

## Conduct of Courses

### ACADEMIC RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

**Academic freedom of students.** Students are guaranteed academic freedom; they make known their views, confident that these will be judged by their instructors only with regard to their academic merit.

**Specification of course requirements.** So that students may be protected from sudden and unexpected shifts in requirements, instructors will provide at an early class meeting a written statement of all academic responsibilities (such as the attendance policy and the number of tests and papers) and will give the class reasonable advance notice of dates when requirements are to be fulfilled.

The instructor must explain how the final grade will be determined, describing the relative weights to be given performance on the final examination, papers, tests, and so on, and whether the final grade will be influenced by participation in class discussion, class attendance, and the like. In making assignments, instructors will have in mind the accessibility of materials or equipment and will be considerate about requiring students to leave Gambier to carry out their academic work. However, this must not be so narrowly construed as to preclude, for example, honors students from obtaining material from other libraries or from doing occasional research off campus, or art students from going to Mount Vernon to obtain materials.

### EXAMINATIONS

**Grace periods.** The College provides Grace Periods during the year to ensure that 1) students have adequate time, free from extraordinary pressures, to prepare for final examinations, 2) students have winter and spring breaks free from substantial assignments, and 3) the routine work in classes during the final week of the semester is not disrupted. During grace periods, instructors may not offer final exams. Also, instructors should not require assignments beyond what is necessary for normal daily participation in classes, seminars and laboratories during grace periods. Instructors may only schedule more ambitious assignments during grace periods if there is a pedagogical rationale for doing so, and they must inform the class of these assignments at the beginning of the course. The grace periods are seven calendar days before the beginning of the final examination period in each semester and two days following winter and spring vacations.

**Reading periods.** The College provides reading periods at the end of each semester prior to the final examinations. The dates of the reading periods are part of the official College calendar established by the Calendar Committee and supervised by the registrar. The purpose of reading periods is to provide time for preparation for final examinations. Instructors may not hold required meetings of classes, give tests, assign work, or schedule alternative final exam times

during these periods. An exception is made in the case of honors examinations, which may be scheduled during reading periods.

**Final examinations.** Final examinations in semester courses are two hours in length. At the option of the instructor, however, such examinations may be three hours in length provided the instructor has so informed the students at the beginning of the semester. Final examinations in year courses are given in the spring and are three hours in length.

Instructors may not accept for credit work submitted after the last day of the semester unless the student has been granted permission by the dean for academic advising and support for an incomplete. The last day of the semester is specified on the College calendar.

**Scheduling of final exams.** When an instructor examines all members of a class simultaneously, he or she must do so at the time and place announced by the registrar, except by permission of an associate provost.

If an instructor wishes to cancel the original time of the examination and substitute another time, even if the entire class agrees, the permission of an associate provost must be obtained.

Instructors may, at their discretion, schedule an alternative final exam time for the entire class as long as it falls within the examination period, excluding reading periods. This would involve giving the exam twice, at the time originally scheduled and at another time. Instructors who wish to schedule alternative final exams are encouraged to indicate this on the course syllabus.

If an instructor chooses, at his or her sole discretion, to allow a student to take the exam at a different time, the entire class should have that option, even if the rescheduling occurs late in the semester.

However, if the dean for academic advising and support, in consultation with the instructor, gives a student permission to take an exam at an irregular time in accordance with established guidelines - for example, if he or she has more than two exams on one day or is experiencing health problems or a personal crisis - there is no obligation on the part of the instructor to offer the option to the entire class.

When considering special examinations for individual students, in the interest of fairness both to students and faculty colleagues, instructors must observe the following guidelines:

- The examination schedule is published each year so that students may plan accordingly. Therefore, problems involving transportation or jobs are not sufficient grounds for setting special examinations.

- Students who are scheduled for more than two examinations on the same day are ordinarily entitled to relief.
- Problems involving the health of students and personal or family crises are decided on a case-by-case basis. Ordinarily, the instructor will consult with the dean for academic advising and support.

