



BA 386T - STATISTICS
TEXAS MBA PROGRAM AT DALLAS
FALL 2012

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Course Web Page	via Blackboard

COURSE INFORMATION FOR THE DECISION ANALYSIS PORTION OF THE COURSE

Course Objectives

This course will focus on the tools and methods that may be used to support risky decision making. This material divides naturally into two areas: statistics and decision analysis. The class sessions on statistics covered such topics as the basic concepts of probability, linear regression models and forecasting. Professor Dyer will be primarily responsible for the class sessions on decision analysis, which will cover such topics as Monte Carlo simulation and the use of decision trees to choose among alternatives in a risky environment.

By the end of the course, you will be able to build models to solve real-world business problems. This involves choosing the appropriate model, performing the correct analysis, validating the model, and drawing the appropriate conclusions.

Materials

Required:

Textbook: *Data Analysis and Decision Making with Microsoft Excel* (4th edition) by Albright, Winston and Zappe.

Course packets distributed by the MBA program office – These will be discussed further in class

Grading

Homework for Jim Dyer's portion of the class	20%
Jim Dyer's exam	30%

There is no predetermined grade distribution for this class. However, the faculty MBA Policy Committee has recommended a GPA of 3.40 ± 0.05 . Historically, this course has been fairly close to the recommended GPA, but we reserve the right to deviate.

Course Policies for Professor Dyer's Part of the Course

Homework

- You will receive homework assignments throughout the semester, and some will be individual assignments while others will be study group assignments.
- When preparing an individual assignment you may discuss the homework problems and solutions among yourselves, but every student is expected to hand in a set of solutions that he or she alone has prepared.
- You must show a complete solution (all steps and calculations) to receive credit for a homework problem. Only relevant and clearly labeled computer output should be handed in.
- All homework assignments should be submitted as hard copies (on paper) at the beginning of the class following the one they were assigned.

Exams

- Professor Dyer's exam will be given on Friday, November 30 (this exam covers the material in his half of the course).
- You may bring one $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$ inch page of notes and formulas to this exam.
- You should bring a laptop to this exam.

Laptops

- It is necessary to bring a laptop to Professor Dyer's class sessions. We will make extensive use of the computer in class to work examples, and in homework assignments.
- Laptops will be used on Professor Dyer's exam.

Helpful Hints

- You are responsible for material covered in class, whether or not it is in the text.

McCombs Classroom Professionalism Policy

The highest professional standards are expected of all members of the McCombs community. The collective class reputation and the value of the Texas MBA experience hinges on this.

Faculty are expected to be professional and prepared to deliver value for each and every class session. Students are expected to be professional in all respects.

The Texas MBA classroom experience is enhanced when:

- **Students arrive on time.** On time arrival ensures that classes are able to start and finish at the scheduled time and enhances learning by reducing avoidable distractions.
- **Students display their name cards.** This permits fellow students and faculty to learn names.
- **Students are fully prepared for each class.** Much of the learning in the Texas MBA program takes place during classroom discussions. When students are not prepared they cannot contribute to the overall learning process. This affects not only the individual, but their peers who count on them, as well.
- **Students minimize unscheduled personal breaks.** The learning environment improves when disruptions are limited.
- **Students respect the views and opinions of their colleagues.** Disagreement and debate are encouraged. Intolerance for the views of others is unacceptable.
- **Phones and wireless devices are turned off.** Please be sure to turn off your phones and wireless devices before class begins.

Academic Dishonesty

I have no tolerance for acts of academic dishonesty. Such acts damage the reputation of the school and the degree and demean the honest efforts of the majority of students. The minimum penalty for an act of academic dishonesty will be a zero for that assignment or exam.

The responsibilities for both students and faculty with regard to the Honor System are described on <http://mba.mcombs.utexas.edu/students/academics/honor/index.asp> and on the final pages of this syllabus. As the instructor for this course, I agree to observe all the faculty responsibilities described therein. During Orientation, you signed the Honor Code Pledge. In doing so, you agreed to observe all of the student responsibilities of the Honor Code. If the application of the Honor System to this class and its assignments is unclear in any way, it is your responsibility to ask me for clarification.

- **As specific guidance for this course,** you may not use the homework answers of students in previous classes in any way to assist you in completing the homework questions this year. It is a violation of the honor code in this class to use such assistance.

