There are **five types of course policies** that should be articulated in your syllabus (or carefully considered before choosing not to articulate them in your syllabus):

- Academic Integrity & Collaboration
- Accommodations for individuals with disabilities
- Attendance &/or Participation
- Extensions, Late Assignments & Re-Scheduled/Missed Exams
- Student use of Mobile Devices in the classroom

In addition, there are a number of **other policies** that frequently show up in syllabi, depending on the nature of the course being taught, and the preferences of the individual instructor. For example:

- Guidelines for discussion/critique
- Food/drink in class
- Freedom of expression
- Preparation for guest speakers
- Recording classroom activities
- Accommodations for religious observances

**For each policy** on your syllabus you should:

- aim to make **your expectations** clear;
- communicate **consequences** for policy-violating behavior;
- explain the **rationale** behind your policy;
- be clear about what a student needs to do if/when **extenuating circumstances** arise (and about what sorts of things count as extenuating circumstances);
- use **language** that emphasizes your **students’ role** in the process;
- aim for a **tone** that communicates both **authority and approachability**;
- remember that policy choices tend to involve **tradeoffs** between equally desirable options; take time to consider what you’re giving up and why.

In the following pages you will find more detailed considerations related to the individual policies, followed by a series of sample policies for you to use as inspiration and copying fodder.
Policy 1: Academic Integrity & Collaboration

Many factors contribute to reduced rates of cheating and plagiarism in the classroom. One of those factors is the clarity of expectations for students, along with a sense of the rationale behind your choices. In addition, the university’s Honor Code gives you the job of defining for your students the levels of collaboration that are permitted, as well what outside resources they are permitted to use (on assignments, exams, projects, etc.), and how they are supposed to report their use of those outside resources. *See page 6 for some sample syllabus policies.*

Questions to Consider:

☐ How will allowing or not allowing collaboration on an assignment contribute to your students’ achievement of your learning objectives?

☐ What degree of collaboration is acceptable (for each type of work students will do in your class)?

☐ What counts as acceptable use of outside resources for graded work?

☐ What method should students use to report their use of outside resources?

☐ How will you articulate the motivation behind your policy for your students?

For more ideas and suggestions specific to Georgia Tech, see [http://honor.gatech.edu/content/8/syllabus-checklist](http://honor.gatech.edu/content/8/syllabus-checklist)

Policy 2: Accommodations for Individuals with Disabilities

You are required, by law, to provide “reasonable accommodations” to students with documented disabilities. At Georgia Tech they can get that documentation from the Office of Disability Services ([http://www.adapts.gatech.edu/content/79/applying-for-services](http://www.adapts.gatech.edu/content/79/applying-for-services)), and that office can be a resource to you, if you need assistance identifying the best ways to accommodate different student needs, in support of their learning in your classroom. *See page 9 for sample policies.*

Questions to Consider:

☐ Will you require students to provide you with a letter from Disability Services, or is the student’s statement of their need for accommodation sufficient?

☐ In what circumstances (if any) will you consider accommodating students who don’t have a documented disability, but express need for extra accommodation?

☐ What amount of notice do you consider reasonable, when a student has needs that will require special accommodations? Keep in mind that a student may not be diagnosed with a need until part way through a semester.
Policy 3: Attendance &/or Participation

Whether attendance and/or participation are required and/or graded in your class is up to you – and your position on this is an important course design consideration. However, there are several questions worth thinking about as you make that decision, and as you articulate your policy for your syllabus. See page 10 for some sample attendance and participation policies.

Questions to Consider:

