

# Plagiarism and Academic Integrity

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The standard penalty for violations of academic integrity in this course will be an F grade for the course. Such violations include cheating on an exam, helping someone else to cheat, resubmitting a paper written for another class, and plagiarism.

**Plagiarism** is the representation of someone else's words or ideas as one's own.

The most egregious cases of plagiarism are easy to avoid because they are so obviously dishonest:

- turning in someone else's paper as your own
- allowing someone else to turn in a copy of your paper as his or her own
- downloading a paper from the internet and altering it a little to fit the class
- employing a "research service"

Be warned: GSIs are quite experienced at detecting such deception.

Other cases of plagiarism are more subtle. Sometimes students plagiarize unwittingly, out of carelessness or ignorance of the standards for attributing ideas to their sources. However, ignorance is no excuse. You are responsible for knowing the standards and taking care to follow them.

Whenever you make use of another's words or ideas in a paper, you must give proper credit. Usually this means inserting a footnote or a brief parenthetical reference. If you're not sure how to give a proper reference, consult a style guide or your GSI. Your GSI can also answer questions about when you must give a reference.

You must provide a reference not only when you use the exact words of another, but also when you paraphrase her words, summarize her ideas, or borrow her metaphors.

When you do use someone's exact words, be sure to mark them as such, either by putting them in quotation marks or by setting them off from the main text and indenting them on both sides. Be careful not to change the wording at all in a direct quotation; if you do change the wording, use square brackets around the words that have changed.

When you paraphrase, state the author's ideas in your own words. Don't just rearrange the words in the sentence and replace some of the words with synonyms. Note: even though you're using your own words, you still need to give a reference, since the idea is not yours.

It is fine (indeed, encouraged) to talk with other students about your paper as you are writing it, and to be influenced by things they say. But the actual writing should be all your own. If conversations with another student have helped you in writing the paper, acknowledge this in a footnote.

For more details on plagiarism and how to avoid it, with examples, see

<http://www.northwestern.edu/uacc/plagiar.html>.