

# Guidelines on Academic Dishonesty, Plagiarism, and Attribution

*Department of Journalism & Media Studies*

All journalism students are expected to follow the university's and department's code of honor and show academic integrity in all academic and extracurricular activities and work. According to the university's code, "Academic integrity is grounded in certain fundamental values, which include **honesty, respect and fairness. Broadly defined, academic honesty is the completion of all academic endeavors and claims of scholarly knowledge as representative of one's own efforts.**"

## Academic Dishonesty

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Behaviors that violate academic integrity are listed below and are not intended to be all inclusive.

### 1) Cheating

#### Definition:

*Cheating* is using or attempting to use materials, information, notes, study aids, or other assistance in any type of examination or evaluation which have not been authorized by the instructor.

#### Clarification:

1. Students completing any type of examination or evaluation are prohibited from looking at or transmitting materials to another student (including electronic reproductions and transmissions) and from using external aids of any sort (e.g. books, notes, calculators, photographic images or conversation with others) unless the instructor has indicated specifically in advance that this will be allowed.

2. Students may not take examinations or evaluations in the place of other persons. Students may not allow other persons to take examinations or evaluations in their places.

3. Students may not acquire unauthorized information about an examination or evaluation and may not use any such information improperly acquired by others.
4. Instructors, programs and departments may establish, with the approval of the colleges, additional rules for exam environments and behavior. Such rules must be announced in advance in a course syllabus or other advance written notice to students.

## **2) Fabrication, Forgery and Obstruction**

### Definitions:

*Fabrication* is the use of invented, counterfeited, altered or forged information in assignments of any type including those activities done in conjunction with academic courses that require students to be involved in out-of-classroom experiences.

*Forgery* is the imitating or counterfeiting of images, documents, signatures, and the like.

*Obstruction* is any behavior that limits the academic opportunities of other students by improperly impeding their work or their access to educational resources.

### Clarification:

1. Fabricated or forged information may not be used in any laboratory experiment, report of research, or academic exercise. Invention for artistic purposes is legitimate under circumstances explicitly authorized by an instructor.
2. Students may not furnish to instructors fabricated or forged explanations of absences or of other aspects of their performance and behavior.
3. Students may not furnish, or attempt to furnish, fabricated, forged or misleading information to University officials on University records, or on records of agencies in which students are fulfilling academic assignments.
4. Students may not steal, change, or destroy another student's work. Students may not impede the work of others by the theft, defacement, mutilation or obstruction of resources so as to deprive others of their use.
5. Obstruction does not include the content of statements or arguments that are germane to a class or other educational activity.

### 3) Multiple Submissions

#### Definition:

*Multiple submissions* are the submissions of the same or substantially the same work for credit in two or more courses. Multiple submissions include the use of any prior academic effort previously submitted for academic credit at this or a different institution.

All work submitted must be the student's own and especially created for each class. Work created by someone else (friend, another student, family member, etc.), or **created by the student for other purposes such as other classes, extra-curricular activities, own personal purposes (i.e., vacation, family event) or for other university, educational or personal activities not covered by this class**, etc. is an offense to academic integrity, will be disqualified for grading purposes and receive zero credit.

#### Clarification:

1. Students may not normally submit any academic assignment, work, or endeavor in more than one course for academic credit of any sort. This will apply to submissions of the same or substantially the same work in the same semester or in different semesters.
2. Students may not normally submit the same or substantially the same work in two different classes for academic credit even if the work is being graded on different bases in the separate courses (e.g. graded for research effort and content versus grammar and spelling).
3. Students may resubmit a prior academic endeavor if there is substantial new work, research, or other appropriate additional effort. The student shall disclose the use of the prior work to the instructor and receive the instructor's permission to use it PRIOR to the submission of the current endeavor.
4. Students may submit the same or substantially the same work in two or more courses with the prior written permission of all faculty involved. Instructors will specify the expected academic effort applicable to their courses and the overall endeavor shall reflect the same or additional academic effort as if separate assignments were submitted in each course. Failure by the student to obtain the written permission of each instructor shall be considered a multiple submission.

#### **4) Complicity**

Definition:

*Complicity* is assisting or attempting to assist another person in any act of academic dishonesty.

Clarification:

1. Students may not allow other students to copy from their papers during any type of examination.
2. Students may not assist other students in acts of academic dishonesty by providing material of any kind that one may have reason to believe will be misrepresented to an instructor or other University official.
3. Students may not provide substantive information about test questions or the material to be tested before a scheduled examination unless they have been specifically authorized to do so by the course instructor. This does not apply to examinations that have been administered and returned to students in previous semesters.

