



Ethics, Legal Rights and Responsibilities

Judy Miller, Associate Dean for Special Academic
Initiatives

[\(judmiller@clarku.edu\)](mailto:judmiller@clarku.edu)

Why this Session?

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Overview of this Session

- The rules and the laws
- Your responsibilities
- Discussions of sample situations



The take-home messages

- As part of the teaching staff, you have a responsibility to your department and Clark.
- Things may be different here.
- You are responsible for knowing what (not) to do.
- When in doubt:
 - Err on the side of caution;
 - Ask a professional.



The rules (and common sense)

- Academic honesty
- Privacy and confidentiality
- Record keeping
- Avoiding (perception of) harassment
- Fairness
- Students with disabilities
- Dealing with challenging students



Academic honesty

(Clark Academic Integrity Policy)

- Definition, procedures
- Responsibilities of faculty
- Responsibilities of TAs
 - Things you should do
 - Be vigilant.
 - Grade normally.
 - Make copies.
 - Turn in reports/copies to instructor and point out the problem.
 - Things you must not do
 - Confront or threaten the student(s).
 - Discuss the situation with anyone besides the instructor.

Privacy and confidentiality (federal “Buckley Amendment”)

- Grades and other academic information must be kept strictly **confidential**.
- Things you must not do:
 - Post lists of grades by name or SS#.
 - Allow students to see other students’ graded papers or grade records.
 - Discuss a student’s academic progress with anyone except the student or other course staff.

Record keeping

- Grade records are arguably the most important records that Clark maintains!
- TA responsibilities
 - Double check *every* grade calculation and entry
 - Keep graded papers for at least a year
 - Back up your grade file frequently, on a disk or separate computer

Harassment

(Clark policy, federal and state law)

- Definition—
 - sexual advances
 - creation of a hostile environment
- Your responsibility: treat students in a friendly but *professional* manner
- Things you must *not* do:
 - Touch a student, sexually or otherwise
 - Date a student
 - Use offensive language
 - Display offensive material

Fairness and favoritism (ethics, state and federal law)

- Equality is the law—gender, race, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation
- You may not like every student equally, but you owe them all a fair share of your time and attention
- You must treat everyone equally
- You must not pre-judge or display bias
- Avoid *perception* of favoritism—e.g. gifts, nicknames, out of class socializing

Students with disabilities (federal law, institutional policy)

- Definition/examples
- Student responsibility: Get documentation from Disability Services Coordinator
- Faculty responsibility: Provide accommodations as requested by DSC
- TA responsibility: Administer accommodations as requested by DSC and faculty (extended time, quiet testing, assistive technology); maintain confidentiality

Dealing with challenging students

- Don't take the behavior personally.
- Maintain an even temper; show tolerance.
- Do not tolerate disrespect to self or others.
- Never hold a grudge when grading student work.
- Enforce safety rules, without threats or physical contact.
- Let course instructor make most determinations.
- If there is an immediate threat to safety or property, call University Police.

Case Studies: for each, discuss

What are the issues?

How could this situation have been avoided?

What should the TA do?





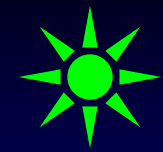
Case Study #2

Situation #1 -

You lead a weekly discussion section and one student consistently arrives late. At least once during each class, he gets up from his seat at the back of the room and leaves the room and then returns a few minutes later, distracting you each time.

Situation #2 -

It is past closing time and a student team refuses to leave the lab. When you ask them again one of the students tells you “I’m paying your salary with my tuition, I’ll stay as long as I want” and continues to ignore you.



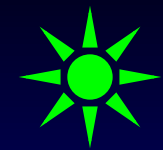
Case Study #1

Situation #1 -

You think one of the students in your class is attractive. She comes to see you during late afternoon office hours. After you have helped her with some difficult material, she invites you to dinner as a “thank you”.

Situation #2 -

You share an office with another TA in your department. A student who comes to your office hours complains to you that the screen saver (a caricature of a political leader) on the other TA’s computer is offensive.



Case Study #3

Situation #1 - (2 students)

Sue - “Hi Dan, I talked to the TA about my grades. S/he showed me the grade sheet and I noticed you failed the last exam. I would be happy to help you on the next one.”

Situation #2 – (phone call)

Parent to TA - “I would like to talk to you about how my daughter is doing in your class.”

TA to Parent - “What do you want to know?”

Parent to TA - “Everything, I’m paying the tuition after all!”



Case Study #4

Situation #1 - Two homework papers are essentially identical, including the same errors.

Situation #2 - Two students sitting next to each other in an exam have nearly identical solutions to one problem. One of the exam sheets looks like it has been erased.



- Situation #1** - A TA is repeatedly late for discussion sections, and often not prepared.
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- Situation #2** - A TA leaves campus the day after classes end, and returns the day the next semester starts.
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- Situation #3** - A TA turns in a set of grades for an assignment that are all either A or A+.



The take-home messages

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- Things may be different here than elsewhere.
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 - Err on the side of caution;
 - Ask a professional.



GOOD LUCK !

