

# Professor Ray's PLAGIARISM Policy

**Defined:** *Plagiarism is when someone copies something that was written by someone else and presents it as his or her own work.*

**Plagiarism has become more widespread due to the ease of copying and pasting text using computers. The most common practice is for a student to copy whole blocks of text (or even entire papers) off of the internet, and neaten a few things up and change a few things around to try to disguise the copying. The practice has become so common in some high schools and even colleges that many people don't even see it as a form of cheating. Another common practice is for two or more students to work together on an independent research project, and share their research and writing between each other, such that each person's work is really a combined effort: all, or part, of each student's writing is identical or nearly identical to the others.**

Cheating, plagiarism, or other forms of academic dishonesty are totally unacceptable and will not be tolerated in this class. Violations of standards of academic honesty will be reported to the school dean for appropriate action. A detailed explanation of academic integrity of students is found below:

The academic integrity of the students in this course and Policy 3100, the SDCCD District Student Code of Conduct, require that all student work including, but not limited to, discussion postings, assignments, essays, papers, and exams be free of plagiarism. Students must fully cite any text, graphics, or others' ideas they include in that work. For additional details, please review [AP 3100.3—Honest Academic Conduct](#).

As part of my commitment to academic integrity, student work in this course may be submitted to an online plagiarism checking service.

Any student caught cheating or plagiarizing will be subject to the disciplinary procedures given in District Policy 3100, which may include receiving a failing grade for the assignment. Any cheating or plagiarism will be reported to the Dean of Student Affairs. Specifically, the following behaviors are examples of cheating/plagiarism (this list is not exhaustive).

- Copying directly from the textbook. Note: you're welcome to summarize the information from when completing homework assignments, but please phrase homework answers in your own words!
- Using unauthorized notes while taking an exam, or copying another student's work.
- Sharing exam answers or collaborating with another student during an exam.
- Turning in homework that contains large blocks of text that are identical or nearly identical to another student's (both parties will receive zero score).
- Copying from any source (including the Internet) without citing the source.
- Turning in work completed for another class (unless pre-authorized by the instructor).
- Passing off work as your own that is not. This includes the use of work completed by other students.

In order to avoid any possibility of someone else plagiarizing your work, you should not share any content-specific material (such as exam answers, homework, or field trip reports) with any other students.

Please note that if I receive any course work from two or more students that is identical or strikingly similar, I reserve the right to assign any and all such students a score of zero for the assignment in question.

Please note that if I suspect academic dishonesty on an assignment or an exam, I reserve the right to schedule a one-on-one Zoom meeting to give you the opportunity to demonstrate that you understand the answer(s) you supplied. In the event that a student is unable to demonstrate their understanding of an exam/assignment answer, I reserve the right to assign the student a score of zero for that exam/assignment. If you have any concerns regarding plagiarism or cheating, please contact the instructor.

- **How to avoid it.**

Make no mistake about it: plagiarism is cheating. But some confusion about plagiarism is perhaps understandable. After all, when a student does research for an assignment, he/she is gathering information about a topic from other sources and presenting that information. Where does proper research for an assignment end, and plagiarism begin?

**THE RIGHTWAY TO DO RESEARCH FOR AN ASSIGNMENT:** Gather information on a topic from several sources, process it, organize it, and present it using your own words and own organization. This is GOOD!

**THE WRONGWAY (PLAGIARISM):** Gather information on a topic by copying large blocks of text, piece those blocks of copied text together, neaten things up, and then change a few words to try to disguise the fact that most of the work was copied. This is CHEATING!!

**Bottom line:** to avoid plagiarism, use your **OWN WORDS and your OWN ORGANIZATION** in ALL writing you do for assignments, tests, and reports.

It is OK (in fact necessary) to copy terms and definitions. It is NOT OK to copy whole phrases and entire paragraphs. If you do copy a phrase or paragraph, you must put quotation marks (" ") around it, and cite the source (give the author and title of the publication, web site, etc.). In general I prefer that you NOT quote entire blocks of text. Rather, process the information and restate it using your own words and own organization. There is nothing like the act of writing things down in your own words to make you really learn concepts. And the act of writing for yourself makes you a better writer! (Whereas copying never made anyone a better writer.)

- **How I catch plagiarism.**

Computer technology has made plagiarism easy to commit, but... computer technology **HAS ALSO MADE PLAGIARISM EASY TO CATCH!** Instructors today have access to a growing toolbox of quick and efficient programs and internet sites designed to detect plagiarism by searching for matches between student work and material available on the internet. **THIS INCLUDES TERM PAPERS AVAILABLE AT CHEATER WEB SITES.**

If I suspect an assignment or student term paper is partially or entirely plagiarized, I routinely submit the assignment to a plagiarism-detection web site. A report comes back showing which internet sites match text in the student's paper or assignment, and how much of the text matches, word-for-word.

- **Consequences of sending me plagiarized work. The CONSEQUENCES will depend on how egregious the plagiarism is.**

If a student submits a 100% copied paper (like one purchased from a cheater web site), this represents the worst form of plagiarism, and may result in EXPULSION FROM THE COURSE WITH A FAILING GRADE.

More common is so-called “soft plagiarism,” where the student copies bits and pieces of material from a bunch of different sources and stitches it all together with perhaps some of their own writing mixed in. This is still plagiarism, but it is somewhat less blatant. For this type of plagiarism, I have the following policy:

First violation – zero credit for the assignment, and an explanation to the student about how and why the work represents plagiarism.

Second violation - zero credit for the assignment, and a group meeting with the dean.

If you have any questions or need further clarification, please contact me.

Thank you for your attention.

**- Ray Rector**

[geoprof@geoscirocks.com](mailto:geoprof@geoscirocks.com)

