



## **Best Practices: Expectations of Classroom Behaviors**

Last updated: June 2010

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.

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### **Learning and Memory, Larry Sensenig, Fall 2005, Morningside College**

 <http://www.teachpsych.org/otrp/syllabi/l05learningf.rtf>

 <http://www.teachpsych.org/otrp/syllabi/l05learningf.pdf>

#### **EXPECTATIONS:**

The instructor has the following expectations of his students:

- a. To be present, punctual, prepared, and attentive during each class.
- b. To be willing to participate positively and constructively in class.
- c. To understand and abide by the procedures, regulations, and schedules described in this syllabus.
- d. To assume ownership of one's ideas, opinions, values, etc.

The students can have the following expectations of their instructor:

- a. To be present, punctual, prepared, and enthusiastic during each class.
  - b. To be genuinely concerned about his students' ability to perform well.
  - c. To remain faithful to the procedures, regulations, and schedules described in this syllabus.
  - d. To provide a class structure to encourage student learning.
  - e. Be a co-learner in the education process.
  - f. To be sensitive to student and group needs.
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## Careers in Psychology, Cynthia Prehar, Spring 2006, Framingham State College

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

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

**Respectful Classroom Behaviors.** Class will almost always run the full time period so plan to be here on time and stay throughout the entire scheduled class period. If this is going to be a problem for you, I strongly urge you to find a class that better suits your schedule. I also expect everyone to behave in a courteous manner in the classroom (e.g., not talking while others are talking, turning off cell phones, using laptops ONLY for note-taking). These are basic courtesies that contribute to an effective learning environment. If you are unable to follow these rules, I may ask you to leave the class, turn off your laptop, etc. In addition, if the behavior of a fellow student or my behavior is inhibiting your learning, please let me know immediately.

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

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

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

### **Creating and Maintaining a Civil Classroom Atmosphere**

It is the responsibility of college faculty to create and maintain a civil classroom atmosphere in which members of their classes treat each other with mutual respect. One crucial outcome of this type of atmosphere is the establishment of a classroom in which attention and energy is focused on teaching and learning, rather than on frustration, conflict, and distrust. Students do not like to be taught by teachers who disrespect them, and teachers do not enjoy teaching students whose behavior is disrespectful to them or to their fellow students. I have always treated my students with dignity, respect, and fairness. I do not play favorites, I do not belittle my students, I show up for my classes on time, and I am always prepared when I arrive for class. I hold all my students in high esteem, regardless of how well they perform in my classes, and I try my best to communicate this to them through both my words and my actions. I do everything in my power to conduct myself in the manner of a professional educator because I realize that I serve as a role model for many of my students who seek education or psychology as their profession. Two of my most important duties as a college professor are (1) to give my students a clear idea of the types of behaviors that can interfere with the teaching and learning process in my classroom and (2) to make a sincere effort to decrease or eliminate these behaviors whenever possible. Research that my colleagues, my students, and I have conducted over the past 15 years has identified the following set of student behaviors that can have a detrimental effect upon my ability to teach and your ability to learn. I want you to know what these behaviors are so you will avoid engaging in them. I also want you to know that if you decide to engage in these behaviors, it will be my responsibility to ask you to stop doing them.

- Allowing your cell phone to ring in class or, worse yet, answering it and engaging in a telephone conversation during class.
- Talking to your fellow students during class about things that are not related to the official topic of discussion.
- Arriving at class late or leaving class early.
- Packing up your books before the class is over.
- Failing to comprehend and/or follow instructions due to a lack of attention.
- Making distracting noises or movements.
- Sitting in the back of the classroom when there are seats available in the front.
- Behaving as if you are bored by or uninterested in the class material (e.g., slouching in your seat or falling asleep).
- Coming to class unprepared (i.e., without completing the assignment that is due).
- Exhibiting academically dishonest behaviors (e.g., cheating or plagiarizing).
- Intentionally refusing to participate in classroom activities.
- Doing things in class other than what is expected (e.g., reading the newspaper or doing homework for another class).
- Asking questions that are off the topic or that have already been answered.
- Treating your fellow students or instructor with disrespect (e.g., with insults, sarcastic remarks, or disrespectful facial expressions).

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



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



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

### CLASS POLICIES

#### CLASS ENVIRONMENT:

The classroom is meant to be a learning environment, both from the instructor and from one another. However, learning is inhibited when there is a lack of respect for one another's individuality as well as for the class as a whole. Therefore, I have decided to set a few ground rules for the classroom environment.

- **Privacy and confidentiality.** Most likely there will be times when class members share very personal experiences and beliefs. Since we all benefit from hearing each other's perspectives, we must be respectful of those who feel comfortable in sharing this personal information. Therefore, we will have an understood policy that nothing shared in class can be divulged outside of the class. While you may discuss general issues with others, you cannot share any information that may identify another member of the class.
- **Risk taking.** To learn from each other we are going to ask each other to "step out of their comfort zones." We may be expressing ideas that others do not agree with, or listening to ideas that challenge our own beliefs or preconceptions.

Be willing to listen to one another and be prepared to be respectfully challenged when controversial issues arise.