- How will attendance contribute to my students’ achievement of our learning objectives?
- What is the maturity level/experience of my students, and what does that say about my need to support/force them to make good choices?
- If a student skips every class but achieves an A in the course, will you be satisfied that they took part in the full learning experience?
- How will student absences affect other students?
- What resources do I have at my disposal for tracking and/or grading attendance and/or participation?
- Is it enough for a student to attend a class, or do I want them to demonstrate active engagement as well? Will that be part of their grade?
- If you are grading participation, will students be graded on the quantity of their contributions to class, or will the quality of their participation also be considered?
- Is my participation policy unfair to students who find speaking in class difficult or overwhelming (e.g. students who speak English as a second language, students who find public speaking difficult, etc.)? Are there alternative options I can provide for these types of students?
- Is there an expectation in your class that students arrive on time? If so, what are the consequences for late arrival?
Policy 4: Extensions, Late Assignments & Re-Scheduled/Missed Exams
Students need to know what your policy is on things like late assignments and missed exams. You should be as clear as possible about your rules and the consequences for your students, in order to help students focus their efforts appropriately, and to make it easy for you to be consistent throughout the course. Note also that at Georgia Tech some exceptions are made for “approved Institute activities” (e.g. field trips and athletic events, see http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/4/ for more information). See page 10 for sample policies on late assignments and missed exams.

Questions to Consider:

☐ Will late assignments be accepted? How will late submissions affect a student’s grade?

☐ Will extensions be granted? Under what sorts of conditions? How much advance notice will you require from students in order to approve an extension?

☐ Is your policy fair to students who make the necessary sacrifices to turn their work in on time?

☐ Are you confident that you will feel comfortable following through on your policy when students ask for exceptions to be made, and/or when they turn work in after a deadline?

☐ What counts as an acceptable “extenuating circumstance”, and how will that change the consequences for a student’s grade?

☐ Are you willing to reschedule midterm (and/or final\(^1\)) exams? Under what conditions?

\(^1\) Note that current university policy affords students a makeup exam option when they have three or more exams scheduled in a twenty-four hour period.
Policy 5: Student use of Mobile Devices in the Classroom

Research on learning shows that unexpected noises and movement automatically divert and capture people’s attention, which means that one student’s use of a mobile devices (laptops, cell phones, tablets, etc.) can distract another student, thus disrupting their ability to learn. In addition, students using mobile devices often become engaged in matters that are not related to the class they are attending. Further, research indicates that students taking notes on laptops tend to process less as they take notes, and the depth of their learning suffers.

On the other hand, mobile devices can be a useful tool for taking notes and/or following presentations that have been made available online, as well as referring to readings or other outside resources. In addition, students mature/advanced enough to use mobile devices appropriately and note-take with some sophistication may not fall prey to the dangers mentioned above. To set this policy, think about individual students, the overall dynamic you would like to see at work in your classroom, and your own tolerance of distractions in the classroom. See page 12 for some sample policies on the use of mobile devices in the classroom.

Questions to Consider:

☐ How distracting do you find it when students are using their mobile devices during your class?

☐ To what degree do you think it is important to protect students from their potential distraction?

☐ Do you have online materials you would like students to be able to access during class?

☐ Are there structured ways to leverage devices to actually support learning in the context of your class (e.g. looking things up online, web-based polling systems, simulations, etc.)?

☐ Are there certain days or activities for which mobile devices will (or will not) be used, as an exception to the rule?
Sample Course Policies

Academic Integrity & Collaboration

Example 1
Honesty and transparency are important features of good scholarship. On the flip side, plagiarism and cheating are serious academic offenses with serious consequences. If you are discovered engaging in either behavior in this course, you will earn a failing grade on the assignment in question, and further disciplinary action may be taken.

For a clear description of what counts as plagiarism, cheating, and/or the use of unauthorized sources, please see the Student Code of Conduct:


I encourage you to work together on homework assignments and to make use of campus resources like the Center for Academic Success, and the Communication Center to assist you in your pursuit of academic excellence.

If you have questions about my integration of the university’s honor code into this course, please do not hesitate to ask: my aim is to foster an environment where you can learn and grow, while ensuring that the work we all do is honest and fair.

For more information about Carnegie Mellon’s standards with respect to academic integrity, you can also check out the following link: http://honor.gatech.edu/
Example 2
Students who copy assignments, allow assignments to be copied, or cheat on tests will fail the assignment or test on the first offense, and will fail the entire course on the second.

