

# College of Liberal Arts Instructor Policies and Procedures

## Fall 2017

This instructor handbook will assist you in becoming familiar with a variety of policies and procedures at the university, especially those of most immediate concern to new instructors. Whether you are relatively new to the teaching profession or have extensive experience at other institutions, some practices at UM will be new to you. Become familiar with the Academic Regulations section of the online catalog. Your department chair and the Office of the Dean in the College of Liberal Arts are always available to assist you with questions or problems so that you can concentrate on the critical task of effective teaching.

### Class Rolls

Instructors can download class rolls from his or her MyOleMiss page. The class rolls are automatically revised as registration changes occur and remain accurate throughout the semester. If you have any questions about how to download class rolls from the university web site, please consult with your department staff.

### Drop/Add Policy

During the first five class days, students may add classes on a space available basis. During the sixth through tenth class days, students may add classes only with permission of the instructor. Be sure to confirm your department's practice. After the tenth class day, no student will be permitted to register for classes without a serious and compelling reason approved by the instructor, department chair, and dean of the student's school or College. In no case may a student register after the last regular class day in any semester.

Students may withdraw from a course through the 30th class day of each semester, and the course will not appear on their transcript. After the 30<sup>th</sup> class day, students may withdraw from a course only in the case of extreme and unavoidable emergency as determined by the student's academic dean. For example, if an accountancy student is in a history class, then the Accountancy dean's office will make this decision. If a student expresses a desire for a late withdrawal, please refer the student to his or her academic dean. If a student in your class is given permission for a late withdrawal, or withdraws from all classes, you must still determine the proper grade assignment. The university policy is as follows:

“Unacceptable reasons for late withdrawal include dissatisfaction over an expected grade or a change in the student's degree program or major . . . Courses dropped after the course withdrawal deadline will still appear on the student's official transcript. The W mark will be recorded if the student is passing the course at the time of withdrawal; the F grade will be recorded if the student is failing.” [UM catalog]

Whenever the CLA Office of the Dean approves a withdrawal request, we send a communication to the instructor. We also instruct the student to confer with you about the reason for the withdrawal. The instructor must then make a professional judgment about whether to assign a grade of W or F. The University of Mississippi does not use the WP or WF grading system.

### Class Attendance

Classes are to meet on every regularly listed class day in the schedule. The university attendance policy is.....that instructors have an attendance policy and notify the students on the syllabus.

Students must attend the first meeting of every course for which they are registered, unless they obtain prior departmental approval. Without such approval, a student who is absent from the first class meeting may be dropped from that class by the department office.

UM has a mandatory class attendance verification process. Faculty must verify the attendance of all students in their courses within the first two weeks of the regular semester. This can be done through the classroom scanners or through inputting absence information in MyOleMiss. For more information:

<https://common.olemiss.edu/docs/attendance>.

A student who incurs excessive absences in a given course may receive a grade of F for the course, and, in addition, may be dismissed from the class upon recommendation of the instructor and approval by the student's academic dean. The university reserves the right to dismiss from the university any student who has been excessively absent from multiple courses.

There are some functions important to the university that will require students to be away from scheduled classes. "Class absences may occur when a student represents the university in official competitions or performances (athletic teams, cheerleading, band, chorus, orchestra, debate, theatre, ROTC, etc.). In these cases, academic departments and faculty should exercise fair and consistent standards for resolving questions of missed assignments and tests. Faculty and staff who supervise student teams and organizations are expected to schedule competitions and performances to minimize the number of classes that students will be forced to miss. Names of participating students and the dates of class conflicts should be provided to the students' instructors prior to participation. Students and instructors should resolve potential conflicts regarding class attendance before the semester course withdrawal deadline." [UM catalog]

### **Course Syllabus**

All instructors must include essential information on course syllabi. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS), the regional accreditation agency for UM, has the following standard concerning a course syllabus: "Students must be provided written information about the goals and requirements of each course, the nature of the course content, and the methods of evaluation to be employed. Methods of instruction must be appropriate to the goals of each course and the capabilities of the students. . . . An institution must publish its grading policies and its grading practices must be consistent with policy." The Provost's office provides a memo each fall about the UM expectations for syllabus content. The College of Liberal Arts requests that instructors also state on the syllabus if a department requires a minimum grade of C in the course for it to count toward the major or minor.

### **Course Materials Assignment Deadline and Procedure**

The Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) governing board and the federal Higher Education Opportunity Act require that UM instructors electronically post textbook assignments for student viewing at the time of registration. Consequently, you will be asked to post assignments for the spring semester in October and for the summer/fall semesters in March. You can post these assignments by navigating the myOleMiss interface in either of two routes:

Route #1 - the Course Materials Management interface (within myOleMiss, under Faculty and Course Info tabs). You can find a PDF containing detailed instructions within this interface.

Route #2 - via Class Rolls and Grades (also under Faculty and Course Info tabs). Using this route, an instructor first selects a course and then uses the "Manage Course Materials" function in the drop-down. This is the simpler entry process, for most cases.

After you have posted your assignments in this system, they are made available electronically to the UM bookstore. Thus, you need not contact the bookstore directly. However, after posting an assignment, the bookstore may contact you regarding a modification of the order (e.g., if a volume is out of print). Certain course types may not require textbooks or other course materials. For such courses, please enter "None" as the assignment. (Via route #2 above, there is a button for assigning "None.")

### **Last Week of Class, and Final Examinations Policies**

UM policies regulating student absence or tardiness during examinations, final examinations, and last week of class may be found in the online catalog as "Examinations." Instructors are not to assign exams, tests, or quizzes counting more than 10% of the final class grade during the period of Wednesday through Friday of the last week of the semester. Please read the policy for exceptions.

