

Paper Rules and Policies©1998-2007

Version 3.0

Last Revised: 12/8/2006

Dr. Michael C. LaBossiere

Introduction

This document specifies and details the rules and policies governing the required papers. By remaining enrolled in the class, each student indicates that he/she understands and accepts the conditions specified in this document. No excuses involving a professed ignorance of this document will be accepted.

Policies and Procedures

Drafts

Students are strongly encouraged to turn in paper drafts prior to turning in the final version of the paper. Drafts will be carefully read and returned with detailed comments. Drafts must be turned in early enough to permit them to be read, commented on, and returned. Drafts should be typed or computer printed if possible. Never turn in your only copy of a draft. No draft-related excuses are accepted.

Due Dates and Late Work

There are penalties for turning papers in late. A paper is considered late if it is not turned in by the end of class on the date it is due. Late work will be downgraded five (5) points for every twelve hours (or fraction thereof) the paper is late. This includes weekends, holidays and days on which the class does not meet. Papers that are not turned in will receive a grade of "0."

Deadlines

In addition to a due date, each paper also has a set deadline. A paper that is not turned in by the deadline will receive a non-negotiable grade of zero (0). In any case, the end of my last regular office hours for a semester constitute the ultimate deadline for any paper—any paper not turned in by then will receive a non-negotiable grade of zero (0) with no exceptions for any reason whatsoever. That date is considered to be the end on the non-final exam part of the semester.

Turning Work In

Be sure to make two copies of your paper (either print two copies from a computer or photocopy a typed paper), but only turn in one copy. Keep the other copy in a safe place. A paper is officially turned in when it is in my hands. I assume no responsibility for papers that are not turned in directly to me in person. Do not ask other university employees to time and date stamp papers. It is not their responsibility and such papers will still be considered turned in when I actually receive them, regardless of the date and time stamped or written on them.

Do not turn in papers by sliding them under the door. If you must turn the papers in outside of class, place them in my mailbox in my office. If the office is locked, place the

work in the drop-off envelope. I will not accept any excuses relating to lost work if the work is not turned in directly to me (see Lost Work, below). For example, if a student claims the paper was slid under my door and I do not find the paper, it is treated as if it was not turned in. If you do not turn the work directly in to me, then you should check with me as soon as possible to see if I received it.

Emailing Papers or Submitting them on Disk

Because of viruses, Trojan horses, worms and the general annoyance of dealing with files, I do not accept papers via email or disks unless special arrangements are made in advance. Such arrangements are only made in very special circumstances, such as when a student has been called up for active military duty. Papers sent without such an arrangement will be deleted without being read or graded.

Excuses and Late Work

There will be times when a student will have a legitimate excuse for being unable to turn work in on time. Only official FAMU excuses are accepted. If the excuses are available when the paper is turned in, the original excuse(s), or a clear photocopy (I must still see the original) must be stapled to the late paper.

If the excuse or excuses are not immediately available, turn the paper in as soon as possible and then provide the excuse(s) as soon as possible. Do not wait for the excuses if doing so would make the paper even later.

In any case, excuses must be provided within one week of the student's return to class. Excuses that are not provided on time will not be accepted.

To completely offset a late penalty, such excuses must cover the time period from when the work was due until I received it, including weekends, holidays and days in which I do not have office hours. For example, if a student turns her paper in four days late, she must be able to provide excuses for those four days. Any excused lateness will not be counted against the student. For example, if the student mentioned above provided excuses for three of the four days, her paper would be downgraded by only ten points, instead of forty.

Excuses and Extensions

A student who misses extended periods of time for a legitimate reason might qualify for an extension. To qualify for an extension, the student must meet the following conditions: 1) the student must have been or is actually prevented from working on the paper by something severe (such as a broken writing hand). 2) The time period the student was/is unable to work on the paper must exceed at least half the assigned time. 3). The request for an extension must be made in a timely manner (no latter than the student's return to class after the cause of the absence). 4) The student must provide an official FAMU excuse (or excuses) covering the relevant date(s). Only original excuses will be accepted. If the extension is granted, the student will receive no more than a one-day extension for each day for which the student had a legitimate excuse for not being able to work on the paper. In no case will the extension extend beyond the end of the semester in question. A student who fails to meet any of the conditions will not be granted an extension.

If a student does not qualify for an extension, the student will be held to the normal due date.

