Courses

Policy/Procedure

Students’ Intellectual Freedom

Students should be free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion. (AAUP, *Joint Statement on Rights and Freedoms of Students*, 1967)

Class Meetings

Classes are to be held at the hours and in the classrooms scheduled by the Registrar. Tests should be given during these scheduled times except for the Final Examination each semester, for which a special day and time are established. Assignments may be made involving expected attendance at out-of-class events, but these cannot be required if they conflict with a student’s other regularly scheduled courses and co-curricular times. Exceptions must be approved in advance by APC.

Course Syllabus

No later than the second class meeting, a written syllabus shall be distributed to the students, containing the following:

1. A reasonable indication of the intent and scope of the course, expectations for class preparation (reading assignments, field trips, film viewing, special lectures, and other forms of out-of-class work), the attendance policy, and, where relevant, the role of student assistants.

2. A reasonable indication of the work expected of the student – papers, exams, quizzes, presentations, lab reports, projects, etc. – and how it will figure in the final grade.

3. Ideally, the due dates of work expected of the student. If this is not possible or appropriate, students must be given reasonable advance notification of the due dates of major papers and tests.

4. The instructor’s own definition of plagiarism, if the one appearing in the Student Handbook is not considered adequate.

5. An indication of office hours.

Ordering Course Texts

The College Store orders all published course texts and a substantial number of the materials
used for computer-intensive and fine arts studio courses. It is the responsibility of the faculty member to provide text information to the College Store in a timely manner. For texts to be used during the Fall Semester, the text information must be provided not later than the end of the first week of the preceding May. For texts to be used during the Spring Semester, the information must be received not later than the end of the first week of the preceding November. Meeting these deadlines will ensure that the College Store can order an adequate supply of new and used texts from students, reducing the costs to other students willing to study a used text.

The College Store supplies the needed order forms and instructions to each continuing faculty member. New faculty are provided these forms as soon as the Store receives the appointment notice. Academic department secretaries have additional text ordering materials. Faculty may also use electronic mail to submit their text requirements for each semester.

Faculty members who wish to order a desk copy should do so through the academic department secretary. Publishers require that the order be made on academic department letterhead stationery and that it be mailed directly to the publisher of the text. The College is not permitted by publishers to order desk copies for faculty. If the Store must lend a text as a desk copy to a faculty member, that loaned text must be returned within two weeks of the start of the semester.

Office Hours

All members of the faculty are expected to establish office hours for student use, at a variety of reasonable times throughout each week. This information should be posted near the faculty member’s office for the information of students. Unless emergencies prevent it, the scheduled hours should be kept. Office hour information should be included in course syllabi.

Grades

1. The evaluation of a student’s performance shall not reflect other factors than those directly concerned with the project or semester’s work in question. Students should have protection through orderly procedures against prejudicial or capricious academic evaluation. (AAUP, Joint Statement on Rights and Freedoms of Students, 1967)

2. All instructors are expected to submit Roll Call grades and final grades each semester at the times requested by the Registrar.

3. Incomplete. This may be reported only in cases where the student is ill or has had to deal with some other serious emergency. Negligence or procrastination is not an acceptable reason for giving an Incomplete. Forms for filing and Incomplete are available in the Registrar’s Office: they ask for the student’s grade at that point, what further work is required, and when the final grade will be submitted.

4. Grade Change. Once a grade has been submitted to the Registrar, it cannot be changed unless the instructor finds an error in computing or transmitting the grade. Reassessing or reweighting previous work, or including further work, is not an acceptable reason for changing the grade. All requests for grade changes must be submitted to the Dean of the
Faculty Responsibilities, Resources and Policies: Courses

College for approval by no later than Roll Call of the subsequent semester.

5. Retaining Grade Information. Accurate evaluation information consistent with standards established in one’s syllabus shall be recorded by the instructor and that information retained for at least one year.

6. Leaving Dickinson. Any instructor leaving the College shall leave with the Dean of the College an accurate, complete record of the method used in determining grades for all the courses taught in that faculty member’s final year.

Student Assistants

Because Dickinson is an undergraduate liberal arts institution which for more than 200 years has prided itself upon the quality of its teaching, the College assumes that, except in special situations approved by APC, all the responsibilities of instruction – including lecturing, running laboratories, directing discussion sections, and grading examinations and papers – will be carried out by fully qualified members of the faculty. Where use of student assistants is approved, these guidelines must be followed:

1. It is inappropriate for student assistants to grade the work of other students, nor should they be asked to do so. They may serve as human scanners of unambiguous multiple-choice or short-phrase answer questions on quizzes or homework assignments, and may compute the numerical results. The instructor is responsible for the accuracy of this, however, and for clearly indicating to students that the SA is not making any evaluative judgments. Hourly examinations, final examinations, and papers of any sort can only be evaluated by the instructor.

2. In all courses where the student assistants are employed, instructors will make it clear in the syllabus the nature and scope of the use of SAs in the course.

Academic Dishonesty

Definitions of cheating and plagiarism, procedures for dealing with their detection, and sanctions when someone is found guilty of either, are provided in the Student Handbook. Charges of academic dishonesty are to be dealt with through the judicial process; they are not to be resolved by the individual instructor. Informal discussion with one’s department chair and/or with the Associate Dean of the College is advised as the first step to take when you think cheating or plagiarism has occurred in one of your courses.

Final Exam Period

Final tests or examinations (with the exception of laboratory finals) will not be given in the last five class days of the semester or during the reading period. Where a final examination is given as a "take-home" examination, or where a final paper is assigned in lieu of an examination, it will be due at the time of the scheduled final examination for that course. Individually-scheduled oral examinations may be arranged ad lib, but not so as to conflict with a student's regularly
scheduled final examinations. All proctored final examinations (with the exception of laboratory examinations) will be given in the examination period at the time scheduled for the course by the Registrar. When a final examination is not accommodated in the regular examination schedule, the instructor of the course must schedule the examination in consultation with the Registrar's Office. The scheduling of such examinations must not force a student to take three examinations within 24 hours. Examinations added to the regular schedule may not take precedence over regularly scheduled examinations.

**Student Course Evaluations**

An evaluation form prepared by the Faculty Personnel Committee is provided to students at the end of a course. It asks them to answer questions using both numerical scales and written free responses. The evaluation information is only made available to the instructor subsequent to the Registrar's due date for all grades. The numerical information is tallied by computer and the results sent to the instructor, the department chair, and the Dean of the College. The written responses are sent directly to the instructor but should be made available to the department chair or the Dean upon request.

Procedures for administering the Course Evaluation Form require that:

- With the exception of Freshman Seminars for which a specifically designed evaluation instrument is used, all classes must undergo evaluation using the College Course Evaluation Forms.
- The evaluation shall be given in class during the last two weeks of the semester.
- On the day of the evaluation, the instructor must allow adequate time, preferably at the beginning of class, for students to complete the forms.
- The instructor must be absent from the classroom during the time students are making their responses. A student or departmental representative other than the instructor must collect the forms for delivery to the department office or Dean's office as soon as possible. The instructor shall not re-enter the classroom until the forms have been collected.

*The required use of the College Course Evaluation Form does not preclude the optional use of other evaluation instruments devised by the instructor or department.*

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**Related Information**

**History/Revision Information**

1 Change approved at 6 May 1996 Faculty Meeting.
Faculty Responsibilities, Resources and Policies: Courses

Responsible Office/Division:

Effective Date:

Last Amended Date:

Next Review Date:

Also Found In: Academic Handbook