

Policy for Appropriate Use of Digital Technology in the College of Arts and Sciences

(Adopted April 2014; rev. April 2016; rev. Oct. 2020)

The College of Arts and Sciences at Winthrop University (hereafter “the College”) is committed to educationally sound uses of digital technology in the classroom, to providing a secure and responsible learning environment. The College is also committed to balancing the need for concentration in the course environment with concerns about safety, privacy, intellectual property, and with students’ outside responsibilities. We recognize that, when used properly, digital technologies can enhance the classroom environment and student learning; used improperly, these same technologies can significantly degrade the quality of learning in the course setting and can threaten the rights and welfare of students and faculty. Each student enrolled in courses in the College has a responsibility to other students and to the instructor to employ digital technologies in a courteous and respectful manner consistent with the Winthrop educational mission. This responsibility includes not disrupting instruction or distracting fellow students, maintaining an atmosphere that supports both personal and academic integrity, and being committed to learning as required by the Winthrop Dedication for Excellence and the Winthrop Code of Student Conduct.

For the purposes of this document, the term “electronic device” refers to any computer or hand-held or wireless device that can be used to access, record, communicate, or publish electronic information. Such devices include but are not limited to desktops, laptops, tablets, cell phones, electronic readers, PDAs, and electronic dictionaries. The instructor may prohibit any use of electronic devices that substantially disrupts learning opportunities, degrades the learning environment, or promotes academic dishonesty or illegal activities. Students are prohibited from publishing course information, proceedings, video-streams, discussion, chats, etc. without the express written consent of the instructor. Students unsure of whether an activity is appropriate should consult with their instructors.

Policy

Unless otherwise specified by the instructor on the syllabus, the following statements govern the appropriate use of digital technologies in courses in the College of Arts and Sciences. (No policy here stated or implicit is intended to supersede any applicable university policy or state or federal statute.)

1. Communication by electronic devices, including but not limited to instant messaging, text messaging, emailing, web surfing, and telephoning during class, is strictly prohibited unless expressly designated as part of the learning activities. Students may not use portable mobile devices during scheduled course meetings (including class time, laboratories, review sessions, individual instruction, or similar activities) in the College. Such devices must be silenced or turned off and should not be taken out during course meetings. Electronic audio or video recording of the classroom environment, including any and all online content, is prohibited unless (i) permission is given by the instructor prior to recording or (ii) as per (6) below.
2. Desktops, laptops, tablets, wireless computers, or similar electronic devices may be used for note-taking or specified course activities (e.g., electronic surveys, electronic course evaluations) with the instructor’s permission. Students using these devices for note-taking must turn off the wireless function and close all applications/windows other than the appropriate document or application

unless the instructor specifically permits otherwise. Students must avoid non-course-related activities such as checking email or social networking sites, web surfing, or playing games because these diminish their—and their classmates'—engagement with instructional activities.

3. Because of the increasing prevalence of electronic textbooks, students may, with the instructor's permission, use electronic readers or other electronic devices in place of standard (print) textbooks. These and similar electronic devices should not be used during instructional time for activities not directly related to the course.
4. Unauthorized use of electronic devices during quizzes, examinations, or other graded activities may warrant disciplinary action under the terms of the Code of Student Conduct. In certain circumstances (exams, laboratories, presentations, etc.), students may be temporarily required to deposit cell phones, laptops, or other electronic devices with the instructor or lab supervisor for the duration of the specific class or activity.
5. A course instructor, administrator, or facility manager may prohibit activities that violate laws and/or University policies, such as those related to intellectual property rights or copyright, eavesdropping, or sexual harassment. (Examples of such activities might include using a camera phone to videotape performances or taking inappropriate photos without the subject's knowledge and permission.)
6. Students who require access to electronic technology as assistive measures for documented disabilities may use them only as authorized by the Office of Accessibility or according to stipulations in the student's Accommodation Letter.
7. Where personal emergency, family care responsibilities or employment situations *require* access to electronic communication devices, arrangements must be made *in advance* with the instructor. The instructor will decide if such access is appropriate; students may appeal these decisions to the Dean or the Dean's designated representative.
8. Because hand-held communication devices are an integral part of the University's emergency notification system, the instructor's or a designated student's hand-held device may be activated during scheduled course times. In an emergency situation or if a security alert sounds or is sent by the Alertus system, the instructor or his/her designee will consult their devices to determine if an emergency exists and may then give students permission to consult their own devices. Once the alert is over, students' devices should be immediately silenced and put away.
9. Recordings or copies of classroom proceedings (lectures, discussions, chats, etc.) or materials (syllabus, handouts, lecture notes, slides, readings, etc.) may not be published or used in any way that denigrates and/or decontextualizes the instructor or any student whose class remarks are recorded. No information contained in the recorded class may be posted, published or quoted without the express consent of the instructor and speaker, and if permission is granted, must be properly cited. All recordings made by students of class lectures or discussions are to be erased at the end of the semester.
10. Other exceptions to this policy may be granted at the discretion of the instructor.

Sanctions

Sanctions for violation of this policy will be determined by the instructor and may include dismissal from the class, attendance penalties or loss of class participation points, zero grades on quizzes or examinations, failure in the class, or other penalties that the instructor determines to be appropriate. These sanctions should be explicitly stated on the instructor's syllabus.

Providing Notice to Students

Instructors should anticipate that issues with electronic devices may arise and publish any policies and restrictions in their course syllabi. Otherwise, a statement such as "The College of Arts and Sciences' Policy for the Appropriate Use of Digital Technologies is in effect for this class" with a link to the text of the policy should appear on syllabi for all courses in the College. If the instructor plans to sanction disruptions, they should publish details about the sanctions in the course syllabus.

Changes

Due to the dynamic nature of technology, any changes or additions to this policy will be published on the College of Arts & Sciences' web site.