Students with Disabilities

Upon request, the University of Texas at Austin provides appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) is housed in the Office of the Dean of Students, located on the fourth floor of the Student Services Building. Information on how to register, downloadable forms, including guidelines for documentation, accommodation request letters, and releases of information are available online at <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/ssd/index.php>. Please do not hesitate to contact SSD at (512) 471-6259, VP: (512) 232-2937 or via e-mail if you have any questions.

Honor Code Purpose

Academic honor, trust and integrity are fundamental to The University of Texas at Austin McCombs School of Business community. They contribute directly to the quality of your education and reach far

beyond the campus to your overall standing within the business community. The University of Texas at Austin McCombs School of Business Honor System promotes academic honor, trust and integrity throughout the Graduate School of Business. The Honor System relies upon The University of Texas Student Standards of Conduct (Chapter 11 of the Institutional Rules on Student Service and Activities) for enforcement, but promotes ideals that are higher than merely enforceable standards. Every student is responsible for understanding and abiding by the provisions of the Honor System and the University of Texas Student Standards of Conduct. The University expects all students to obey the law, show respect for other members of the university community, perform contractual obligations, maintain absolute integrity and the highest standard of individual honor in scholastic work, and observe the highest standards of conduct. Ignorance of the Honor System or The University of Texas Student Standards of Conduct is not an acceptable excuse for violations under any circumstances.

The effectiveness of the Honor System results solely from the wholehearted and uncompromising support of each member of the Graduate School of Business community. Each member must abide by the Honor System and must be intolerant of any violations. The system is only as effective as you make it.

Faculty Involvement in the Honor System

The University of Texas at Austin McCombs School of Business Faculty's commitment to the Honor System is critical to its success. It is imperative that faculty make their expectations clear to all students. They must also respond to accusations of cheating or other misconduct by students in a timely, discrete and fair manner. We urge faculty members to promote awareness of the importance of integrity through in-class discussions and assignments throughout the semester.

Expectations under the Honor System

Standards

If a student is uncertain about the standards of conduct in a particular setting, he or she should ask the relevant faculty member for clarification to ensure his or her conduct falls within the expected scope of honor, trust and integrity as promoted by the Honor System. This applies to all tests, papers and group and individual work. Questions about appropriate behavior during the job search should be addressed to a professional member of the Career Services Office. Below are some of the specific examples of violations of the Honor System.

Lying

Lying is any deliberate attempt to deceive another by stating an untruth, or by any direct form of communication to include the telling of a partial truth. Lying includes the use or omission of any information with the intent to deceive or mislead. Examples of lying include, but are not limited to, providing a false excuse for why a test was missed or presenting false information to a recruiter.

Stealing

Stealing is wrongfully taking, obtaining, withholding, defacing or destroying any person's money, personal property, article or service, under any circumstances. Examples of stealing include, but are not limited to, removing course material from the library or hiding it from others, removing material from another person's mail folder, securing for one's self unattended items such as calculators, books, book bags or other personal property. Another form of stealing is the duplication of copyrighted material beyond the reasonable bounds of "fair use." Defacing (e.g., "marking up" or highlighting) library books is also considered stealing, because, through a willful act, the value of another's property is decreased. (See the appendix for a detailed explanation of "fair use.")

Cheating

Cheating is wrongfully and unfairly acting out of self-interest for personal gain by seeking or accepting an unauthorized advantage over one's peers. Examples include, but are not limited to, obtaining questions or answers to tests or quizzes, and getting assistance on case write-ups or other projects beyond what is authorized by the assigning instructor. It is also cheating to accept the benefit(s) of another person's theft(s) even if not actively sought. For instance, if one continues to be attentive to an overhead conversation about a test or case write-up even if initial exposure to such information was accidental and beyond the control of the student in question, one is also cheating. If a student overhears a conversation or any information that any faculty member might reasonably wish to withhold from the student, the student should inform the faculty member(s) of the information and circumstance under which it was overheard.

