




Best Practices: Attendance and Participation Policies


Last updated: July 2007

Each description contains links (rtf and pdf, or internet) to the entire syllabus from which it was drawn.

Every syllabus in the Project Syllabus database as of Spring 2007 was reviewed by at least two reviewers. The reviewers chose portions from the following syllabi because they were both exceptional and represent a variety of ways to present the information. This document is by no means an exhaustive list of good examples of this component of the syllabus.

Clinical Psychology: Ethics & Issues, Mitch Handelsman, Fall 2005, University of Colorado at Denver

 <http://www.apadiv2.org/otrp/syllabi/mh05ethicsf.rtf>

 <http://www.apadiv2.org/otrp/syllabi/mh05ethicsf.pdf>

Class Participation Skills

Thanks to the 1998 Student Management Team for the inspiration for this Reading and listening carefully are useful, but class participation includes other skills. Here is a long (although not exhaustive) list of such participation skills. Feel free to come see me to discuss which skills you have demonstrated well and which you could develop more.

- Respecting others (including not interrupting)
- Encouraging and supporting the contributions of others
- Listening actively
- Clarifying what others have said
- “Punctuating” the discussion by summarizing or pointing out relevant issues
- Asking questions (that clarify or that extend the point made)
- Volunteering personal views or other information
- Applying principles, course material, or others’ contributions to personal examples
- Looking critically (but respectfully) at points made by others
- Approaching with a critical attitude your own previous contributions
- Exploring the implications of other contributions: taking the “next step”
- Furthering the discussion by presenting an alternative view or direction

In his Student Management Team Handbook

(<http://www.isu.edu/ctl/facultydev/webhandbook/smt.htm>), Ed Nuhfer lists these

NONFUNCTIONAL group behaviors:

- **BEING AGGRESSIVE:** working for status by criticizing or blaming others; showing hostility against the group or some individual; deflating the ego or status of others.
- **BLOCKING:** interfering with the progress of the group by going off on a tangent; citing personal experiences unrelated to the problem; arguing too much on a point; rejecting ideas without consideration.
- **SELF-CONFESSING:** using the group as a sounding board; expressing personal, irrelevant feelings or points of view.
- **COMPETING:** vying with others to produce the best idea, talk the most, play the most roles, gain favor with the leader.
- **SEEKING SYMPATHY:** trying to induce other group members to be sympathetic to one's problems or misfortunes; deploring one's own situation; disparaging one's own ideas to gain support.
- **SPECIAL PLEADING:** introducing or supporting suggestions related to one's own pet concerns or philosophies; lobbying.
- **HORSING AROUND:** clowning; joking; mimicking; disrupting the work of the group.
- **SEEKING RECOGNITION:** attempting to call attention to one's self by loud or excessive talking, extreme ideas, unusual behavior.
- **WITHDRAWAL:** acting indifferent or passive; resorting to excessive formality; daydreaming; doodling; whispering to others; wandering from the subject.

Introduction to General Psychology, Margaret H. Launius, Fall 2007, Mansfield University

Internet <http://faculty.mansfield.edu/mlaunius/Psy1101/101Syllabus.html>

Participation/Attendance: Regular and consistent attendance is necessary to do well in this class. Much of what you will learn will come from experiences we have in class and much of the learning will require your participation. Attendance will be taken during each class period and arriving late or leaving prior to the end of the class may result in your having an absence recorded for that class period.

You are allowed 3 absences without penalty after which each absence will result in a **5 point** per absence **deduction** from your final point total at the end of the semester. You will receive **5** bonus points for **perfect attendance**. **Perfect attendance is not missing any class session for any reason.** Student athletes may bring in a copy of their game schedule and identify class periods that will be missed due to travel or games. These absences will not be counted against your point total but will count against perfect attendance. **NOTE:** Much of the learning in this class will come from in-class activities such as quizzes, small group activities, videos, class lecture, etc. A student who misses a significant number of classes can have a negative impact on others' learning experiences, particularly in the small groups, and will not have the same learning experience as students who attend regularly, thus I have the following policy related to

excessive absences: *Any student having 7 or more absences (about 23%+) will receive an "F" grade regardless of their performance on quizzes and exams.*

History of Psychology, Deborah Briihl, Spring 2001, Valdosta State University

Internet <http://teach.valdosta.edu/dbriihl/hists99syl.html>


Class Participation. This class is designed to be a capstone senior level course in which you show your understanding of psychology. Course participation is a requirement. You will be graded on your participation level While I don't require perfect attendance; obviously if you are not here, you are not participating. Part of your grade will be based on class attendance (for those questions everyone shouts out an answer to). However, attendance does not equal participation- that is, for you to earn a good grade in this area means more than showing up and breathing or asking me to explain something over again. When you do make comments, make sure they are relevant to the discussion at hand. You have the questions before class – that will be the discussion we will be having. Go through the two books and make an outline of the response that would answer the question. There will be some answers that will not be found in the book but the majority of the information is there. Make sure to bring your answers and both books to class with you every day.

