



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, and any use of technology that substantially degrades the learning environment, promotes dishonesty or illegal activities, may be prohibited by the instructor.

Classroom disruptions: Consistent with College policy, it is the course instructor who decides whether student behavior is disruptive or not in her/his classroom. While use of electronic devices will usually be infrequent and a minor annoyance, such uses could become disruptive. Disruptions should be handled with reference to the College policy — “Procedures for Dealing with Students who are Disruptive in Class” which applies to these behaviors and empowers course instructors to warn students and to ask persistently disruptive students to leave the classroom.

Cellular telephones: Students **must not** abuse the use of cell phones in class. Ringtones **must** be turned off in class and, if on, cell 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 **must not** engage in text messaging in the classroom. Students who create disturbance with ringing cell phones or text messaging, should be warned and may be asked to leave the class session if the behavior continues.

Laptop computers: Using laptop computers in the classroom to take notes and for any other use authorized by the course instructor should be allowed. However, the instructor may restrict the use of laptops to this (these) purpose(s) and prohibit other uses of laptops such as instant messaging, game playing, and Internet surfing during class time. If the instructor chooses to prohibit such activities, s/he should make this known to the class from the beginning of the semester. In addition, the instructor can establish such a policy later in the semester if misuse of these devices becomes a problem. The instructor can also disallow the use of laptop computers in the classroom.

Electronic devices and academic dishonesty: The course instructor also may evaluate the potential for academic dishonesty with various devices and ban or limit their use on this basis. Incidences of dishonesty should be handled with reference to College policy — “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 inform

students that having a cell phone in hand during an examination will bring a suspicion of (and possibly charges of) violating 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, Student Learning Center, Student Health Center, Drake Memorial Library and others may make rules concerning appropriate use of cellular telephones, 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.