

For Discussion in Your Classroom: Case Studies in Academic Integrity

Instructions for students: Break up into small groups of 3-5 students, depending on the size of the class or based on your professor's instructions. Each group will receive one case study to review together. Read the case study, discuss what occurred, and answer the questions associated with the situation. Be prepared to share out at the end of your discussion.

Helpful information regarding this case may be available here: <https://teachingexcellence.syr.edu/academic-integrity/>

Case 1: Jimmy is taking a course in 20th century Latin American history. The class is conducted fully in Spanish and Jimmy has fallen behind. Jimmy waits until the last minute to start a 10-page essay due the next day because of how nervous he is. Stressed about the essay, Jimmy stays up until 3 a.m. to finish his draft. He then takes the draft, which he wrote completely on his own, and put it into Claude, asking it to point out any grammatical errors and suggest revisions to strengthen his arguments. Jimmy chose Claude because Syracuse University provides licenses to all students, so he feels like it is more acceptable than ChatGPT or other LLMs. Jimmy takes the suggestions made by Claude and incorporates them into his paper without much review. He then waits until 9:00 AM to submit the paper because he feels like submitting it at 3:00 AM is suspicious and doesn't want to draw any extra attention to himself.

Is Jimmy's behavior academically dishonest? Does it violate SU's AI policy?

Would similar behavior be permissible in your course? Why or why not? Where would you go to find out what was and was not permitted?

What if Jimmy spent more time reviewing Claude's suggestions and only incorporating those that made sense for him and his paper? How would Jimmy appropriately attribute Claude if he were in your class?

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Case 2: Emily is taking an upper-level political science class. Her professor asks students in the class to write a critique summarizing their own views on the strengths and weaknesses of arguments made by the author of a controversial new book on mass incarceration. Not knowing much about the subject, Emily decides to gather ideas for her critique by going online. She finds and reads three reviews of the book. Emily agrees with the views expressed by two of the reviewers and incorporates their opinions into her critique. Because she is drawing on the reviewers' opinions, not facts, and because she agrees with those opinions, Emily does not cite the two reviews.

Is Emily's behavior academically dishonest? Does it violate SU's AI policy? Would similar behavior be permissible in your course? Why or why not?

What if Emily disagrees strongly with one critique she reads and makes the opposite argument in her own critique? Does anything change? Should Emily cite the critique she disagreed with?

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Case 3: Victoria and her friend Sam live in the same Living Learning Community and take the same Chemistry class. While Sam and Victoria are in the same Chemistry class, they are not in the same lab; Victoria has lab on Mondays while Sam has lab on Wednesdays. During one particularly difficult week of content, Victoria lent Sam a copy of her lab report so that he would be prepared for his lab on Wednesday; Victoria knew Sam had been falling behind recently, and Victoria really liked Chemistry. Not all labs are collected for grading, but the professor decided to collect this one to spot-check and grade. It is written in the syllabus that at least four lab reports will be spot-checked and graded. The syllabus language states, "You may work with others on your take home lab, but the work you submit is expected to be solely your own." Sam and Victoria's lab answers are the same, including mistakes, even though the professor changes unit measures depending on the day of the week, indicating Sam directly copied Victoria's lab answers.

Is Sam's behavior academically dishonest? Does it violate SU's AI policy? What about Victoria's behavior? Why or why not?

Is sharing of homework/lab/assignment answers permitted in your course? If so, to what extent? Where would you go to find the answer?

How could Victoria help Sam in a way that wouldn't be considered academically dishonest?

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Case 4: Sarah has been sick lately and thinks she is coming down with the flu. She has a doctor's appointment at Barnes, but the earliest they could see her was Thursday afternoon. On Tuesday morning, Sarah has Music Theory with Brandy and knows that she won't be able to make it to class. Sarah already missed class last Thursday because of how sick she is, and the professor only permits one unexcused absence per semester before they start deducting participation points. Sarah texts Brandy as she's walking to class and asks Brandy to sign her in for the day, even though she won't be there. The sign in sheet is at the back of the classroom, and the professor generally isn't paying attention to what students are doing before class starts. Brandy is nervous but agrees.

Who has violated academic integrity expectations? Sarah? Brandy? Both? Why or why not? Where could you look to find this information? Would similar behavior be permissible in your course? Why or why not?

How could Brandy help Sarah without engaging in academic misconduct? What campus resources could Brandy guide Sarah to?