The Mercy

As noted on the syllabus, each student receives one non-transferable Mercy for the class in question. This Mercy is only usable once, but can be used as one 24 hour excuse if a paper is late. To use the Mercy in this manner, simply write on the paper that you are using your Mercy. Once used in this manner, the Mercy can not be used again. The Mercy does not apply to Deadlines, only to Due Dates.

The “No Book” or “No Paper Information” Excuse

Students are required to have the assigned readings and paper information for the course. If either or both are lost or stolen, it is that student’s responsibility to acquire the material needed to complete the papers. In any case, excuses involving not having the readings or information will simply not be accepted.

The “I didn’t know” Excuse

Students are required to know the requirements and the due dates for the papers. Assignment information for each paper is available on the class web site and in the required course pack for the class. The due dates are listed on the syllabus-both the printed version and the web version. Students who miss classes are expected to take the effort to learn if any dates have been changed. In no case will any excuse be accepted that involves claims that the student did not know the requirements for the paper or when it was due.

Lost Work/Lost Work Excuses

When papers are turned in they will be carefully counted and placed in a special folder or envelope before I leave the classroom. I will also create a list of the students who have turned in papers by marking my grade sheet.

If a student claims that I have lost his/her work, then I will check the list I created. If the student’s name is on the list and the work is lost, then the student can turn in the paper again, with no penalty (or bonus) by a date that I will specify. If the student turned in his/her only copy, then the student will have to rewrite the work and turn it in by a date that I will specify. If the student’s name is not on the list, then it will be assumed that the work was simply not turned in.

As noted above, I only assume responsibility for work that is turned in directly to me. Work that is “lost” that was not turned in directly to me will be treated as if it was not turned in.

Students can request that I mark the sheet in their presence. Very concerned students can request a receipt for the paper.

Grade Discussion

Although every effort has been made to ensure that each paper has clear standards, the grading of written work contains an unavoidable subjective element. As such, students are encouraged to carefully consider paper grades and determine if the assigned grade is just and fair. If you believe that you did not receive the grade you deserved on a paper bring the work to me during my office hours. There are five things to keep in mind: First, a grade discussion can never result in a lower grade, with one exception. If the paper is

found to be plagiarized, the student will receive a grade of zero (0) for the paper and face the possibility of being charged with academic misconduct. Second, you must have the original work, with my comments on or attached to it. Third, you must discuss the work with me within two weeks of the date on which I returned the work in class. Fourth, you must have a legitimate case based solely on the content of the work. In other words, you must be able to show me exactly why the grade assigned failed to correspond with the grade you believe you deserve. Finally, you must come prepared. Being prepared involves the following:

First, when discussing a grade on a paper, you are required to bring your copy of the information for that specific paper.

Second, you must have your case ready. You are not required to write out or formally prepare your case, but you must be ready to discuss the paper.

In the case of papers that involve summaries, you will most likely need to show that apparently missing details are, in fact, present and that your presentation is clearer, better organized and better done than it initially appeared.

In the case of the argumentative components of the papers, you will be expected to be able to clearly identify your arguments-including the premises, conclusion, and impact of each specific argument.

I will be looking for specific reasons to change a grade and these reasons must be based on what is actually present in the paper. Irrelevant “reasons” such as “I thought I did well” or “I get As on all my papers in all my other classes” will not be accepted. Vague comments like “I think I did what you said” or “I thought I had arguments in there” are also unacceptable as reasons.

External factors, such as a student needing a particular grade to graduate, avoid the wrath of parents/guardians, get a sweet new car or keep a scholarship, are not an acceptable basis for grade alterations.

Basic Requirements

The following details the basic requirements of the papers.

General Paper Requirements

There are certain general basic requirements that every paper must meet. These requirements are as follows.

First, the paper must meet the specific requirements set in the assignment in question. Papers that do not meet the specific requirements will receive a grade of “0” no matter how clever or well they are written. Be sure that you understand the requirements before attempting to write a paper. When in doubt, ask me.

Second, the paper must be formatted properly. The paper must be divided into sections, as described in the particular paper assignments. Papers that are not formatted properly will be downgraded one point for each section that is not labeled.

Third, the paper must be typed or computer printed and the pages must be stapled together. Papers that are not typed or computer printed will be downgraded ten (10) points. The pages must also be stapled together with a single staple in the upper left-hand corner. Please do not use plastic binders, paper clips, or the “fold and tear” method. Papers that are not stapled properly will be downgraded one (1) point.