#### **5) Computer Misuse**

Definition:

*Misuse of computers* includes unethical, or illegal use of the computers of any person, institution or agency in which students are performing part of their academic program.

Clarification:

1. Students may not use the University computer system in support of any act of plagiarism.
2. Students may not monitor or tamper with another person's electronic communications.

More violations listed at:

[http://www.usfsp.edu/catalog-undergrad/integrity-of-students\\_0.htm](http://www.usfsp.edu/catalog-undergrad/integrity-of-students_0.htm)

# Plagiarism

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Plagiarism is also a violation of academic and professional integrity. It goes against the university's code of ethics as well as our profession's ethics.

## Academic Writing

### Definition

*Plagiarism* is **intentionally or carelessly** presenting the work of another as one's own. It includes submitting an assignment purporting to be the student's original work which has wholly or in part been created by another person. It also includes the presentation of the work, ideas, representations, or words of another person without customary and proper acknowledgement of sources. Students must consult with their instructors for clarification in any situation in which the need for documentation is an issue, and will have plagiarized in any situation in which their work is not properly documented.

### Clarification

1. Every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or appropriate indentation and must be properly acknowledged by parenthetical citation in the text or in a footnote or endnote.
2. When material from another source is paraphrased or summarized in whole or in part in one's own words, that source must be acknowledged in a footnote or endnote, or by parenthetical citation in the text.

Submitting someone else's work as yours, intentionally or by accident, is considered plagiarism. Plagiarism is not limited to copy/paste from a document (web page, paper, media source, photographs and other visuals, etc.) into yours. **Plagiarism can take many forms, such as taking someone's ideas, words, any form of work, and presenting them as yours.**

**The golden rule: If you take anything from someone else, give credit.**

All plagiarism and academic integrity issues will be enforced using the rules above. No exceptions.

**Situations that ARE plagiarism:**

- Submitting large or small sections of someone else's work as your own, without attributing the source even if you rephrased the original wording
- Paraphrasing from one source or multiple sources without attribution. Presenting ideas developed by someone else without attribution, even if you paraphrase the wording, is still plagiarism.
- Submitting an assignment that contains perfectly cited sources but the assignment is mostly made of citations and includes no to little original work by the student
- Submitting work created by other people and presenting it as your own, such as taking someone else online submission or files and presenting them as your own
- Working with another student or another person on an assignment that requires no collaboration, and/or receiving assistance in doing an assignment or taking an exam that's supposed to be individual work. This include taking online exams and quizzes in the presence of other people and receiving assistance from them during the exam, quiz or assignment.

This list is not comprehensive.

## Journalism Writing

In addition to the university's code of ethics, journalism students are required to follow the profession's code of ethics. The number one requirement in SPJ's Code of Ethics is seeking and reporting the truth, specifically:

- "never plagiarize, always attribute;"
- "neither speed or format excuses inaccuracy;"
- "never distort fact;" also be accountable and transparent.

Read the entire code: <http://www.spj.org/ethicscode.asp>

When writing and producing news and media content, don't do the following:

- Don't copy/paste from other sources such as: web pages, news stories, press releases, etc. **without attribution and/or links**
- Don't copy/paste quotes from other media stories without attribution and/or link
- Don't re-write without attribution and/or link

It's good journalism practice to do research to find information, but then conduct interviews, find additional sources to double-check the information you obtained through research and find fresh information that no one else has. Stay away from repeating information that everyone else has.

No attribution needed when:

- You witness/see something personally
- If it's common knowledge

## Violations and Sanctions

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Violations are classified into four levels according to the nature of the infraction. For each level of violation a corresponding set of sanctions is recommended, however, specific violations may include additional and different sanctions.

These examples are not to be considered all-inclusive.

It is recommended that the instructor forward a concise written statement describing the academic dishonesty of an incident with its particulars to the Department Chair as well as the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs for violations in Levels Two through Four.

These records will be maintained until graduation or until they are of no further administrative value. This will enable better handling of multiple violations.

### **1) Level One Violations**

Level One violations may occur because of inexperience or lack of knowledge of principles of academic integrity on the part of persons committing the violation. These violations address incidents when intent is questionable and are likely to involve a small fraction of the total course work, are not extensive, and/or occur on a minor assignment.

The following are examples:

1. Working with another student on a laboratory or other homework assignment when such work is prohibited.
2. Failure to footnote or give proper acknowledgment in an extremely limited section of an assignment.

Recommended sanctions for Level One violations are listed below:

- Reduction or no credit given for the original assignment.
- An assigned paper or research project on a relevant topic.
- A make-up assignment at a more difficult level than the original assignment.
- Required attendance in a non-credit workshop or seminar on ethics or related subjects.

