

The University of Mississippi

College of Liberal Arts

Instructor Handbook

Fall, 2009

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the University of Mississippi. This handbook has been prepared to assist you in becoming familiar with a variety of policies and procedures at the University, especially those of most immediate concern to new instructors. Whether you are relatively new to the teaching profession or have extensive experience at other institutions, some academic and administrative practices at UM will be new to you. The Office of the Dean, College of Liberal Arts, is always available to assist you with questions or problems you might have so that you can concentrate on the critical task of effective teaching.

UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS

Registration

It is essential that you have a valid registration for every student in your class and that you have a student for every registration. The initial drop-add period may seem a period of confusion and disruption in this regard, but you will have other occasions to verify class registration. If you have any questions about course registration and class attendance, please consult with your department chair, course coordinator, or feel free to call this office.

Drop/Add Policy

During the first five class days, students may add classes on a space available basis. During the sixth through tenth class days, students may add classes only with permission of the instructor. Some department offices centralize this function. Be sure to confirm the departmental policy as it applies to your course. Additions to courses with full enrollments during the first ten class days may only be accomplished with instructor or departmental permission. After the tenth class day, "No student will be permitted to register for classes after the last day to register without a serious and compelling reason approved by the dean of the student's school or college. In no case may a student register after the last regular class day in any semester." (pg. 40, Fall 2009 Undergraduate Catalog). Our office will add students after the tenth class day with a note of permission and explanation from the instructor and the approval of the department chair.

Students may withdraw from a course through the thirtieth class day of each semester (October 5 for Fall 2009). Their names should not appear on the permanent class roll, and their transcript will not show their participation in the class at all. After the thirtieth class day, students may withdraw from a course “. . . only in the case of extreme and unavoidable emergency as determined by the student’s academic dean” (pg. 41, Fall 2009 Undergraduate Catalog). If a student expresses a desire for a late withdrawal, please refer the student to his or her academic dean. If a student in your class is given permission for a late withdrawal, or withdraws from the University generally after the withdrawal deadline, you must determine the proper grade assignment. The University policy is found on page 41 as follows:

Unacceptable reasons for late withdrawal include dissatisfaction over an expected grade or a change in the student’s degree program or major . . . Courses dropped after the course withdrawal deadline will still appear on the student’s official transcript. The W mark will be recorded if the student is passing the course at the time of withdrawal; the F grade will be recorded if the student is failing.

Whenever the Office of the Dean, College of Liberal Arts, approves a withdrawal request, we instruct the student to confer with the instructor about the reason for the withdrawal, and notify the instructor of the withdrawal date. The instructor must then make a professional judgement about whether to assign a grade of “W” or “F.” The University of Mississippi does not use the the “WP” or “WF” grading system.

Course rolls

Printed class rolls are no longer distributed from the Registrar’s office. Instead, instructors can download class rolls from the University of Mississippi WWW page using faculty webID accounts. The class rolls are automatically revised as registration changes occur

and remain accurate throughout the semester. If you have any questions about how to download class rolls from the University web site, please consult with your department chair, course coordinator, or designated resource person in your department.

Class Attendance

Classes are to meet on every regularly listed class day in the schedule, including days immediately before University holidays.

No other department or instructor in the University has the right to take a student out of one of your regularly scheduled class periods. There are, however, some functions important to the University which will require students to be off campus or away from a scheduled class. Such legitimate activities should be announced by a memorandum of information from the appropriate departmental or dean's office. For further information on this policy, please refer to page 42 of the Undergraduate catalog.

The University policy on class attendance is found on page 42 of the Undergraduate Catalog as follows:

It is the responsibility of the instructor to notify classes at the outset of each course of the class attendance requirements. It is the responsibility of the student to comply with the class attendance policy.

Students must attend the first meeting of every course for which they are registered, unless they obtain prior departmental approval. Without such approval, a student who is absent from the first class meeting may be dropped from that class by the dean of the school or college with the responsibility for the course. A student who incurs excessive absences in a given course may receive a grade of F for the course, and, in addition, may be dismissed from the class upon recommendation of the instructor and approval by the student's academic dean. When it appears to an instructor that a student has discontinued a class without officially dropping the course, the instructor will report this fact to the student's academic dean. The University reserves the right to dismiss from the University any student who has been excessively absent from multiple courses.

Some departments have uniform attendance policies for all sections of the same course.

