

Dealing with Disruption in the Classroom at UWW



Proactive Steps

- Make your expectations regarding classroom behavior as clear as possible
 - Attendance
 - Late arrival or early departure
 - Eating and drinking
 - Cell phones
 - Use of laptops, PDAs, calculators, smartphones, ipods, ipads, etc.
 - Behavior such as reading the newspaper, doing other work, sleeping, etc.
- Talk about how you want classroom discussions to run
 - Do students need to raise their hand and/or be called upon?
 - Is there a limit to how many times one student may contribute?
 - Is there an expectation for all to contribute?
- Explain your role as classroom facilitator
 - Ultimately, you are responsible for creating an environment that is the best one for **all** students to learn
 - These rules and expectations are necessary for that to happen

During the Course

- Serve as a good role model related to these expectations
 - Be on time and be prepared
 - Turn off the ringer on your cell phone
 - Don't cut off others while speaking
 - Act in a courteous and respectful manner
- Be consistent in your enforcement right from the start
- Make the classroom environment relaxed and fun, yet make it clear that we are all here to learn.

Should Trouble Arise

- You are responsible for the safe and appropriate environment in your classroom. Therefore, you always have the right to address **conduct** that is disruptive.
- If the general demeanor of the classroom is starting to be disruptive, a reminder may do the trick (e.g. "There are too many individual conversations going on and we need to focus on the topic.")
- If one or two students are causing the problem, the best approach is to be direct and not "beat around the bush". Some students don't get subtle hints.
 - You can be direct and still be respectful.

- Deal with issues while they are still small. If you allow them to build up, you reinforce the idea that such behavior is acceptable. (and it makes other students question the norms and the rules).
- Unless the disruption is so significant that it must be dealt with immediately, talk with the student after or outside of class.
- Be very clear
 - Describe the disruptive behavior
 - Remind the student that such behavior is prohibited in your classroom.
 - Inform the student that the behavior must cease or s/he may not remain in your class.
- It is certainly appropriate to listen to the student but do NOT engage in debate or negotiation.
- Keep notes or a log of students' inappropriate behavior.
- If a student's behavior is significantly disruptive during class, you have the right to ask the student to leave **for that class period**.
 - If a student does not leave as directed, call 911 and a University Police Officer will respond and remove the student.
 - It is important that you discuss the matter with the student prior to the next class period and reiterate your expectations for classroom conduct.
 - You may wish to have your Department Chair and/or the Dean of Students attend this meeting.
- Anytime there is a threat of violence or the safety of others is in jeopardy, call 911.
- If you believe that a student should be permanently removed from the class, that action must afford the student their due process rights. Therefore, it must be done through the UW System Code of Conduct process. Contact the Dean of Students to begin this process.

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