

Classroom Behavior Policy for Students

I. PURPOSE

At Goucher College, we honor freedom of expression, inquiry, and action. In return, we expect consideration and respect of others, accountability, and a commitment to collaborative and constructive behavior. This policy aims primarily to establish guidelines for expected classroom behavior for students and a process for instructors to address behavior that is disruptive to the learning environment. This policy cannot be used to inhibit classroom dissent or discussion with the instructor or other students.

II. SCOPE

This policy pertains to graduate and undergraduate students.

III. DEFINITION

1. **Being Present in Class:** Being attentive; Contributing to class discussions and participating in class activities as defined in the course syllabus.
2. **Disruptive Classroom Behavior:** Behavior that, in the judgment of the instructor, consistently interferes with other students' opportunities to learn and significantly impacts the achievement of class objectives. In addition, a single instance of disruptive behavior can be sufficiently severe that it interferes with other students' opportunities to learn and significantly impacts the achievement of class objectives.

IV. STUDENTS' RESPONSIBILITIES

Students are expected to be respectful of others in class. They are responsible for following classroom policies and procedures as outlined in the class syllabus, and the principles of honor and integrity in academic work outlined in the [Academic Honor Code](#). Students should be present in class, focus on relevant issues and refrain from (1) using cell phones or other electronic devices without instructor's permission; and (2) doing work or activities unrelated to the course content.

Students should attend every class session, arrive on-time and stay for the entirety of the class session. An absence, excused or unexcused, is an absence. Faculty will record all absences and will follow the attendance policy in their syllabus. If a student is absent from class in a 14-week term for three or more weeks, or in a 7-week term for more than ten (10) days, the student should consider taking a Leave of Absence or a mid-semester withdrawal (for more information, click [here](#)). Also, see the College's [Attendance Policy for Undergraduate Students](#).

V. INSTRUCTOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Instructors are responsible for setting clear classroom expectations. They are responsible for facilitating classroom discussion and work, establishing and maintaining appropriate time limits, helping students to focus on relevant issues, and ensuring student participation is fair and equitable. Instructors should follow the guidelines of the employee handbook.

Classroom behavior is normally addressed by the instructor either by modeling appropriate behavior prescribed by the syllabus and/or [Student Code of Conduct](#) or offering general words of support. Instructors can be firm but respectful and may indicate that further discussion will occur after class. Instructors are encouraged to avoid public confrontations and harsh language. In private, instructors may provide specific examples of the behavior that needs to be eliminated or adjusted as students might be unaware that their behavior is being disruptive.

Instructors who experience an incident of disruptive behavior in their classroom are encouraged to meet with students one-on-one to address the behavior but should also document the event for their own records, including specific dates. The instructor might also wish to consult with the student's academic advisor through the institutional online platform. Instructors teaching through the Goucher Prison Education Partnership (GPEP) should contact GPEP staff directly, either by phone or email.

If the behavior is repeated or a pattern is observed, the instructor should initiate the following process, and should also inform the associate provost for undergraduate studies (or the associate provost for curriculum in the case of graduate students) of the situation while continuing to maintain documentation.

VI. PROCEDURES

A. Process When a pattern of disruptive behavior is observed:

1. The instructor warns the student. The warning consists of orally notifying the student that their behavior is disruptive and that it must cease immediately. If the disruptive behavior ceases, no further action is needed.
 - If the student fails to comply with the instructor's warning, the instructor may require the student to immediately leave the classroom for the remainder of the class period.
 - If the instructor believes the disruptive behavior poses an immediate threat to the safety or health of anyone in the classroom, the instructor summons the Office of Campus Safety to remove the student, regardless of whether a warning is issued. The instructor immediately reports this action to the dean of students to review whether the student's behavior poses an imminent threat to self or others. Instructors teaching through GPEP should summon the correctional officer on duty in the school building to remove the student. Upon leaving the prison, they should also immediately report this action to GPEP staff.
 - Once the process is resolved, the instructor may choose to allow the student to return to the class and continue the course.
 - If the disruptive behavior continues and/or if the instructor believes that the student should not be permitted to return to class, the instructor gives formal notice to the associate provost for undergraduate studies (or the associate provost for curriculum in the case of graduate students) via email. The instructor includes all relevant materials (i.e.: description of

disruptive behavior, dates and times, email exchanges, meetings, topics discussed...). Instructors teaching through GPEP should also give formal notice to GPEP staff.

- The instructor and the associate provost for undergraduate studies (or their designee) or the associate provost for curriculum (in the case of graduate students) meet with the student to create and implement a classroom behavior contract and to discuss the policy and the appeal process.
 - i. If the student does not agree to enter into the behavior contract, the student is permanently removed from the course with a W and/or with other sanctions if appropriate.
 - ii. If the student agrees to the contract, the student is allowed to return to the class.
 - iii. If the student allegedly violates the contract, the instructor determines whether to proceed under the Disciplinary Process of the [Student Code of Conduct](#). The instructor may elect to file a complaint in writing addressed to the [dean of students](#). Instructors teaching with GPEP should file a complaint with GPEP staff. An Interim Class Exclusion is put in place if the dean of students (or their designee) determines in consultation with the associate provost for undergraduate studies or the associate provost for curriculum that there is a need to deny attendance and/or participation in a college course until the conduct and appeal process concludes. An Interim Class Exclusion is put in place if the GPEP director of operations and prison affairs in consultation with the associate provost for undergraduate studies determines that there is a need to deny attendance and/or participation in a GPEP course until the conduct and appeal process concludes.
 - iv. If the dean of students finds the student is in violation of the contract – the student and the relevant associate provost are informed by the dean of students and permanently removed from the course with a W and/or with other sanctions if appropriate. If the GPEP director of operations and prison affairs finds the student is in violation of the contract – the student and the associate provost for undergraduate studies are informed by the GPEP director of operations and prison affairs and permanently removed from the course with a W and/or with other sanctions if appropriate.
 - v. If the student is not in violation, the dean of students/associate provost for undergraduate studies (or GPEP executive director and director of operations and prison affairs, if applicable) directs the student to return to the classroom. The instructor works with the student to address any missed content.
 - vi. If the student does not feel like they can return to the course with the instructor, the student may petition to withdraw from the course with a W.

B. Appeal Process

A student who wishes to appeal a withdrawal from a course for class disruption may do so by petitioning the provost via email within two working days of the action taken. A GPEP student who wishes to appeal a withdrawal from a course for class disruption may do so by petitioning the provost via letter within one week of the action taken. The provost consults with all concerned parties, including potentially the dean of students, the associate provost for undergraduate studies or for curriculum, the instructor, and/or other students in the class to assess the case. The student appealing a withdrawal is not allowed to return to the classroom until the provost makes a determination and informs the student.

C. Confidentiality

All parties and actions taken under this policy shall maintain the confidentiality of the proceedings and all written reports to the extent reasonably possible. The Office of the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies maintains all original documentation.

D. Non-Retaliation

No person shall intimidate, threaten, coerce, or discriminate against any individual participating in these proceedings. Complaints of such retaliation or interference may be filed and processed under the [grievance policy](#).

VII. RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL

The official responsible for administering this policy is the Office of the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Studies at associateprovost@goucher.edu

VIII. HISTORY

Adopted: August 2021; Updated: June 2024.