Who Cares About Academic Honesty?

We do! The English Department at UMass Lowell takes you and your work seriously. By enrolling in a class in our department, you are entering a community of scholars and critics—both within the English department itself, and within the larger community of other students, professors, and readers upon whose ideas we often build. A fundamental precept of any academic community is trust. Plagiarism and cheating (defined below) are serious violations of that trust. When you choose to plagiarize on a paper, you are stealing the intellectual property of someone else. You are also robbing yourself of the opportunity to improve your writing, to think critically, and to earn your degree honestly.

How does the University define plagiarism and cheating?

According to the University catalog, academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to:

*Cheating* - use, or attempted use, of trickery, artifice, deception, breach of confidence, fraud, or misrepresentation of one's academic work.

*Fabrication* - falsification or invention of any information or citation in any academic exercise.

*Plagiarism* - representing the words or ideas of another as one's own work in any academic exercise.

*Facilitating dishonesty* - helping or attempting to help another commit an act of academic dishonesty, including substituting for another in an examination, misrepresenting oneself, or allowing others to represent as their own one's papers, reports, or academic works.

Can people plagiarize without realizing it?

Sometimes students plagiarize unintentionally. In some cultures, borrowing the ideas of others without citing them is expected and even rewarded. Even in many US high schools, teachers sometimes turn a blind eye when students copy work from an encyclopedia, sending a mixed message about expectations. In addition, many writers (even professional writers) have been known to inadvertently lift a line or two from another source and forget to cite it. They might also accidentally paraphrase someone’s work without mentioning that the ideas in the paraphrase were originally written by someone else. However understandable, these errors are still violations of the University’s rules against cheating and plagiarism. **Credit for ideas and language must always be attributed to their source. When in doubt, ask for help! You are responsible for making sure your work follows the rules and will be held accountable.**

What happens when people plagiarize?
Not all instances of plagiarism are so innocent. It is common to feel overwhelmed by an assignment, especially when you have many responsibilities vying for your attention. Sometimes it seems like it would be easier to go on the internet and copy someone else’s ideas (or buy a paper). When students do this, they know very well that they are plagiarizing. They are blatantly pretending that they did work that they did not do.

Do not plagiarize! Trust us: you will probably be caught. Your teachers are experienced, and they know your work. They do research for a living, and can easily find any sources that you can find. The entire campus also now has anti-plagiarism software at our disposal (turnitin.com) that will help us match plagiarized papers to millions of sources. Anyone who plagiarizes a paper is taking a huge gamble. The penalties for plagiarism are severe, and faculty in the English department will not hesitate to fail students for the paper or for the semester depending upon the circumstances. Some students may also face University disciplinary action. It isn’t worth the risk. If you are worried about being able to complete your work satisfactorily, get help from your professor or the “Write Place” tutoring at the Centers for Learning.

Five Tips to Avoid Plagiarizing:

1. Leave yourself enough time to complete assignments without resorting to cheating.

2. Whenever you do research for a paper, take careful notes on where you got all information, including websites.

3. Remember that paraphrases as well as quotations all need to be cited.

4. Consult a good English handbook on the rules for citing sources; these books will clarify how to give credit where credit is due.

5. When in doubt, ask for help from your teacher to make sure you are not plagiarizing.
Academic Honesty Contract

Definitions:

**Cheating** – the use or attempted use, of trickery, artifice, deception, breach of confidence, fraud, or misrepresentation of one's academic work – may further be defined as 1) misrepresenting academic work done by another as one's own efforts, whether such misrepresentation has been accomplished with or without the permission of the other individual, 2) providing or utilizing prohibited assistance (whether in the nature of a person or a resource) in the performance of assignments and examinations, 3) copying another person’s work or giving or receiving information or answers by any means of communication during an examination, 4) utilization of the services of a commercial term paper company, and 5) the unauthorized or fraudulent acquisition and/or use of another’s academic property.

**Plagiarism** – representing the words or ideas of another as one's own work in any academic exercise – may further be defined as 1) direct quotation or word-for-word copying of all or part of the work of another without identification or acknowledgment of the quoted work, 2) extensive use of acknowledged quotation from the work of others which is joined together by a few words or lines of one's own text, and 3) an abbreviated restatement of someone else's analysis or conclusion, however skillfully paraphrased, without acknowledgment that another person's text has been the basis for the recapitulation.

Honor Pledge:

(Please initial each statement and sign/date below.)

_____ I have read and understand the definitions of “cheating” and “plagiarism” above.

_____ I agree never to cheat or plagiarize.

_____ I agree to ask for help if I need it and I realize that it is my responsibility to make sure that I am not cheating or plagiarizing.

________________________________________________________________________

(signature)       (date)
(printed name)