The Undergraduate Catalog may be found online at the WWW page of the Registrar at:

<http://www.olemiss.edu/depts/registrar/>

Course Syllabus

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the regional accreditation agency for the University of Mississippi, has the following standard concerning a course syllabus:

4.2.4 Undergraduate Instruction

"Students must be provided written information about the goals and requirements of each course, the nature of the course content, and the methods of evaluation to be employed. Methods of instruction must be appropriate to the goals of each course and the capabilities of the students. (the same wording exists in 4.3.5, Graduate Instruction) . . . An institution must publish its grading policies and its grading practices must be consistent with policy."

Some of you will be teaching a course that has a standard departmental syllabus, others will be expected to develop a syllabus. We recommend that you consult closely with your department chair or course coordinator.

Final Examinations

University regulations require that all final examinations be given on the day and hour stated in the examination schedule. If a student comes to you with what you believe to be a legitimate need to take an examination at a time other than the regularly scheduled one, you may seek permission from the Department Chair to give the student the examination at another time. A student who has three or four final examinations in one day may arrange with the course instructor to take the noon or 7:30 p.m. examination at another time.

Academic Honesty

We recommend that you become familiar with the University policy regarding academic honesty, and hope that you never have occasion to use it. University policies regarding academic misconduct may be found in the online Policy Directory as “Academic Conduct and Discipline.”

Disorderly Conduct

University of Mississippi policy concerning disorderly may be found in the online Policy Directory as “Disorderly Conduct.” Please note that this behavior is defined as that which “. . . violates the standard of fair access to the academic experience.” Examples include “. . . harassing an instructor or fellow student (and) causing a disruption within the classroom environment.”

Although this kind of behavior is infrequent, we recommend that you become familiar with the policies so that you will be prepared to handle any such occurrence in a way that meets the best interest of all your students. Please take the time to familiarize yourself with the Student Intervention Team by reviewing the materials at

<http://www.olemiss.edu/orgs/sit/>

Grades

A final grade is the instructor's evaluation of a student's achievement throughout a semester's work in a course. Factors upon which the final grade may be based include attendance, recitation, written and oral quizzes and tests, reports, papers, the final examination and other class activities (Undergraduate Catalog, p. 42).

The University of Mississippi uses the following system for assigning final grades:

A - Excellent

B - Good

C - Satisfactory
D - Lowest passing grade
X - Audit
F - Failure
Z - Credit granted
P - Pass
I - Incomplete
IP - In progress
W - Withdrawn

Pluses or minuses are not used by the University of Mississippi for final grade assignment. A student who wishes to audit a course should consult with the instructor (p. 44 of the Undergraduate Catalog). The “Z,” “P,” and “IP” grades can be used only in the courses for which those grade assignments are approved.

The matter of “I” or “Incomplete” grades deserves special attention. The University policy concerning this grade is found on page 43 of the Undergraduate Catalog as follows:

The temporary mark of I (incomplete) is given to a student when, for unusual reasons acceptable to the instructor, course requirements cannot be completed before the end of the semester. The instructor must submit an I Mark Assignment Form to the registrar detailing the work to be completed and the deadline for completion. The registrar will convey a copy to the student. **COURSE FAILURE OR UNEXPLAINED CLASS ABSENCES MAY NOT BE USED AS REASONS TO ASSIGN AN I MARK.** I marks are not computed in determining a student's GPA. If an I mark for an undergraduate student has not been changed to a regular grade before the course withdrawal deadline (the 30th day of classes) of the next regular semester (excluding summer terms), the I automatically changes to an F and is computed in the GPA. **AN I GRADE MAY NOT BE REMOVED BY FORMALLY ENROLLING IN THE SAME COURSE IN A SUBSEQUENT SEMESTER AT THIS UNIVERSITY OR ANY OTHER INSTITUTION.**

Although this regulation is stated in the catalog, it is not familiar to many of our students, and needs to be brought to their attention.

REPORTING GRADES

Final grades at the University of Mississippi are now reported to the Office of the Registrar through the My Ole Miss online system. Please consult with your Department Chair or course coordinator for details of this process. Change of grade cards are available in the Department office or in the Office of the Registrar. Change of grade cards are used to report the change of an "I" grade to the final grade, and to correct any grade given in error. Grades may not be changed for any other reason.

Grade Appeals

Grade appeals are relatively uncommon, and many faculty members complete a career without having a grade formally appealed. However, you may wish to review the policies and procedures concerning grade appeals found in the online Policy Directory as "Grade Appeal." Please note the university requirement that faculty members retain all grade-related materials until the completion of the next regular (fall or spring) semester of any term. Materials returned to the student (reports, tests, quizzes, etc.) are the responsibility of the student. If you leave the university, we request that you leave course records in the departmental office in case a student makes an inquiry about the course.

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