Many students have questions as to what constitutes too much "help" on essays or homework. Of course, you may ask a friend if a certain phrase or sentence is correct. You may consult an online dictionary or translator for a word or phrase. BUT, the line between legitimate help and cheating is this: Are you able to reproduce the same information on a test or on your own? If the answer is yes - i.e., you learned something from getting the help and won't make the same mistake again - that's okay. If the answer is no – i.e., you can't identify the parts of speech in the phrase or you can't tell me what the word(s) mean on the spot) then you shouldn't turn in the assignment as your own work. You should, at the very least, indicate those parts of the assignment that are not your own work.

Experienced teachers like me can easily recognize essays that are written by native, near-native, or advanced speakers, are copied from other sources, or are completed using online translation services. I am obligated to uphold the university's policy on academic integrity and I take this responsibility very seriously. If you are unsure about your particular situation, please ask me for clarification BEFORE you turn in an assignment as your own work. Please take the time to read the information provided by the Honor Advisory Council at:

http://honor.gatech.edu/

In addition, you can find the university’s full Honor Code here:

http://www.policylibrary.gatech.edu/student-affairs/academic-honor-code
Example 3
Cheating, plagiarism, and all forms of academic dishonesty are expressly forbidden in this class, and by the university’s Honor Code (http://honor.gatech.edu/content/2/the-honor-code). Any form of cheating will immediately earn you a failing grade for the entire course, and I will pursue further disciplinary actions according to Carnegie Mellon’s policies and procedures (see http://honor.gatech.edu/plugins/faq/ for more information on this).

Here are the things you need to know to ensure that you are working within the constraints of both the university’s policy, and my expectations for this course:

1. **Homework Assignments:**
   You are welcome to work with other students in this class on your homework assignments, but you must (a) list the names of anyone you work with on your assignment, and (b) write up your own solutions to homework problems, based on your own understanding of the material. Some students find it helps to take a half hour break between any work you do with other students, and the time you spend actually writing up your own solutions.

2. **Crib Sheets for Exams:**
   You may work with others to develop your crib sheets, and you may use the same crib sheet as others in the class. Note, however, that it is in your best interest to be actively involved in the creation of any crib sheet that you use, as this process will help you learn and recall the right sort of material, and is therefore likely to contribute to a higher test score.

3. **Research Paper:**
   Your paper should be crafted and written on your own. You may talk with others about your ideas, but you should be working by yourself on the actual outline and content. If you need further assistance with your paper please consider joining me during my office hours, or making an appointment with the Communication Center (http://www.communicationcenter.gatech.edu/).

   In addition, you are required to cite all sources you use in your paper. This includes both direct quotations and cases where you use someone else’s ideas. “Sources” include papers, journals, conversations, anything found on the internet, and so on. Basically, if the thought did not origination with you, you should provide a source.

   If you need some guidance on the mechanics of citing your sources, please see the “Citing Your Sources” document on our Blackboard site.

4. **Campus Resources:**
   You are permitted (and even encouraged) to make use of the academic support services offered by The Center for Academic Success (http://www.success.gatech.edu/) and the Communication Center (http://www.communicationcenter.gatech.edu/).
If you have any questions about what is expected of you in this class, come see me during my office hours, or ask me after class.

**Accommodations for Individuals with Disabilities**

**Example 1**

**Students with Disabilities**: If you wish to request an accommodation due to a documented disability, please inform your instructor and contact Disability Services as soon as possible. They can be reached at adaptsinfo@gatech.edu or 404-894-2563 (voice)/ 404-894-1664 (TDD).

**Example 2**

**Accommodations for Disabilities**: If you have learning needs that require some adaptations for you to succeed in this course, please contact Disability Services (http://www.adapts.gatech.edu/). We can arrange to accommodate your learning needs based on their recommendations.

**Example 3**

**Accommodations for Learning Needs**: If you have learning needs that require some adaptations for you to succeed in this course, please contact the Office of Disability Services on campus (http://www.adapts.gatech.edu/). I am happy to arrange to accommodate your learning needs based on their recommendations.
**Attendance and/or Participation Policies**

**Example 1**

*Class Presence and Participation*. Class presence and participation points are given to encourage your active class participation and discussion. You will be rewarded with a perfect score as long as you frequently come to class and actively contribute to the class discussion during recitations and lectures.