Actions Required for Responding to Suspected and Known Violations

As stated, everyone must abide by the Honor System and be intolerant of violations. If you suspect a violation has occurred, you should first speak to the suspected violator in an attempt to determine if an infraction has taken place. If, after doing so, you still believe that a violation has occurred, you must tell the suspected violator that he or she must report himself or herself to the course professor or Associate Dean of the Graduate School of Business. If the individual fails to report himself or herself within 48 hours, it then becomes your obligation to report the infraction to the course professor or the Associate Dean of the Graduate School of Business. Remember that although you are not required by regulation to take any action, our Honor System is only as effective as you make it. If you remain silent when you suspect or know of a violation, you are approving of such dishonorable conduct as the community standard. You are thereby precipitating a repetition of such violations.

The Honor Pledge

The University of Texas at Austin McCombs School of Business requires each enrolled student to adopt the Honor System. The Honor Pledge best describes the conduct promoted by the Honor System. It is as follows:

"I affirm that I belong to the honorable community of The University of Texas at Austin Graduate School of Business. I will not lie, cheat or steal, nor will I tolerate those who do."

"I pledge my full support to the Honor System. I agree to be bound at all times by the Honor System and understand that any violation may result in my dismissal from the Graduate School of Business."

Syllabus for Professor Dyer's part of the course

The information provided below gives the reading assignments for the different topics we will cover during the first half of the semester. All page numbers refer to *Data Analysis & Decision Making with Microsoft Excel* by Albright, Winston and Zappe. Case assignments, slides, and other materials will be provided in hard copy or on the course Blackboard site.

10/5-10/6 Session: Monte Carlo simulation

Time: (4 hours)

Learning Outcomes:

- Understand the basic concepts of Monte Carlo simulation using computer programs, including the ideas of random number generation

Topics/Agenda:

1. Simulation as a means of evaluating risk
2. Introduction to @Risk software

Required reading:

- Albright, Winston, and Zappe, Data Analysis and Decision Making, Ch. 16, Sections 16.5 and 16.6

Recommended practice problems:

1. Albright, Winston, and Zappe, Ch. 16: 19, 20, 29, 32

Assignment(s) due:

1. Install the @Risk add-in as part of the DecisionTools Suite. Download the software from the McCombs website:

<http://www.mcombs.utexas.edu/Tech/Computer-Services/COE.aspx#DecisionTools>

10/19-10/20 Session: Assessing risks with simulation models

Time: (4 hours)

Learning Outcomes:

- Develop the ability to use an add-in simulation software program to evaluate risks in the context of EXCEL spreadsheets
- Develop an understanding of the use simulation as tool to evaluate the risks associated with real-world projects

Topics/Agenda:

1. Developing spreadsheet simulation models using @RISK

Required reading:

- Albright, Winston, and Zappe, Data Analysis and Decision Making, Ch. 17, Sections 17.1, 17.2, 17.3, 17.4
- The Appshop Case. *A hardcopy of this material is provided to you.*

Recommended practice problems:

1. Albright, Winston, and Zappe, Ch. 17: 31, 34, 38, 39

Assignment(s) due1. The Appshop Case. *Individual assignment to be turned in for a grade.* Appraise the risk of the alternatives and make a recommendation for what Eric Clark should choose. Suppose

Clark's specific secondary incentive is to keep blended revenue per hour above 150. How does that affect your view of the risk? Prepare a written summary of your recommendation of no more than two single-spaced pages in length. You may attach an appendix containing exhibits from your analysis. However, be sure that your exhibits are numbered and that you refer to each of them in your summary.

11/2-11/3 Session: Introduction to risk analysis and decision trees

Time: (4 hours)

Learning Outcomes:

- Develop a skill in decomposing and structuring risky problems
- Provide an understanding of the use of decision and risk analysis for the evaluation of real world projects and opportunities
- Develop a skill in using PrecisionTree for evaluating risky decisions

Topics/Agenda:

1. Decision trees as a means of structuring risky problems
2. Applications of decision trees to real world problems

Required reading & preparation:

- Albright, Winston, and Zappe, Data Analysis and Decision Making, Ch. 7, Sections 7.1-7.3
- Freemark Abbey Winery. *A hardcopy of this material is provided to you.*
- GPC's New Product Decision. *A hardcopy of this material is provided to you.*
- C-Energy's Red Hill Plant: Meeting the SO₂ Challenge. *A hardcopy of this material is provided to you.*

Recommended practice problems:

