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College of Visual and Performing Arts Academic Affairs

4400 University Drive, MS 3E6, Fairfax, Virginia 22030

Policies for Instructors

At the start of the new semester, we would like to remind all instructors of some important academic policies.

1. Instructors should hand out a paper syllabus on the first day of class and post the syllabus on their websites.
2. Instructors and students are to use their **gmu.edu email** addresses, especially for grades, instruction, assignments, and confidential information.
3. Classes need to meet in the times and places that have been scheduled by the Office of the Registrar, except for occasional alternative arrangements (such as one-on-one or small group consultations or where project work legitimately interrupts regular class sessions). In any case, faculty is expected to be available to students on campus throughout the entire semester.

Instructors cannot require additional course meetings beyond those officially listed in the Schedule of Classes. In the event of cancelled classes, the Office of the Provost will notify faculty about any changes to the schedule to compensate for missed class time.

4. Faculty who plan to miss more than one scheduled class need prior permission of the chair and should make alternative arrangements for the class that are approved by the chair.
5. Instructors should periodically remind students that they are responsible for the accuracy of their own schedules. Students need to be reminded to check PatriotWeb regularly to verify that they are registered for the classes that they think they are. This is particularly important since students are no longer dropped for nonpayment. Faculty should not allow a student who is not registered to continue to attend class and should not grade the work of students who do not appear on the official class roster.
6. Instructors should note the add and drop deadlines for classes on their syllabus. The deadlines for courses that last the whole semester are given below. **These dates differ for courses that meet less than the full semester. See the Schedule of Classes for those dates, Fall 2010 (attached):**
 - The **Last Day to Add is September 14** for full-semester classes, and the **last day to drop with no tuition liability is September 14**. For adjustments to deadlines for courses that meet *less than the full semester*, please refer to the add/drop chart for non-standard courses on the Registrar's website.

Once the add and drop deadlines have passed, instructors do not have the authority to approve requests from students to add or drop/withdraw late. Late adds (up until the last day of classes are reviewed and approved by the department chair of the course being offered. These should generally be approved only in the case of a documented university error (such as a problem with financial aid being processed). Requests for non-elective withdrawals and retroactive adds (adds after the last day of classes) must be approved by the student's academic dean.

7. The Provost has requested that instructors include on their syllabi the following statement about accommodations for students with disabilities:

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services at 703.993.2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.
<http://ods.gmu.edu/>

Instructors should inform students that the need for accommodations should be identified at the beginning of the semester and that the specific accommodation has to be arranged through the Office of Disability Services. Faculty should not provide accommodations to students on their own (e.g. allowing a student extra time to complete an exam because the student reports having a disability).

8. If instructors give a final exam, they must give it at the time and place published in the Schedule of Classes. This time is set by the Registrar, and instructors are not free to change it. Students plan their schedules around the published dates, and it is important to follow them. Exams should not be given during the final week of classes. This reduces instructional time and the time students have been given for review. If an exam time for a particular class is not printed in the Schedule of Classes, the instructor should contact the Registrar at the start of the semester to schedule one. Instructors should allow students the entire scheduled exam time to complete the exam unless they give advance notice that less time will be allowed.

9. Grading reminders: Once final grades have been recorded, instructors should never accept any work to change a grade. Grade changes can only be approved when they are due to a calculation or recording error on the part of the instructor.

An incomplete grade (IN) should be used only if the student requests it in writing. An IN counts as a failing grade until completed, and it automatically turns into an F if a grade is not turned in by the deadline in the Schedule of Classes. Some students may prefer a C or D to an IN, and instructors shouldn't assume that the student wants an IN rather than a grade or that it is in the student's best interest to get an IN.

In addition, instructors should assign an IN only if the student has a very limited amount of work to complete and there is a non academic reason they can't do so within the semester and if, in their best judgment, the student actually stands a good chance of passing the course by finishing the work satisfactorily. Typical situations for giving incompletes involve a final exam (missed due to illness) or a final paper (not completed because of a family emergency). Instructors shouldn't assign incompletes if the student has missed a substantial portion of the work of the semester and wants extra time to do it; they shouldn't assign incompletes to give a student time to improve on work already completed.

Instructors shouldn't agree to give incompletes unless they will be available to grade the work and submit a grade by the official due date. If the instructor will be going on leave or leaving George Mason, this might not be possible. Instructors may set an earlier due date for the unfinished work; it is best to have in writing a description of the work that is outstanding and the date by which it is due. Instructors are not ever obligated to give an IN.

10. Federal law (a law known as FERPA) requires us to protect the privacy of student information. Instructors should not speak about a student's record with anyone other than the

student. The record includes how a student is doing in a course, whether a student has attended class, information about performance or grades, whether a paper has been turned in, etc. This prohibition includes parents, siblings, spouses, anyone. If instructors have questions about whether to respond to an inquiry about a student, please refer them to Linda Miller, Associate Dean, Academic Affairs.