It is the university and College of Liberal Arts policy that instructors must give a final examination to the class unless an exception has been approved by the department chair and dean. In addition, instructors must receive prior approval from the department chair and the dean in order to give a final examination for the whole class at a time other than the time scheduled by the University.

If an individual student has a reason of such importance as to justify taking the examination at another time, the instructor, at his or her discretion, and with the permission of the department chair, may administer the final examination for that individual student at some other time within the examination period. Please be aware that

instructors are not required to arrange alternative examination times. The one exception is when a student has three examinations in one day. In these cases, the noon or the 7:30pm examination will be moved to a mutually satisfactory date/time. In these individual student situations, the permission of the Dean's office is not required.

### **Academic Honesty**

We recommend that you become familiar with the university policy regarding academic honesty. University policies regarding academic misconduct may be found in the online policy directory as "Student Academic Conduct and Discipline." There is an online form to complete in order to report a sanction for academic discipline that is found in MyOleMiss under your tab for class info. Discuss issues of academic misconduct with your department chair to learn if there are any department recommendations regarding sanctions. In a recent policy change, if a faculty member recommends that a student receive a grade of F or reduces the course grade due to a violation of academic honesty, the student may not retake the course and use it for a forgiveness grade.

### **Disorderly Conduct**

UM policy concerning disruptive behavior may be found in the online policy directory as "Disorderly Conduct." Please note that this behavior is defined as that which "violates the standard of fair access to the academic experience. Examples include harassing an instructor or fellow student (and) causing a disruption within the classroom environment." Although this kind of behavior is infrequent, we recommend that you become familiar with the policies so that you will be prepared to handle any such occurrence in a way that meets the best interest of all your students. Instructors should inform their chair when there is any significant incident in the classroom, and complete the online "Student of Concern" form on the Dean of Students' website.

### **Grades**

A final grade is the instructor's evaluation of a student's achievement in a course. The university allows pluses and minuses for use with the letter grades, but it is the individual decision of the instructor. We ask that the grade scale used for each class be very clear in the syllabus, especially about whether pluses and minuses will be used. The following chart shows the letter grades available and the associated grade points.

A	4.0 grade points	Excellent
A-	3.7 grade points	Excellent
B+	3.3 grade points	Good
B	3.0 grade points	Good
B-	2.7 grade points	Good
C+	2.3 grade points	Satisfactory
C	2.0 grade points	Satisfactory
C-	1.7 grade points	Satisfactory
D	1.0 grade points	Lowest Passing Grade
F	0 grade points	Failure

### **Other Marks**

V	Incomplete
IP	In Progress (a place holder until second course in the sequence is completed)
W	Withdrawal (UM does not have a WP or WF – withdrawal passing or withdrawal failing)
X	Audit
Z	Credit granted

A student who wishes to audit a course should consult with the instructor. The Z, P, and IP grades can be used only in the courses for which those grade options are attached to the course. They are not a case-by-case option for individual students. The matter of the I (incomplete) mark deserves special attention. The university policy concerning its use is in the catalog as follows:

"The temporary mark of I (incomplete) is given to a student when, for unusual reasons acceptable to the instructor, course requirements cannot be completed before the end of the semester. The instructor will submit an I Mark Assignment Form online during final grade submission, which will detail the work to be completed and the deadline for completion. This information will be conveyed to the student via email. COURSE FAILURE OR UNEXPLAINED CLASS ABSENCES MAY NOT BE USED AS REASONS TO ASSIGN AN I MARK. I marks are not computed in determining a student's GPA. If an I mark for an undergraduate student has not been changed

to a regular grade before the course withdrawal deadline (the 30th day of classes) of the next regular semester (excluding summer terms), the I automatically changes to an F and is computed in the GPA. AN I MARK MAY NOT BE REMOVED BY FORMALLY ENROLLING IN THE SAME COURSE IN A SUBSEQUENT SEMESTER AT THIS UNIVERSITY OR ANY OTHER INSTITUTION. Although this regulation is stated in the catalog, it is not familiar to many of our students, and needs to be brought to their attention."

### **Reporting Grades**

Final grades are reported to the Office of the Registrar through the myOleMiss online system. Change-of-grade forms are available to report the change of an "I" grade to the final grade, and to correct any grade given in error. Grades may not be changed for any other reason.

### **Grade Appeals**

While grade appeals are relatively uncommon, you may wish to review the policies and procedures concerning grade appeals found in the online policy directory and catalog as "Grade Appeal." Any grade appeal must be initiated within 30 calendar days of the posting of the course grade for viewing by the students. The first step is an informal consultation between student and instructor. We ask that you are available in person or through email or phone during that 30 day period if possible

### **Retaining Course Materials**

All graded course materials in your possession should be retained for one full semester, preferably a year if you have room. We want the evidence retained in case of a grade appeal or questions for a retroactive withdrawal. After this period of time, the materials should be shredded. If you leave the university, we request that you leave course materials with the departmental office in case a student makes an inquiry about the course.

### **FERPA and Privacy**

Academic information cannot be disclosed to anyone outside of the university without the student's written consent. There is a "need to know" rule between faculty and staff at UM....but there really must be a reason to share the information. During course registration, students complete an online form where they either waive for certain individuals or do not waive their privacy. Faculty must contact the dean's office (CLA is x7177) to find out the student's FERPA status. Take care, because it is difficult to determine someone's identity over the phone or email. And, even if a student has waived his/her privacy for an individual, the FERPA statement says that the faculty member "MAY" disclose academic information, not must.