1. Albright, Winston, and Zappe, Ch. 7: 35, 37, 38, 64

Assignment(s) due:

1. Freemark Abbey Winery: Read the case prior to class. Be prepared to discuss your recommendations to Mr. Jaeger. Develop a simple decision tree to support your analysis, either by hand or with the use of PrecisionTree.
2. GPC's New Product Decision. Develop a decision tree analysis of the three alternative products that could be selected for development by GPC, either by hand or with the use of PrecisionTree. Be prepared to discuss your analysis and your recommendations in class.
3. C-Energy's Red Hill Plant: Meeting the SO₂ Challenge: *Group assignment to be turned in for a grade.* Cap and trade is in the news, and lessons can be learned from similar efforts to reduce sulfur dioxide emissions. Evaluate the alternatives at C-Energy's Red Hill coal plant that might be used to mitigate the emissions of SO₂. Your assignment is to prepare a 20-minute presentation that is responsive to the issues raised in the case. I will ask a couple of groups to give their presentation in class, so please bring a "thumb drive" with a PowerPoint presentation for use on the classroom computer.

Prior to class, each group should hand in the following:

- A hard copy of the presentation you prepared should be turned in. If there are comments you planned to make but did not put on the slides, you may include them in the "speaker notes" feature of PowerPoint and then print the notes along with the presentation.
- Please include the following supporting information in an appendix to your presentation:
 - Two copies of your spreadsheet showing row and column headings

- One with values
- One with formulas
- An @Risk report documenting assumptions and results for the analysis
- The objective is a complete analysis of the C-Energy problem along with thoughtful recommendations. Be creative and comprehensive in your analysis. Good luck.

11/16-11/17 Session: Perfect and imperfect information

Time: (4 hours)

Learning Outcomes:

- Ability to determine when it is worthwhile to obtain information, and how much that information is worth
- An understanding of the concept of subjective probabilities, and the methods that are useful in assessing them

Topics/Agenda:

1. The value of perfect information
2. The value of imperfect information

Required reading:

- Albright, Winston, and Zappe, Data Analysis and Decision Making, Ch. 7, Sections 7.4 and 7.5
- Integrated Siting Systems, Inc.. *A hardcopy of this material is provided to you.*
- High Places Studio (A) and (B). *A hardcopy of this material is provided to you.*

Recommended practice problems:

1. Albright, Winston and Zappe, Ch. 7: 49, 50, 52, 56, 79

Assignment(s) due:

- High Places Studio (A) and (B). *Individual assignment to be turned in for a grade.* Prepare an analysis of this case to be turned in for a grade. In your analysis, consider the following issues:
 - 1) Which director, Morgan or McManus, will sign on to direct the film?
 - 2) Will Morgan complete the film on time?
 - 3) What will be the studio's gross receipts from the film?
 - 4) Which payment option for Nick would the studio prefer?
 - 5) Which payment option would Nick prefer?
 Feel free to address other questions and issues that you consider to be relevant.
- Integrated Siting Systems, Inc. Prepare an analysis of the alternative ways that ISSI can implement a system to meet their contract obligations, and make a recommendation. What is the value of the information that is provided by the test that is available? You might consider performing some sensitivity analysis on some of the key problem parameters.

11/30 Session: Review and final examination

Time: (4 hours)

Learning Outcomes:

- Review of materials covered in class and final examination

Topics/Agenda:

1. *Final examination.*

Assignment(s) due: SCOR-eSTORE.COM: *Group assignment to be turned in for a grade.* . Your

assignment is to prepare a 20-minute presentation that that is responsive to the issues raised in the case. I will ask a couple of groups to give their presentation in class, so please bring a “thumb drive” with a PowerPoint presentation for use on the classroom computer. Please consider the following questions.

- What value does each of the four ideas offered by Lance Bernard’s friends have, over and above the value of the original opportunity?
- Are there other contingent opportunities that would add value to this business? Think of some generic types of ideas that might be relevant here, without evaluating them.
- Should Bernard invest in the business?
- Perhaps not all the uncertainty is considered in the base model of case Exhibit 2. Without doing explicit analysis, think about what the addition of more uncertainty (wider probability distributions or additional uncertainties) would do to the values found in Question 1.
- Does Bernard have reasonable cutoff values to trigger action on each of the ideas in Question 1?