11. According to the University catalog, all students and faculty are to use their **GMU.EDU** email address. Some commercial email addresses may be filtered out of the **GMU.EDU** system. No official information can be sent to students unless on the Mason email system.

12. Language to include in your syllabi:

Policies and Practices:

GMU Honor Code:

<http://academicintegrity.gmu.edu/honorcode/>

Honor Code: To promote a stronger sense of mutual responsibility, respect, trust, and fairness among all members of the George Mason University community and with the desire for greater academic and personal achievement, we, the student members of the university community, have set forth this honor code: *Student members of the George Mason University community pledge not to cheat, plagiarize, steal, or lie in matters related to academic work.*

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at 703.993.2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through that office.

Students must inform the instructor at the beginning of the semester, and the specific accommodation will be arranged through the Disability Resource Center.

An incomplete grade (IN) is used only if the student requests it in writing. An IN counts as a failing grade until completed, and it automatically turns into an F if a grade is not turned in by the deadline in the Schedule of Classes.

Encourage students to sign up for the Mason Alert System by visiting the website <https://alert.gmu.edu>, and please place this information on course syllabi. Students can also be reminded that an emergency poster exists in each classroom explaining what to do in the event of crises and that further information about emergency procedures exists on <http://www.gmu.edu/service/cert> .

Provost's Email, August 17, 2010

SAMPLE SYLLABUS LANGUAGE

(for further ideas on syllabus design, visit

http://cte.gmu.edu/Teaching/getting_started.html#syllabus)

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

GMU is an Honor Code university; please see the University Catalog for a full description of the code and the honor committee process. The principle of academic

integrity is taken very seriously and violations are treated gravely. What does academic integrity mean in this course? Essentially this: when you are responsible for a task, you will perform that task. When you rely on someone else's work in an aspect of the performance of that task, you will give full credit in the proper, accepted form. Another aspect of academic integrity is the free play of ideas. Vigorous discussion and debate are encouraged in this course, with the firm expectation that all aspects of the class will be conducted with civility and respect for differing ideas, perspectives, and traditions. When in doubt (of any kind) please ask for guidance and clarification.

GMU EMAIL ACCOUNTS

Students must use their Mason email accounts—either the existing “MEMO” system or a new “MASONLIVE” account to receive important University information, including messages related to this class. See <http://masonlive.gmu.edu> for more information.

OFFICE OF DISABILITY SERVICES

If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS. <http://ods.gmu.edu>

OTHER USEFUL CAMPUS RESOURCES:

WRITING CENTER: A114 Robinson Hall; (703) 993-1200; <http://writingcenter.gmu.edu>

UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES “Ask a Librarian”

<http://library.gmu.edu/mudge/IM/IMRef.html>

COUNSELING AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES (CAPS): (703) 993-2380;

<http://caps.gmu.edu>

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

The University Catalog, <http://catalog.gmu.edu>, is the central resource for university policies affecting student, faculty, and staff conduct in university academic affairs. Other policies are available at <http://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/>. All members of the university community are responsible for knowing and following established policies.

Please direct any questions about the above information to:

Linda Miller, Senior Associate Dean, Academic Affairs (lmille6@gmu.edu)

(Linda Miller will be on leave Fall 2010.)

Victoria Salmon, Associate Dean, Graduate Programs (vsalmon@gmu.edu)

Alice Watts, Academic Coordinator (awatts@gmu.edu)

Registrar: Important Dates

Dates listed on this page are for full semester courses only. For add/drop deadlines for courses that meet less than a full semester, see [Non-standard Sections Dates](#).

First day of classes ; last day to submit Domicile Reclassification Application; Payment Due Date	August 30
Labor Day, university closed	September 6
Last day to drop with no tuition penalty	September 14
Last day to add classes —all individualized section forms due	September 14
Last day to drop with a 33% tuition penalty	September 21
Last day to drop with a 67% tuition penalty	October 1
Last day to drop	October 1
Midterm progress reporting period (100-200 level classes)—grades available via Patriot Web	September 27 - October 22
Selective Withdrawal Period (undergraduate students only)	October 4 - October 29
Columbus Day recess (Monday classes/labs meet Tuesday. Tuesday classes do not meet this week)	October 11
Incomplete work from spring/summer 2010 due to instructor	October 29
Incomplete grade changes from spring/summer 2010 due to registrar	November 5
Thanksgiving recess	November 24-28
Last day of classes	December 11
Reading Days	December 13
Exam Period (beginning at 7:30 a.m. on Tuesday, December 14)	December 14 - December 21
Degree Conferral Date	January 15, 2011