

Classroom Policies, Spring 2012

The following requirements are not negotiable.

1. You have to come to class.
2. You have to do all the reading and writing assignments on time.
3. You have to submit all written work in revised printout form. After one bad experience too many, I now refuse to accept any assignment by e-mail. Stock up on paper and printer ink now, and be aware that the Kinko's down the hill is open 24 hours a day, but don't bother trying to e-mail a paper to me.
4. You have to understand the note below about academic honesty.

All of which, amplified, is to say:

About requirement 1: This is not an online course. It is not going to become an online course. E-mail is not a substitute for coming to class.

I don't promise to take roll every single day, but I do promise to lower your grade by a letter or two if you keep missing classes after you've been warned. Of course I'll accept legitimate excuses for absence, but for those I'll ask for documentation from (for instance) a doctor or a coach. And if your schedule will force you to miss a lot of class, please don't take the course.

More about requirement 1: If my recent experience is any guide, about a quarter of you are going to experience a graduation-endangering crisis this semester. If the crisis comes to you, please be aware that lots of good help is available in the Student Services Center, from help with your study habits to help with drugs and alcohol.

About requirement 2: Don't play the odds about missing work. Miss one graded assignment and your final grade will drop by the applicable percentage – typically, one or two letters. Miss two assignments and your final grade will drop all the way to F.

About requirement 3: The key word is *revised*. Revise even a text message before you hit Send. This little poem by Richard Brinsley Sheridan dates from the era when a text was something written with a sharpened feather dipped in ink, but it's still a good thing to keep in mind.

You write with ease, to show your breeding,
But easy writing's curst hard reading.

And as a matter of reader psychology, when you rewrite a paper you should rewrite it all – yes, including the parts I didn't mark. Part of any writer's job is developing a sense of self-criticism,

and at the undergraduate level that process of development begins with the dawning realization that your most recent draft can still be improved. So go with that new knowledge and make the improvements. Unless you're Shakespeare, nobody will want to read the same paper of yours twice.

And you aren't Shakespeare.

Finally, about requirement 4, academic honesty:

Don't sign your name to another person's work. A ghostwritten paper, or a paper copied without acknowledgment from another source, in whole or in part (even in small part), will get you an F in the course. One of the hundreds of download paper services on the Web is headed by a banner that assures its customers, "It isn't cheating, it's collaboration," and that's cute but wrong. It's cheating, and if you cheat in this course you die.

So how do you collaborate? Simple answer: if you got an idea or a phrase from somebody else – in person, from a printed source, or from the Net – acknowledge the fact, in writing.

That's really all there is to it. Nobody expects you to come up with thoughts unprecedented in the history of the world, expressed in a completely new way. There's a continuity of thought, and everybody gets help with everything. That's the reason we live in a society. So if you get help with your thinking – yes, even if your helper is named Wiki or Cliff – that's fine. To keep up your part of the social contract, all you have to do is say, publicly, "Thank you, Wiki or Cliff. Here's where my ideas leave off and yours begin." There's a standard way of saying that in writing, and any English 100 handbook can show you the standard formats.

If you aren't sure about any of this, **ASK ME**. And ask *before* you turn the paper in.