **Answer:** Switching to the S/U option would help to maintain your GPA, but you will need to retake courses if you receive a U (for grades of D or F). Remember that a course assigned a “U” grade will not satisfy credit hours for your psychology major/minor/certificate or for graduation. Some students currently getting a D or F may be able to still receive sufficient points for a C-, so moving to a S/U grading option may give you the motivation to increase your performance in class. Keep in mind that you cannot switch to S/U grading for a class that you are taking for a grade modification (i.e., you previously have not passed that course and are retaking it).

Question: I am planning on graduate school in my future (either an MA or PhD program, or medical school). Would moving my courses to S/U this semester hurt my application?

- **Answer:** We understand that many students have this question, and that there are no clear answers. What we can say is that a great many universities across the country, including medical schools, are utilizing S/U grading this semester due to COVID-19. Thus, if your academic record is already very strong, having some S grades on your transcript this semester is very unlikely to hurt your graduate school applications. If your previous coursework is spotty, and you’ve been working to improve your GPA and academic record, then you may wish to stay with letter grades as long as you are likely to earn an A or a B.

Question: If I make this change for this semester, will I have to remember to change it back for next semester and the future?

- **Answer:** No, if you select S/U grading for any of your courses this semester, this only applies to those courses for this semester.

Question: Can this choice impact any of my current financial aid or scholarships? What about future applications?
Answer: Courses in which you receive a S grade can count towards the credit hours needed for scholarships and financial aid eligibility. S/U grades do not change your GPA at all for merit scholarships.

Question: Could this choice influence my eligibility for Phi Alpha Theta membership? (even if my GPA doesn’t change, can the S hours count toward eligibility?)

Answer: Courses in which you receive a S grade can count towards the credit hours needed to apply to Phi Alpha Theta. Again, S/U grades do not change your GPA at all.

Question: Okay, I think I have a class or two where this might help. What do I need to do, to change a current class to S/U grading?

Answer: All you have to do is log into MyGateway, and look for the S/U App. Click on that and submit your request. This will be reviewed by an academic advisor for approval.