Fourth, the paper must be the student's own work. Plagiarism is defined below. A paper that is plagiarized will automatically receive a grade of "0."

Readable

The paper needs to be easily readable. I have not set strict guidelines for this, but since people do ask-the best bet is to use one inch margins, a 12 point "normal" font (Times, Arial, Times New Roman), paragraph indents, double spacing and to print on white paper using dark (black or blue) ink. If a paper is unreadable or too annoying to read (for example, it is printed in a 6 point italic font with no paragraph indents) it will not be graded. In such cases, the paper will be considered turned in when a readable copy is actually turned in.

Plagiarism and Citing Sources

Plagiarism involves turning in work that is completely or partially the work of another and failing to provide proper credit. In this context, plagiarism is defined as including three or more substantive words from the work of another without giving due credit.

Plagiarism also includes copying significant ideas without giving credit, even if there are not three or more significant words copied from the other work.

Copying the work of another student is, contrary to what some people think, also plagiarism. If two or more students turn in similar or identical papers, each student will be assigned a grade of zero (0) on the paper. If one (or more) students are willing to confess to plagiarizing an innocent student's paper, then the innocent student's paper will be graded and each plagiarized work will receive a grade of zero (0) with the possibility of academic misconduct charges. If there is clear evidence (such as a draft one student turned in prior to the incident of plagiarism) that one student is the honest author of a work, that student will receive due credit, while the plagiarized work will receive a grade of zero (0) with the possibility of academic misconduct charges.

While distrust is an unpleasant thing, it is prudent to not allow other students to have access to your work. In most cases of students turning in similar or identical papers, one (or more) of those involved have claimed to have had their paper stolen by the other student(s). In any case, it is your responsibility to ensure that others do not gain access to your work and turn it in as their own.

While plagiarism of outside (non student) sources is common and can be accidental, it can be avoided by exercising due care. Here are three ways to avoid plagiarism:

1. If you are copying word for word from a source, you must put quote ("") marks around the text. If you use a direct quote of more than five lines, single-space the quote and indent it in the body of the paper. In either case, cite the source properly. Keep in mind that quoting the work of another generally does not help your grade (beyond avoiding plagiarism, of course). Your grade is based on the work you have done, not work that others have done.

2. If you are paraphrasing from a source, clearly indicate when the paraphrasing begins and when it ends. Cite the source properly. Like direct quoting, direct paraphrasing tends not to help your grade. In papers that involve summarizing the work of others it is

important to know the difference between paraphrasing and summarizing. This is discussed below.

3. If you are summarizing from a source, clearly indicate when the summary begins and when it ends. Cite the source properly. In papers that involve a required summary component, you do not need to formally site the text that is being summarized for that paper. You do, however, need to include the summary statement in the introduction that specifies you are summarizing the work in question.

Any standard method of citing sources that clearly indicates the title of the work, the author, page number(s), publisher/magazine, and date for each quotation/direct paraphrase is acceptable. Suggested styles include MLA, APA and Chicago. If you do not know how to cite properly, it is important to learn how-there are numerous guides for citing sources that are fairly inexpensive. Also, such information is readily available on the web.

Citing from the Course Readings

If you are using text from electronic class readings, you still need to cite the text. Here is an acceptable method:

Author's Name, "Title of work" in class readings for X, pages (s).

For example,

Plato, "Euthyphro", in class readings for Ethics Spring 2005, page 74.

Citing from a Paper Guide

Author's Name, "Title of work" in class readings for X, pages (s).

For example,

Plato, "Ring of Gyges", in paper guide for Ethics Spring 2007, page 3.

Example of Citing from an Anthology

Here is the Chicago method of citing a work in an anthology:

Author's Name, "Title of the work," in title of the anthology, ed. Name of editor (City of publication: Publisher, Year) page(s).

For example,

Michael C. LaBossiere, "Ghosts and Minds" in The Philosopher's Snack Pack, ed. Julian Baggini and Jeremy Stangroom (London: The Philosophers' Magazine, 1999) pages 15-18.

“Mistakes” and Plagiarism

Since “mistakes” are possible, each student is allowed three incidents in which direct quotes or direct paraphrases are not properly marked. After three such incidents in a paper the student will receive a grade of 0 on that paper. An incident is defined as approximately one average sentence (3-30 words). Cases in which a single sentence is very long might constitute multiple incidents-this is left to my discretion in accord with the specifics of the case in question.