Attendance: While I do not have a strict attendance policy, it is expected that you will attend class regularly. If for some reason you miss a class, it is your responsibility to find out any information that was discussed in class. When in class, I ask that you be courteous to myself and to others. Refrain from constant chit-chat and note-passing. If you come in late or plan on leaving early, sit near the door so as not to disturb others. Please make sure your cell phones are off and beepers on vibrate. In addition, I can see when you are doing other work besides mine – I don't want to see it. It is especially annoying when people who are doing other things then ask questions that obviously indicate they were not paying attention. My other pet peeve is when people walk into class late and want to turn something in or pick something up after I start class. Again, don't do that, please.

One final note – if you are having difficulty, don not wait until the end of the semester to come talk to be and plead for me to give you a B when your grade is an F or to give you extra credit. Please talk to me as soon as possible if you are having personal difficulties or are having a problem with course material.

Psychology of Women, Kimberly E. Smirles, Spring 2005, Emmanuel College

 <http://www.apadiv2.org/otrp/syllabi/ks05psychwomenf.rtf>

 <http://www.apadiv2.org/otrp/syllabi/ks05psychwomenf.pdf>

ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION:


Attendance. You are required to attend all class periods. The issues covered in class will often go beyond the readings. Also, this is a seminar, designed to facilitate substantial interaction and discussion between class members. Missing one class results in your loss of a substantial amount of information and discussion and our loss of your own contributions to the discussions. Unexcused absences will affect your final grade.


Participation. We are a learning community, which means that everyone's perspective is respected and valued...whether or not we agree with one another on certain issues. Meaningful knowledge comes from exposure to different perspectives and taking ownership of the ideas and information that are most valid and contribute to your understanding of the world. Therefore, your **active contribution to class discussions is necessary and required.** Your participation in the class meetings will count for **20% of your final grade.**

Note that participation is **not solely about personal opinion.** Certainly, people will periodically share personal experiences and insights. However, our main goal should be to move beyond individual opinions to include the readings and research we will cover in class. Ultimately, we want to critically evaluate the issues using personal experiences AND existing research and/or theories concerning them. **A single perspective is necessary, but not sufficient, for an informed analysis of any social or psychological issue.**

We all benefit when people share their experiences, ideas, and insights with one another. I will not police your presence. It is your responsibility to be an active participant in your own education. However, if you are having difficulties with participating in class, please see me. I cannot be of assistance if I am not aware that there is a problem.

Careers in Psychology, Cynthia Prehar, Spring 2006, Framingham State College

 <http://www.apadiv2.org/otrp/syllabi/cp06careersf.rtf>


 <http://www.apadiv2.org/otrp/syllabi/cp06careersf.pdf>


- **Attendance & Late Arrivals.** Learning is an active process; therefore it is imperative that students participate in and attend class on a regular basis. In addition, since we only meet once a week, it is crucial that students attend class to learn the new material and prepare for the following week. Attendance will be taken at the start of each class period (i.e., at 6:30).
 - ✓ At the end of the semester, students with perfect attendance (i.e., missing no classes) will be rewarded with **10 extra credit points.**

- ✓ Student who miss only one class will earn 0 extra credit points but will also have no deductions for the lost class (**i.e., there are no penalties for missing one class**).
- ✓ Students who miss **more than 1 class period** and/or **habitually come late/leave early** will incur the following penalties:
 - Every missed class period after the “free” miss will result in a -10 point deduction from the student’s overall course points for **any reason**. For example, a student who misses 3 classes will have 20 points deducted from their overall points (2 excessive absences at -10 pts each equals a -20 point deduction).
 - Students who miss more than three classes will automatically earn an “E” in the course.
 - Coming late to class/leaving early is very disruptive and results in the student missing valuable information. Coming late is defined as coming to class after attendance has been taken and leaving early is defined as leaving before the class is let out. **Any combination of 3 late arrivals/departures will be the equivalent of missing an entire class period**; points will be deducted as stated above. If you cannot be here by 6:30pm, please consider whether you are able to commit to this course this term.

Attendance log. You and I will both be monitoring your attendance in this course. I will monitor attendance every class period and you will keep an attendance log that you will turn in with your portfolio. Failing to turn in an updated attendance log with your portfolio will result in a -5 point deduction from your portfolio grade. I will compare your log and my records so that we can reconcile any discrepancies before the end of the term.

**Psychology as a Social Science, Drew Appleby, Spring 2005, Indiana University—
Purdue University Indianapolis**

 <http://www.apadiv2.org/otrp/syllabi/da05introf.rtf>

 <http://www.apadiv2.org/otrp/syllabi/da05introf.pdf>

Attendance Policy

You are expected to attend all scheduled class meetings because absence results in the loss of classroom interaction for you, your instructor, and your peers. You should enroll in this course only if you are both willing and able to attend its scheduled class meetings. If you are absent when participation points can be earned (e.g., taking the Practice Test, grading another student’s Study Guide, playing the Millionaire Game, or solving the Crossword Puzzle), you will not be penalized for missing the class, but the instructor will not award you credit for

participation that did not take place. Please refer to the Final Grade Criteria section of this syllabus to determine the impact of class absence on your grade. It is important to remember that you are responsible for all information presented in class, regardless of your attendance. University regulations require instructors to report the dates of last class attendance of students who receive financial aid and who discontinue class attendance without officially withdrawing.