*Presence*: Although it is not required, most students send their professor a brief e-mail to explain their absence in advance. Students who repeatedly arrive late to the lecture or recitation will have their Class Participation grade lowered. Please sign the attendance sheet when you come to the class. Any false signatures will result in zero participation grades for all parties involved.

*Participation*: We will devote one entire session to the case discussion. The instructor's role during a case discussion is that of a moderator. When the cases are discussed, we are less concerned with “right” or “wrong” answers than we are with thoughtful contributions which follow the discussion and either add to the debate or move it in a new direction. If you find it uncomfortable to speak up in class, we encourage you to visit your professor in office hours and work on this skill.

**Example 2**

Class participation is a very important part of the learning process in this course. Although not explicitly graded, you will be evaluated on the QUALITY of your contributions and insights. Quality comments possess one or more of the following properties:

- Offers a different and unique, but relevant, perspective;
- Contributes to moving the discussion and analysis forward;
- Builds on other comments;
- Transcends the “I feel” syndrome. That is, it includes some evidence, argumentation, or recognition of inherent tradeoffs. In other words, the comment demonstrates some reflective thinking.

We will use our assessment of your participation to manage borderline grades. While your participation grade is subjective, it will not be random or arbitrary. And, clearly, more frequent quality comments are better than less frequent quality comments.

**Example 3**

Attendance is taken at all lectures, and participation in weekly sections will be graded on the following scale:

- Unexcused absence = 0 points
- In class, but asleep or obsessed w/laptop = 1 point
- In class, but silent or ill-prepared = 2 points
- In class and making an okay contribution = 3 points
- In class and making quality contributions = 4 points
- In class, but your cell phone rings = -5 points

**Example 4**

Attendance is not required in this course.
**Extensions, Late Assignments, and Re-scheduled/Missed Exams**

**Example 1**

**Late Assignments:** Group projects, your individual paper, and your final paper, are due at 11:59 PM on their respective due dates. These items may be turned in after the deadline, but you will be eligible for fewer points once the deadline has passed: you will only be eligible for 95% of the total grade if it is submitted by 3 AM that night, and you will lose an additional 10% from the total you are eligible to earn for every 12 hour period it is late thereafter. Papers more than 3 days late will earn a grade of 0.

Late reading assignments will not be accepted.

Note also that extensions will not generally be permitted, but if you think you are subject to an exceptional circumstance, please discuss it with me outside of class (and as soon as possible).

**Example 2**

**Late Assignments and Missed Exams:** To avoid dealing with lateness and missed exams, I provide you with more assessment opportunities than you need for your grade. If you miss an exam or an assignment for any reason, your grade on that item will be zero. To calculate your grade I will select the best ones to count toward your grade. This means that NO arrangements will be made for late assignments or missed exams, so please be careful in choosing to skip assignments or exams early in the semester: you may be overwhelmed later, get sick, or otherwise need to miss an exam or assignment. Don’t throw your chances away.

**Example 3**

**Exams:** Make-up exams will be given only for documented reasons of illness, family emergency, or participation in approved Institute activities (such as field trips and athletic events, see [http://catalog.gatech.edu/rules/12/](http://catalog.gatech.edu/rules/12/) for more information). Exams will be closed book and no calculators will be allowed.
Student Use of Mobile Devices

Example 1

Cell Phones, Laptops, and Related Technology: Use of portable technology during class time is not permitted unless prior arrangement has been made with the course instructor. Please leave your laptop in your bag, turn off your cell phone, and resist the urge to text your mom.

Example 2

Use of Mobile Devices, Laptops, etc. During Class As research on learning shows, unexpected noises and movement automatically divert and capture people's attention, which means you are affecting everyone's learning experience if your cell phone, pager, laptop, etc. makes noise or is visually distracting during class.

For this reason, I [insert the language that aligns with your sentiments]

- ask you to turn off your mobile devices and close your laptops during class.
- allow you to take notes on your laptop, but you must turn the sound off so that you do not disrupt other students' learning. If you are doing anything other than taking notes on your laptop, please sit in the back row so that other students are not distracted by your screen.

There are other variations based on your tolerance of such devices; the key is simply to communicate clearly to students what your expectations are.