



**OVERVIEW:** The College is committed to educationally sound uses of technology and the classroom and to preventing technology from becoming disruptive to the learning environment.

**OFFICE/DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBLE:** Vice Provost for Academic Affairs

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### **Use of Electronic Devices in the Classroom**

Technology use in the classroom is intended to enhance the learning environment for all students. It is the responsibility of the course instructor to decide when, if, and what type of technology is to be used during class. Any use of technology that degrades the learning environment, promotes dishonesty or is used for illegal activities may be prohibited.

**Classroom disruptions:** Consistent with College policy, it is the course instructor who decides whether or not student behavior is disruptive in her/his classroom. This applies to the use of electronic devices as well. Disruptions should be handled with reference to the College policy “Procedures for Dealing with Students who are Disruptive in Class” which empowers course instructors to warn students and to ask persistently disruptive students to leave the classroom.

**Laptop, notebook, and tablet computers:** The use of mobile computers in class is at the discretion of the instructor. Instructors are asked to consider allowing the use of mobile computing devices to take notes, and for activities formerly done in computer labs. The instructor may restrict the use of laptops to specific purposes and may prohibit other uses such as messaging, game playing, and Internet surfing during class time. If possible the instructor should outline mobile device usage guidelines for the class at the beginning of the semester, preferably in the syllabus. However; the instructor can change these guidelines if circumstances warrant.

**Mobile phones:** Mobile phones can be disruptive in the classroom in a number of ways and their use should not be abused. Ringtones **must** be turned off in class, and if on, phones must be in vibrate mode. If there is a need to check for and/or receive a call (New York Alert or parent with sick child and similar needs), the student **must** inform the instructor in advance that the student may need to excuse him/herself to take an important call. Students should refrain from text messaging in the classroom unless the instructor has given permission. Students who create a disturbance by mobile phone use will be warned and may be asked to leave the class session if the behavior continues.

**Electronic devices and academic dishonesty:** The course instructor can ban or limit the use of these devices in ways that might promote academic dishonesty. Incidences of dishonesty should be handled with reference to College policy, see “Policy on Student Academic Dishonesty.” Cell phones with text messaging or photo/video capabilities and PDAs, for example, could be used for cheating on examinations and instructors should make students aware that having a cell

phone in hand during an examination can bring a suspicion of (and possibly charges of) violating this College policy. Other electronic devices may also be used for these purposes and similar inappropriate uses may be handled in the same way.

**Electronic devices and illegal activities:** A course instructor or facility manager may prohibit activities that s/he knows will violate laws, such as those related to intellectual property rights or copyrights, invasions of privacy or sexual harassment. Examples of this might include activities such as using a camera phone to videotape choreography, or taking inappropriate photos without the subject's permission. These violations should be handled with reference to College Policy — *Code of Student Social Conduct* (see Campus Regulations and Computing Policies).

**Providing notice to students:** It is advisable for instructors to anticipate that such issues with wireless communications and electronic devices may arise and publish any restrictions in their course syllabi.

**Sanctions:** Appropriate sanctions for infractions of the instructor's policy must always begin with a personal warning to the student(s) that the behavior is disruptive or brings suspicion of academic dishonesty or is illegal. A "blanket warning" by the instructor at the beginning of the term or a syllabus statement is not adequate as a "personal warning." (See specific sanctions and procedures to be followed in the case of disruptive behavior.)

If the instructor plans to make use of sanctions for disruptions, s/he should make this known in advance by publishing the details about the sanctions in the course syllabus. If the problem arises and the syllabus does not contain such information, the instructor may publish restrictions at any time by providing written notice to all students in the class. However, no penalties should be applied for actions taken before the publication of the written notice to the students. NOTE: An exception to this would be charges of academic dishonesty, invasion of privacy, or violation of intellectual property rights, and other College policies or laws because all students have an obligation to abide by the law and published College policies regardless of prior written or verbal notification.

Sanctions for minor disruptions with cell phones, laptops, or other electronic devices will usually not include course grade penalties. However, if a student is asked to leave class due to additional infractions of the instructor's restrictions (following a personal warning), the instructor is not obligated to allow make up of examinations/quizzes or other graded assignments missed during the session in which the student was not in class.

**Electronic devices in non-classroom facilities.** Directors or coordinators in charge of non-classroom facilities such as computer labs, the Student Learning Center, the Student Health Center, the Drake Memorial Library and others may make rules concerning appropriate use of mobile phones, cameras, and other electronic devices in their facilities. Students who do not adhere to those rules may be asked to leave the facility, or be charged as described previously.

**Appeals:** Any appeals related to a course instructor's or facility director's restrictions on communications and use of electronic devices should be addressed to the department chairperson or staff member's supervisor.