## **2) Level Two Violations**

Level Two violations are characterized by dishonesty of a more serious character or that which affects a more significant aspect or portion of the course work.

The following are examples:

1. Quoting directly or paraphrasing, to a moderate extent, without acknowledging the source.
2. Submitting the same work or major portions thereof to satisfy the requirements of more than one course without permission from the instructor.
3. Using data or interpretative material for a laboratory report without acknowledging the sources or the collaborators. All contributors to preparation of data and/or to writing the report must be named.
4. Receiving assistance from others, such as research, statistical, computer programming, or field data collection help that constitutes an essential element in the undertaking without acknowledging such assistance in a paper, examination or project.

Recommended sanctions for Level Two violations are listed below:

- Failing grade for the assignment involved with the grade in the course determined in the normal manner.
- Failing grade for the course, which may be an "F" or "FF" on the internal transcript.

## **3) Level Three Violations**

Level Three violations are those that go beyond Level One or Two violations and that affect a major or essential portion of work done to meet course requirements, or involve premeditation, or are preceded by one or more violations at Levels One and/or Two.

Examples include:

1. Copying on examinations.
2. Plagiarizing major portions of a written assignment.
3. Acting to facilitate copying during an exam.
4. Using prohibited materials, e.g. books, notes, or calculators during an examination.
5. Collaborating before an exam to develop methods of exchanging information and implementation thereof.
6. Altering examinations for the purposes of regrading.



7. Acquiring or distributing an examination from unauthorized sources prior to the examination.
8. Presenting the work of another as one's own.
9. Using purchased term paper or other materials.
10. Removing posted or reserved material, or preventing other students from having access to it.
11. Fabricating data by inventing or deliberately altering material (this includes citing "sources" that are not, in fact, sources).
12. Using unethical or improper means of acquiring data.

Recommended sanctions for Level Three violations are listed below:

- Failing grade for the course with a designation of "FF" on student's internal transcript.
- Possible suspension from the University for one semester.

#### **4) Level Four Violations**

Level Four violations represent the most serious breaches of intellectual honesty.

Examples of Level Four violations include:

1. All academic infractions committed after return from suspension for a previous academic honesty violation.
2. Infractions of academic honesty in ways similar to criminal activity (such as forging a grade form, stealing an examination from a professor or from a University office; buying an examination; or falsifying a transcript to secure entry into the University or change the record of work done at the University) .
3. Having a substitute take an examination or taking an examination for someone else.
4. Fabrication of evidence, falsification of data, quoting directly or paraphrasing without acknowledging the source, and/or presenting the ideas of another as one's own in a senior thesis, within a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation, in scholarly articles submitted to refereed journals, or in other work represented as one's own as a graduate student.
5. Sabotaging another student's work through actions designed to prevent the student from successfully completing an assignment.
6. Willful violation of a canon of the ethical code of the profession for which a student is preparing.

Recommended sanctions for Level Four violations are listed below:

The typical sanction for all Level Four violations is permanent academic dismissal from the University with the designation of "Dismissed for Academic Dishonesty" to be placed permanently on a student's external transcript.

## Additional Resources

The department's policy: <http://www.usfsp.edu/journalism/academic-integrity/>

USFSP's policies for graduate and undergraduate students:

[http://www.usfsp.edu/catalog-undergrad/integrity-of-students\\_0.htm](http://www.usfsp.edu/catalog-undergrad/integrity-of-students_0.htm)

## Journalism Writing

Steve Buttry on attribution:

<https://stevebuttry.wordpress.com/2011/10/31/you-can-quote-me-on-that-advice-on-attribution-for-journalists/>

A quiz on plagiarism and attribution by Steve Buttry:

<https://docs.google.com/a/mail.usf.edu/forms/d/17zVKwdW9MkJIRpBG3wOwh3KX3f2TMraYahaCREQoHNA/viewform?formkey=dFRVSFEtdXJKdFlwaGh6dktpdIY0M2c6MQ>

Telling The Truth, a book by Steve Buttry about plagiarism and attribution in journalism:

<http://bit.ly/14vrhOE>

## Academic Writing

APA Citation Style, and a tutorial on correct citation and avoiding plagiarism (15-minute activity)

[http://decade.it.usf.edu/stpete/lib\\_modules/AvoidPlagiarismAPA/index.html](http://decade.it.usf.edu/stpete/lib_modules/AvoidPlagiarismAPA/index.html)

MLA Citation Style, and a tutorial on correct citation and avoiding plagiarism (15-minute activity)

[http://decade.it.usf.edu/stpete/lib\\_modules/AvoidPlagiarismMLA/index.html](http://decade.it.usf.edu/stpete/lib_modules/AvoidPlagiarismMLA/index.html)