

Academic Integrity at the End of the Semester

As the semester winds down, and undergraduates take exams and submit final papers, inevitably, some students will attempt to cheat on those exams and papers, and TAs and graduate student instructors need to watch out for and try to prevent violations of academic integrity. Cheating may especially be a problem in very large classes, where the students may not feel a sense of investment in the class, a connection to the instructor, or a sense of community with fellow students. Students may cheat because they feel desperate or because they think they can get away with it easily. Instructors need to discuss academic integrity with their students and let them know that there are consequences for cheating, but they should also make themselves available to struggling students who may feel that cheating is their only option. The following tips can help you prevent cheating and plagiarism.

Exams

Create multiple versions of the same test, with the same questions given in a different order. Let students know that you have done this, so they won't be tempted to try to copy off someone else's exam. Don't give the same exam every year.

In large classes, check student IDs against the roster, to make sure that no one takes an exam for another student.

If the room allows, have students sit with empty space around them. Consider assigning seats so that students can't sit near friends with whom they may try to collaborate.

Advise students not to bring bags or other items to the test, because they will not be allowed to keep anything on their desks or around their seats, including drinks, unless it is approved material. If students will need scratch paper to work out problems, the instructor should provide it. Don't allow students to keep cell phones with them. They may use them to text message another student, take

New TAP Workshop Series: Tips for Future Faculty

The Teaching Assistant Project is offering a new series of workshops designed to help graduate students make themselves more attractive candidates on the academic job market and prepare for their roles as future faculty members.

The first workshop, "**The Job Talk**," will be held on December 9 from 11:30 am to 1:00 pm in Murray Hall on the College Avenue Campus. Professor Paul Clemens, History, and Professor Lee Cronk, Anthropology, will be discussing what they look for when they listen to candidates' "job talks" during the interview process for assistant professors.

During the Spring Semester, the series will include workshops on:

- **Improving Your Teaching Evaluations**
- **Writing Your Dissertation with the Book in Mind**
- **Creating a Teaching Portfolio**

For more information, or to register for the December 9 program, please call 732-932-7747 or email tapweb@rci.rutgers.edu.

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pictures of the exam, or access notes. Let students know in advance that if they usually use their cell phones to check the time, they should bring a watch on exam day.

In courses where the instructor provides blue books, write or stamp in them before handing them out, or instruct students to begin writing on the second page, or on a specific line of a selected page, so that students can't hand in blue books that they've prepared before class and brought with them. In courses where students are supposed to bring blank blue books with them, collect the blue books and redistribute them or have students exchange blue books before the exam begins.

Be alert during the exam—don't read or do other work. Walk around the room occasionally, and, where possible, watch the class from the back of the room. Let students know you are paying attention.

Photocopy selected portions of graded exams before returning them to prevent students from changing their answers and then challenging their grades.

Papers and Research Projects

Let students know what is expected of them. Talk to them about the differences between quoting, paraphrasing, and plagiarism, and make sure students understand that both an author's ideas and written work must be cited. Make it clear to students what format they should follow for citations, and distribute selections from appropriately formatted work with examples of correct citations. Suggest that students use a style guide to develop their papers.

Design specific, detailed assignment questions, so that it's harder for students to find something relevant from which to plagiarize. Change assignments from year to year. Have students turn in outlines, drafts, or annotated bibliographies before the final draft of the paper is due. You can also require students to hand in copies of their sources, so that they can't use false references, turn in papers written by others, or cut and paste directly from those sources.

The Internet has made plagiarism easier than ever. Students can cut and paste material they find online into their papers, or they can download entire papers from websites which sell them or give them away. You can also use the Internet, however, to catch

cheaters. If you suspect that a student has cut and pasted material—if particular phrases seem overly polished, technical, or academic, or if some of the language differs from the rest of the text or from what you would expect of a student—use a search engine to look for that material. Type exact phrases or sentences (with quotation marks around them) into Google or another search engine. If the paper as a whole doesn't quite conform to the assignment or seems suspicious (no footnotes, footnotes that don't match the text, citations you don't trust), try a Google search using the paper's title, to see if it appears in an online catalog of papers for sale. Document your searches, noting the relevant web addresses and printing out any pages which contain matching text.

If you do find evidence that a student has plagiarized or cheated, don't take action on your own, like failing the student. Following University procedures protects you and ensures fairness for your students. Speak to the instructor in charge of the course, if there is one, or the chair of your department. Go to <http://cat.rutgers.edu/integrity/faculty.html> for instructions on how to report violations of academic integrity, as well as for further advice on preventing cheating. If you have questions about academic integrity, please call the TA HELPLINE at 732-932-11TA.

