

## **Rhodes College Handbook: Course Syllabi**

Faculty members must prepare and distribute to their students syllabi for all courses within the first week of the semester. Syllabi vary enormously across disciplines and from individual to individual. These should be documents that faculty prepare very carefully since they serve as the primary resource for adjudicating disputes regarding the course's policies, expectations, and the responsibilities of both student and instructor. At a minimum a course syllabus must include information on course texts and other required reading materials; course objectives; required assignments; testing policies; grading policies; specific attendance expectations and the consequences for absences; expectations regarding the Honor System; and contact information and office hours of the instructor. Where possible, dates for tests and other assignments should be provided, along with consequences for missed work. It is also advisable to include in the syllabus policies regarding absences due to college-sanctioned activities; procedures for accommodating conflicts with required class meetings outside the regularly scheduled class time (e.g., film viewings, field trips, etc.); accommodating approved disabilities; and statements regarding plagiarism, group work, and other potential violations of student integrity. The syllabus for each course should be archived by the Department as the permanent record required for the College's accreditation.

In effect September 15, 2010.

Dean of the Faculty and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

## **Rhodes College Handbook: Classroom Environment**

Instructors strive to create and maintain a classroom environment that is conducive to student learning. They are expected to make their policies clear on the syllabus and during the first week of class about classroom regulations designed to maximize student learning in accordance with the goals of the course.

Students are expected to conduct themselves as responsible learners. Classroom behavior should not detract from the learning environment. Each faculty member has the right to determine appropriate conduct for the classroom. For example, expectations might address behavior such as the use of electronic devices[\*], late arrivals or early departures, eating, or sleeping.

Faculty can determine consequences for violations of these class policies or other disruptions to the classroom environment, which might include dismissal from the class for the day on which the disruption occurs (and being counted absent for that day), reduction of participation grade, and/or referral to the Director of Student Conduct. These consequences should also be included in the syllabus.

A student violating a professor's classroom policy or individual instructions regarding classroom disruptions might be dismissed from the class for the day on which the disruption occurs (and counted absent for that day), subject to a reduction of participation grade, and/or referred to the Director of Student Conduct.

[\*Electronic devices must be allowed for disability-related accommodations; however, it is also important that exceptions not be limited exclusively to students with disabilities, in order to

retain confidentiality (in other words, avoiding situations where students with disabilities are known to be the only students with laptops or other devices). Language such as the following would allow faculty to make exceptions to such policies for disability accommodations, as well as temporary injuries or other appropriate situations: “No electronic devices are allowed in class without prior approval.”]

The above incorporates changes to the Handbook as reported in the Faculty Professional Interest Committee minutes 15.1 distributed October, 2014.

## **Rhodes College Handbook: Class Attendance Policy**

Rhodes, as a residential college of the liberal arts and sciences, considers interactive engagement with other students and the professor, in a structured setting, to be one of the essential and central components of the academic program. Students enrolled at the institution make a commitment to participate fully in their education, which includes attending class.

- Monday-Wednesday-Friday classes meet for a total of 42 times in a semester;
- Tuesday-Thursday classes meet for a total of 28 times in a semester.

Missing three (3) MWF classes, or two (2) TuTh classes, is equivalent to one week’s work out of the fourteen weeks of the semester; this is a significant amount of time. Absenteeism is not to be taken lightly.

Specific attendance policies are set by individual instructors, who state them in the course syllabus and during the first class session. Faculty should be mindful in setting attendance policies that college-sanctioned activities may require participating students to be off campus and consequently miss class. Faculty are discouraged from penalizing students solely for such absence and should normally, at their discretion, accommodate such a student in, e.g., an alternate date for a test. It is, however, the student’s responsibility in undertaking college-sanctioned activities (e.g., varsity athletics, internships, and off-campus competitions connected with courses) to understand that their participation may come at the cost of absences from other courses or even forfeiting credit on certain assignments when making them up is not feasible.

Students are responsible for knowing the attendance policy in each of their courses, for obtaining and mastering material covered during an absence, and for determining, in consultation with the instructor, whether and under what conditions make-up work will be permitted. It is the student’s responsibility to address the issues related to missing a class whatever the reason for the absence. If, in accordance with the course policies, the instructor determines that excessive absences are jeopardizing a student’s ability to obtain a passing grade in the course, the instructor may make written request to the Dean of the Faculty that the student be removed from the course with a grade of F. If a student is removed from two or more courses in the same semester for this reason, the student may be asked to withdraw from the College.