**Failure to appear for a final exam.** When a student fails to appear for a final examination, the instructor may prepare and administer a special examination. In such cases, a fee of \$35 is charged and the instructor is obliged to exact a grade penalty on the examination, unless the absence is excused by a dean.

**"Take-home" final examinations.** When an instructor requires a "take-home" examination, paper, or project in lieu of a final examination, such take-home examination, paper, or project may not be required for submission earlier than the scheduled time of examination set by the registrar. To protect students and faculty from too much work at the end of the examination period, faculty members are strongly advised to make take-home assignments due at the exam time scheduled for that class.

## CLASS ATTENDANCE

**Attendance policies.** Faculty members are responsible for announcing their attendance policy at the first meeting of the course or including such a statement in the course syllabus. Students are subject to attendance regulations as determined by the instructor of each course. Excessive absence is a valid reason for an instructor to expel a student from a course. Students receiving financial assistance from the Veterans Administration are required by law to attend all classes unless excused.

Students are expected to attend all lectures, laboratories, and other scheduled course meetings. Faculty members are expected to monitor the regular attendance of first-year students and those on conditional enrollment. Absence from a class meeting is inevitably a loss both to the student and to classmates. Students who are absent from a class meeting bear full responsibility for minimizing such loss.

It is especially important for students to attend classes in a regular manner for the first two weeks of each course; during this period instructors must develop accurate class rosters in order to allow additional interested students into their courses. Students who do not attend classes during the first two weeks may be expelled by the instructor (see Expulsion). Instructors will define "regular attendance" to suit their individual circumstances, and students must know that many faculty members will remove those who do not attend from the very first class meeting. Students who have been so removed from a course roster will still need to drop the course from their schedule as they add another in its place at the registrar's office.

**Absences.** Policies and practices with regard to class absences are generally defined, communicated to students, and enforced by individual course instructors. Instructors will receive notification of student absence due to the following reasons: 1) curricular or extracurricular activities sanctioned in advance by the College, 2) infirmity as determined by the College Health and Counseling Center, or 3) compelling and unavoidable personal circumstances as determined by the Dean of Students or the Dean for Academic Advising. In these cases, students may not be penalized for the absence, but they should be held responsible for all course assignments. The rescheduling of examinations or assigned work must be initiated by the student.

**Absence due to illness.** Absences for reasons of illness are not ordinarily excused: only when a student is declared by the College physician to be infirm (in a hospital or at home) will a health report be sent from the Health and Counseling Center to the dean of students, giving the days when each patient is judged infirm and recommending that the student's class absences be excused. When released from confinement, the student is expected to resume regular required attendances unless otherwise advised.

The Office of the Dean of Students issues a weekly report to the faculty listing all students who have been officially excused from scheduled College classes. Although students may not be penalized for being absent from a class that has been excused, they are held responsible for all course assignments. The rescheduling of examinations or assigned work must be initiated by the student and arranged by the instructor.

## EXPULSION FROM A COURSE

An instructor may expel a student from a course for cause at any time provided that, a reasonable time beforehand, he or she has given the student written warning and has, by copy, informed the dean of students, an associate provost, and the registrar and dean for academic advising. Valid causes include excessive absences and disturbances in class. Poor performance in a class or failure to submit written work does not constitute reason for expulsion. If a student is expelled from a course, X is recorded on the permanent record and is treated in the same manner as an F.

## STUDENT APPEALS OF ACADEMIC POLICY

Occasionally, students may encounter situations in which a policy in a course is apparently in conflict with the academic policies of the college. In some of these circumstances, students may be permitted relief from the course policy. For advice about these situations, students should consult their faculty advisors and/or the Dean of Academic Advising. When students believe that a course policy is not in compliance with the academic policies of the college, they should discuss the matter with the instructor first, then the chair of the department or program that lists the course, and finally a member of the administration (an Associate Provost or the Provost).