I suggest doing the analysis in stages. Those might be the following:

1. Create a decision tree for the basic analysis using the probabilities shown in footnote 2 on p. 2.
2. Add the “abandon” option to the tree based on Allen’s question and the answer.
3. Add the “switch” option to the tree based on Soares’s question and the answer.
4. Now, add the “expand” option to the tree based on Estes’s question and the answer. To get the number at the end of the branch for this option, use the @Risk spreadsheet to determine the expected value associated with this option. Do not try to link the @Risk model directly to the tree. Do the @Risk calculation for the expected value of this option and use that value. You could add a probability node to the end of this decision node branch that approximates the probability distribution associated with this option, but it’s really not necessary.
5. Finally, add the “buyout” option to the tree, again using the @Risk model to determine the expected value of this option but not trying to link these two models. You may simply place this value at the end of the corresponding decision node branch. For simplicity, assume that you will only do the buyout if the expand option is exercised (if you would expand). They could be valued separately, but the value of this option will be higher when the expand option is taken also. Plus, let’s make it simple so you can study for the final exam.

Be sure to note the value of adding each of these options, and the overall value of the project with these options versus its base value.

The following pages provide specific guidance about the Standard of Academic Integrity at the University of Texas at Austin. Please read it carefully and feel free to ask me any questions you might have.

Excerpts from the University of Texas at Austin Office of the Dean of Students website
(http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php)

The Standard of Academic Integrity

A fundamental principle for any educational institution, academic integrity is highly valued and seriously regarded at The University of Texas at Austin, as emphasized in the standards of conduct. More specifically, you and other students are expected to "maintain absolute integrity and a high standard of individual honor in scholastic work" undertaken at the University ([Sec. 11-801](#), *Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities*). This is a very basic expectation that is further reinforced by the University's [Honor Code](#). At a minimum, you should complete any assignments, exams, and other scholastic endeavors with the utmost honesty, which requires you to:

- acknowledge the contributions of other sources to your scholastic efforts;
- complete your assignments independently unless expressly authorized to seek or obtain assistance in preparing them;
- follow instructions for assignments and exams, and observe the standards of your academic discipline; and
- avoid engaging in any form of academic dishonesty on behalf of yourself or another student.

For the official policies on academic integrity and scholastic dishonesty, please refer to [Chapter 11](#) of the *Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities*.

What is Scholastic Dishonesty?

In promoting a high standard of academic integrity, the University broadly defines scholastic dishonesty—basically, all conduct that violates this standard, including *any act designed to give an unfair or undeserved academic advantage*, such as:

- Cheating
- Plagiarism
- Unauthorized Collaboration
- Collusion
- Falsifying Academic Records
- Misrepresenting Facts (e.g., providing false information to postpone an exam, obtain an extended deadline for an assignment, or even gain an unearned financial benefit)
- Any other acts (or attempted acts) that violate the basic standard of academic integrity (e.g., multiple submissions—submitting essentially the same written assignment for two courses without authorization to do so)

Several types of scholastic dishonesty—[unauthorized collaboration](#), [plagiarism](#), and [multiple submissions](#)—are discussed in more detail on this Web site to correct common misperceptions about these particular offenses and suggest ways to avoid committing them.

For the University's official definition of scholastic dishonesty, see [Section 11-802](#), *Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities*.

Unauthorized Collaboration

If you work with another person on an assignment for credit *without the instructor's permission to do so*, you are engaging in unauthorized collaboration.

- This common form of academic dishonesty can occur with all types of scholastic work—papers, homework, tests (take-home or in-class), lab reports, computer programming projects, or any other assignments to be submitted for credit.

- For the University's official definitions of unauthorized collaboration and the related offense of collusion, see Sections [11-802\(c\)\(6\)](#) & [11-802\(e\)](#), *Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities*.

Some students mistakenly assume that they can work together on an assignment as long as the instructor has not expressly prohibited collaborative efforts.

- Actually, students are expected to complete assignments independently unless the course instructor indicates otherwise. So working together on assignments is *not* permitted unless the instructor specifically approves of any such collaboration.