This document incorporates amendments made at the October 8, 2003 Meeting of the Faculty. Dean of the Faculty and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

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## **Suggested language for the syllabus:**

This syllabus is a guide for effective learning in this class; it is not a legal contract. The instructor reserves the right to modify the syllabus as needed.

### **Attendance**

Students will be allowed three unexcused absences. *All other absences after the third one must be excused. Each unexcused absence after the third one will cost you 5% of your **final** grade. If you miss three weeks worth of classes, you can be dropped from the class or flunked.* Valid excuses for missing class include but are not limited to religious observances, college-sanctioned academic or athletic travel, personal illness or injury, family illness or injury or bereavement. Excuses after the allotted three should be accompanied by a note from the Dean's office. Needless to say, infrequent class attendance will negatively impact your class participation grade.

### **Attendance**

Students with extracurricular activities (athletics, mock trial, etc.) that will require them to miss one or more classes during the semester should talk to me in advance of their anticipated absence. All absences that are not approved in advance will adversely affect your grade.

### **Honor Code**

All papers and exams should be your own work. Students are expected to abide by the Honor Code, and I will be diligent about reporting all violations to the Honor Council.

### **Honor Code:**

All work turned in for this course is to be completed in accordance with the Rhodes College Honor Code. To demonstrate your commitment to the Code, each student must write "pledged" and sign his/her name on every assignment. If you have questions about plagiarism you should talk to me directly.

### **Academic Integrity**

All work turned in for this course is to be completed in accordance with Rhodes' Honor Code. Students are expected to be familiar with the requirements of the Code and to conduct themselves accordingly in all classroom matters. Plagiarism is the use of someone else's information or ideas without proper citation. If you have questions about the correct use or citation of materials, consult Marius & Page. If you wonder if something should be cited, it probably should. This applies to materials read even if you do not use them directly in the paper. Plagiarism will result in an F in the course. Ignorance will not be treated as innocence.

### **Accommodations**

Students with a documented disability in need of special accommodations should contact the Office of Disability Services and also see the instructor to discuss your situation.

### **Electronic Devices**

No electronic devices are allowed in class without prior approval. When permission has been granted for the use of an electronic device in the classroom, the student shall employ such device solely in a manner appropriate to the course work and will avoid distractions or interruptions to fellow students or the instructor, including leaving the room to use such device.

### **Electronic Devices**

Electronic devices are allowed only for legitimate classroom purposes (reading electronic texts, taking notes, etc.); do not use a personal device for any purpose unrelated to the class. All devices should be silenced. Cell phones should be put away unless you are asked to use them for a class activity; otherwise, they should be powered down. If there is a serious need to leave your cell phone on, such as a family emergency, please put it on vibrate mode and let the professor know. Violations of this policy will affect the student's final grade.

### **Mutual Respect**

The \*\*\*\* Department is committed to creating an academic climate that is safe, respectful, and appreciative of all students, staff, and faculty regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, size, socioeconomic background, religion, spirituality, physical ability, mental ability, or any other aspect of one's identity. A climate of mutual respect allows us to ask difficult questions and to participate in honest discussions, even in the context of strong disagreement. Creating this kind of open, honest, and respectful climate is our mutual responsibility.

### **Sexual Misconduct Disclosure**

I will do my best to help any student who comes to me with non-course-related concerns. Please keep in mind, however, that all faculty members are mandated to report any incidents of sexual misconduct that comes to their attention. That means that I cannot keep information about sexual misconduct confidential if you share that information with me.

The Rhodes Counseling Center, the College Chaplain, or the Student Health Services Staff can advise you confidentially. Also, the Title IX Coordinator, Claire Shapiro, (Director of Human Resources, 843-3750, [shapiro@rhodes.edu](mailto:shapiro@rhodes.edu)) or the Deputy Title IX Coordinator, AnneMarie Reed (Director of Community Standards, Student Affairs, 843-3899, [reeda@rhodes.edu](mailto:reeda@rhodes.edu)) can help you access other resources on campus and in the local community.

The student [Sexual Misconduct Policy](#) is in the Student Handbook; it can be found on the InRhodes web site at <https://in.rhodes.edu/admin/studentconduct/Pages/Sexual-Misconduct-.aspx>.