- **Support.** If we are asking each other to step out of their comfort zones, we need to be there to support one another. This does not mean you have to agree with someone. It means that you have to allow her/him the space and freedom to express her/himself. It is difficult to take risks if you are concerned that people will attack your ideas.

- **Respect.** Every individual's perspective is valued and considered legitimate for that person. Respect that someone's ideas may be different from your own and try to understand where that person is coming from. Being open to other perspectives is important to academic and personal growth.

- **No "put downs."** All comments should be made with the desire to educate, not hurt. You can express disagreement with an issue or idea, but be aware of HOW you express yourself. Also, express WHY you disagree...this continues the learning process for all of us.

### **CLASS ETIQUETTE:**

- **Be on time.** People coming in late disrupts the flow of the class and places them behind in the material covered in class. Our class time is precious and limited, and no one would like to spend that time repeating material for late-comers. Occasionally, being late cannot be helped, and that is fine. But routine tardiness shows a lack of respect for the entire class, and it will not be tolerated.

- **Raise your hand when you wish to speak.** There are times when several people want to speak, so some just blurt out their responses. This behavior, especially when repeatedly perpetrated, takes away people's equal access to the classroom forum. If you speak out of turn, you will be ignored.

- **No talking.** Making comments to your neighbor while someone is speaking is disrespectful. If you missed something that was said, let us know and the speaker will repeat it.

- Any beepers or phones will be turned off or otherwise silenced during class time.

- Food is not allowed in the multi-media rooms. You can bring clear liquids.

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

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

**Course etiquette**

Adult education is a privilege and one that is costing you or someone else and the state's taxpayers thousands of dollars. As course professor, it is my responsibility to create and ensure a classroom environment that is conducive to student learning. The following general rules of conduct will help guide our behavior in class.

**Coming and Going:** We all should arrive to class on time. Coming in after class has started interrupts me and the lecture or activity that is going on and disturbs the attention of other students. If you arrive after roll has been taken, check with me after class to be sure you get marked present. If you must leave class early, please let me know before class starts. If you leave more than 10 minutes before the end of class, I will typically count this as an absence. Please take care of personal needs prior to entering the classroom – leaving and re-entering the classroom during class will not be allowed unless you have a special health need that you have previously explained to me.

**Cell phone and lap top use:** Please remember to turn your **cell phone off** upon entering the classroom and put it away. Students who are observed text messaging during class will be asked to leave and counted absented. Unless you have a special need, lap top computers will not be used in the classroom due to the variety of activities typically engaged in and the amount of movement around the class. Lecture notes for each chapter are available in your course binder so you will not need to take extensive notes during class.

**Talking in class:** Please refrain from talking when another student is asking or answering a question or has the floor in a class discussion. Do not talk with other students during a film or activity unless directed to do so as part of the activity. This is the #1 complaint of students – other students talking while they are trying to listen to the professor, film, etc. If you continue to disrupt the class with talking, I will ask you to leave and you will be given an absence.

**Attention and Participation:** Please come to class prepared to be awake, alert, and attentive. You will need to develop a *good attitude towards learning* so that you are willing to participate actively in class activities, group projects, question and answer periods, etc. **Napping in class is not tolerated.** If you lay your head down on your desktop or fall asleep sitting in class, I will ask you to leave. If you do not pay attention and participate in group activities, I will ask you to leave. In both cases, you will be counted as absent. If you are too tired or ill to be able to participate adequately in class, please do not come – take care of yourself!

**Manners:** Please be respectful of others in the classroom when they are expressing their thoughts or asking questions. Laughing at others, rolling of eyes, frequent swearing, snide comments about the class or activity, etc. are immature displays not appropriate for adult learners. Treat other students and me as you would like to be treated. I will make every attempt to treat students with respect and consideration but I am not perfect! If I inadvertently offend you, please come see me – I want to learn from my behavior just as I expect you to learn from yours!

### Summary

Together, we can create a classroom where teaching and learning are both effective and fun. I look forward to being a part of your continuing educational journey!

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***Cognitive Development and Learning, Aaron S. Richmond, Spring 2010, Metropolitan State College of Denver***

 <http://teachpsych.org/otrp/syllabi/ar10cognitive.rtf>

 <http://teachpsych.org/otrp/syllabi/ar10cognitive.pdf>

#### ***I. CLASS EXPECTATIONS:***

##### ***Student Expectations***

- a.*** PLEASE BE ACTIVE AND PARTICIPATE IN CLASS
- b.*** Listen and respect others
- c.*** Be comfortable in taking risks
- d.*** Complete all assignments
- e.*** Turn off your cell phones and/or pagers
- f.*** Be punctual for all classes
- g.*** Discuss class concerns either after class or during designated office hours
- h.*** Be prepared for class by reading chapter prior to lesson

##### ***Instructor Expectations***

- a.*** BE ACTIVE AND ENTHUSIASTIC TO FACILITATE STUDENT LEARNING
- b.*** Listen and respect students' views
- c.*** Be in class at least 5 minutes before and after class
- d.*** Respond swiftly and effectively to student concerns
- e.*** Turn off cell phone
- f.*** Grade objectively, consistently, and timely
- g.*** Be prepared for class
- h.*** Accommodate differences in students' learning

Please remember if you have any questions, concerns, or comments to let me know right away. I welcome any feedback you're willing to offer.