TapTalk is produced by the Teaching Assistant Project (TAP), Graduate School—New Brunswick.
Editor: Melissa T. Brown
Letters, submissions, calendar items, and suggestions for articles should be directed to the Editor.
TAPTalk
25 Bishop Place
New Brunswick, N.J. 08901
(732) 932-7747 tapweb@rci.rutgers.edu

TAs and Harassment

Everyone at Rutgers has the right to learn and explore ideas in an environment free of intimidation and fear. University policy prohibits harassment based on federally identified characteristics, including race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, age, sex, sexual orientation, disability, marital status, or veteran status. (The policy has also been administratively interpreted to include transsexual and transgender individuals within the prohibition against harassment on the basis of sex.) According to the Office of University Harassment Compliance & Equity, harassment is any conduct directed toward an individual or group based on one or more of the traits listed above that creates an intimidating, offensive, or hostile environment and is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter an individual's employment conditions, educational environment, or participation in a University activity.

Harassment can include a range of behaviors, including inappropriate comments, the display of offensive material, and unwanted physical contact. Behavior may be considered harassment if it is frequent or severe. For example, a single racist joke, while offensive, would probably not constitute harassment. An instructor's frequent use of racial epithets, which makes a student feel uncomfortable attending class, might well be harassment.

In some cases, course assignments and discussion may deal with ideas that are offensive to some people. Exposure to the expression of such ideas is not harassment, so long as the controversial material is relevant to the subject of the class and is not being used to intimidate students or gain special favors from them.

Teaching Assistants and graduate student instructors are not only students who are themselves at risk of being harassed, but also teachers in a position of authority over their students. TAs have a responsibility to maintain an appropriate classroom environment and to treat all students fairly and with respect. Be sensitive to how others react to you and whether your behavior makes any of your students uncomfortable.

Graduate students should avoid romantic/sexual relationships with their students, just as they should avoid such relationships with faculty members. Even voluntary, consensual romantic relationships between students and teachers can be problematic. Instructors and professors wield power over students. A student may find it difficult to end a relationship with an instructor/professor, feeling that there may be negative consequences for his or her academic career, and other students may believe that they are at an academic disadvantage when another member of the class is receiving inappropriate attention from the instructor.

If you think you may be the victim of harassment or have witnessed it, take careful notes so you can remember exactly what happened when, and who was there. Tell someone you trust what is happening. If you feel it is safe to do so, let the harasser know that you find his or her behavior offensive—in some cases, the harasser may not know the behavior is offensive to you. The Office of University Harassment Compliance & Equity has trained harassment advisors who will listen to you, confidentially, and discuss the options for dealing with the problem. Some situations can be resolved by informal methods, while others will require the use of the University's formal complaint process. If you choose to make a formal complaint, harassment advisors can lead you through the process. To find a harassment advisor, or to find out more about the University's harassment policies and what constitutes harassment, visit <http://uhce.rutgers.edu> or call 732-445-3020 ext. 626.

Get In Touch!

Tap Office:

<http://tapproject.rutgers.edu>

Graduate School - NB:

<http://gsnb.rutgers.edu>

TA Helpline: 932-11TA

TA
Helpline
Call
932-11TA
Monday-Friday
between
the hours
of
8:30 am - 4:30 pm

**Want to be a Movie
Star?**

Get your class videotaped!

<http://taproject.rutgers.edu>
Call 932-11TA for details

TAP Calendar

12/9 11:30 am-1:00 pm Tips for Future Faculty CAC
-The Job Talk

Call 732-932-7747 for information or to register.

Coming in the Spring:

Tips for Future Faculty Series
Introduction to College Teaching Seminar
Public Speaking
Teaching with Technology
International Teaching Assistant Certificate Program
Active Learning in Large Classes
Teaching a Summer Course

The Master Faculty Observation Program

TAP has assembled a select group of outstanding faculty members who have volunteered to provide graduate students with the opportunity to observe their classes. The names, teaching schedules, and contact information of these veteran teachers are listed on our website. Earn a certificate by visiting three or more classes. For more information visit:

http://taproject.rutgers.edu/services_tips/Master_Faculty.php3

Teaching
Assistant
Project

Office of the Dean
Graduate School-New Brunswick
25 Bishop Place
New Brunswick, N.J. 08901-1181
(732)932-7747