Penalties for Plagiarism

If a paper is found to be plagiarized, the student will automatically receive a zero (0) for the work in question. Plagiarism is a serious matter and is considered to be academic misconduct and there can be severe consequences for this-up to and including expulsion from the university. While there are also ethical concerns, it is obviously more prudent to do the work and avoid the risk of being caught and punished.

The Internet and Cheating

The internet has obviously made cheating much easier-material is readily available for copying and sites exist that specialize in providing papers to students. However, one should always keep in mind that if a student can find the material to copy and pass off as his/her work, than I can also find it-and I have been using web search engines for as long as they have existed. For the curious: I typically catch 2-3 students in each class per semester who copy word for word right from the web. Some people even accidentally paste in graphics and links from webs sites. Trust me-it is very easy to catch people.

Examples of Plagiarism

Original Text from "Ghosts and Minds": “Substance dualism is the view that reality contains at least two fundamental types of entities: material entities and immaterial entities. On this view, which was most famously presented by Descartes, the mind is an immaterial substance which enjoys a special sort of causal relation with its body. This rather mysterious relation enables the mind to control and receive information from the body and allows the body to affect the mind in some respects. Not surprisingly, on this view ghosts are a real possibility.”

Plagiarized: LaBossiere says that substance dualism involves the notion that the world contains at least two fundamental entities. These are the material entities and the entities that are not material. According to Descartes, the mind is a nonmaterial thing which has a special sort of relation with the body that it occupies. This relation lets the mind control and receive information from the person's body and also allows the mind to get information from the body. The body can also affect the mind in some respects. If dualism is correct, then ghosts are possible.

Why: Although LaBossiere's name is given, the direct quotes/paraphrases are not cited in a way that lets the reader know which words belong to the writer and which belong to LaBossiere. While the writer uses some of his/her own words, there is also extensive copying.

Plagiarized: Substance dualism is the theory that the world contains two basic kinds of things: the material beings and the immaterial beings. This position is best known in the works of Descartes in which the mind is a nonmaterial substance which has a unusual causal connection to the physical frame it occupies. This unknown connection permits the mind to direct the body and permits the body to have some impact on the mind. Under this position, ghosts are possible.

Why: The writer is simply using synonyms for the original words. For example, "basic" replaces "fundamental" and "beings" replaces "entities."

Acceptable Summary: According to LaBossiere, a person who accepts substance dualism agrees that the world contains things that are physical in nature as well as second class of things that are not physical. The mind is counted among the non-physical things and it is claimed that the mind can interact in some way with the body. The author claims that dualism allows for ghosts to exist.

Why: The writer presents the key details in his/her own words. No direct quotes are used and the wording and structure are adequately different from the original text. It is assumed that the writer identified the specific work elsewhere in the paper.

Assessment of Papers

Grading

Each paper is graded on a 100 point scale.

Penalties

The following specifies the basic penalties:

1. A paper that is not on a current, approved topic will receive a grade of "O."
2. A paper that is not typed or computer printed will be downgraded ten (10) points.
3. A paper that is not stapled appropriately will be downgraded one (1) point.
4. A paper that is late will be downgraded five (5) points every twelve (12) hours, or fraction thereof, it is late. This includes weekends and holidays.
5. A paper that has been plagiarized will receive a grade of "0."
6. A paper that is not formatted correctly will be downgraded.
7. There is a one (1) point penalty for every quote/paraphrase that is not properly cited (plus the possibility of plagiarism).

Standards of Assessment for Papers

To insure fairness and consistency in grading, a clear set of standards is used in assessing the papers. These standards are indicated in the specific paper assignments.

Resources

The following are some very readable secondary sources that might prove useful.

Title: *Critical Thinking*

Authors: Brooke Noel Moore, Richard Parker

Publisher: Mayfield

Description: A very well written and even lighthearted approach to arguments and clear writing. An excellent book for learning about using arguments and avoiding fallacies (mistakes in reasoning).

Title: *A Rulebook for Arguments*

Author: Anthony Weston

Publisher: Hackett

Description: Probably the best short (less than 100 pages) books on how to write an argumentative essay. The text includes very clear coverage of basic argument types.

Title: *The Elements of Style*

Author(s): William Strunk Jr., E.B. White

Publisher: Macmillan

Description: Simply the definitive text on writing in the English language.

Title: *A Pocket Style Manual*

Author: Diane Hacker

Publisher: Bedford/St. Martin's

Description: A handy guide to style. The text includes detailed information on MLA, APA, and Chicago styles.