Unfortunately, students who engage in unauthorized collaboration tend to justify doing so through various rationalizations. For example, some argue that they contributed to the work, and others maintain that working together on an assignment "helped them learn better."

- The instructor—not the student—determines the purpose of a particular assignment *and* the acceptable method for completing it. Unless working together on an assignment has been specifically authorized, always assume it is not allowed.
- Many educators do value group assignments and other collaborative efforts, recognizing their potential for developing and enhancing specific learning skills. And course requirements in some classes do consist primarily of group assignments. But the expectation of individual work is the prevailing norm in many classes, consistent with the presumption of original work that remains a fundamental tenet of scholarship in the American educational system.

Some students incorrectly assume that the degree of any permissible collaboration is basically the same for all classes.

- The extent of any permissible collaboration can vary widely from one class to the next, even from one project to the next within the same class.
- Be sure to distinguish between collaboration that is authorized for a particular assignment *and* unauthorized collaboration that is undertaken for the sake of expedience or convenience to benefit you *and/or* another student. By failing to make this key distinction, you are much more likely to engage in unauthorized collaboration. To avoid any such outcome, always seek clarification from the instructor.

Unauthorized collaboration can also occur in conjunction with group projects.

- How so? If the degree or type of collaboration exceeds the parameters expressly approved by the instructor. An instructor may allow (or even expect) students to work together on one stage of a group project but require independent work on other phases. Any such distinctions should be strictly observed.

Providing another student unauthorized assistance on an assignment is also a violation, even without the prospect of benefiting yourself.

- If an instructor did not authorize students to work together on a particular assignment *and* you help a student complete that assignment, you are providing unauthorized assistance and, in effect, facilitating an act of academic dishonesty. Equally important, you can be held accountable for doing so.
- For similar reasons, you should not allow another student access to your drafted or completed assignments unless the instructor has permitted those materials to be shared in that manner.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is another serious violation of academic integrity. In simplest terms, this occurs if you represent as *your own work* any material that was obtained from another source, regardless how or where you acquired it.

- Plagiarism can occur with *all* types of media—scholarly or non-academic, published or unpublished—written publications, Internet sources, oral presentations, illustrations, computer code, scientific data or analyses, music, art, and other forms of expression. (See [Section 11-802\(d\)](#) of the *Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities* for the University's official definition of plagiarism.)
- Borrowed material from written works can include entire papers, one or more paragraphs, single phrases, or any other excerpts from a variety of sources such as books, journal articles, magazines, downloaded

Internet documents, purchased papers from commercial writing services, papers obtained from other students (including homework assignments), etc.

- As a general rule, the use of any borrowed material results in plagiarism if the original source is not properly acknowledged. So you can be held accountable for plagiarizing material in either a final submission of an assignment *or* a draft that is being submitted to an instructor for review, comments, and/or approval.

Using *verbatim* material (e.g., exact words) without proper attribution (or credit) constitutes the most blatant form of plagiarism. However, other types of material can be plagiarized as well, such as *ideas* drawn from an original source or even its *structure* (e.g., sentence construction or line of argument).

- Improper or insufficient paraphrasing often accounts for this type of plagiarism. (See additional information on [paraphrasing](#).)

Plagiarism can be committed intentionally *or* unintentionally.

- Strictly speaking, any use of material from another source without proper attribution constitutes plagiarism, regardless why that occurred, and any such conduct violates accepted standards of academic integrity.
- Some students deliberately plagiarize, often rationalizing this misconduct with a variety of excuses: falling behind and succumbing to the pressures of meeting deadlines; feeling overworked and wishing to reduce their workloads; compensating for actual (or perceived) academic or language deficiencies; and/or justifying plagiarism on other grounds.
- But some students commit plagiarism without intending to do so, often stumbling into negligent plagiarism as a result of sloppy notetaking, insufficient paraphrasing, and/or ineffective proofreading. Those problems, however, neither justify nor excuse this breach of academic standards. By misunderstanding the meaning of plagiarism and/or failing to cite sources accurately, you are much more likely to commit this violation. Avoiding that outcome requires, at a minimum, a clear understanding of plagiarism *and* the appropriate techniques for scholarly attribution. (See related information on [paraphrasing](#); [notetaking and proofreading](#); and [acknowledging and citing sources](#).)

By merely changing a few words or rearranging several words or sentences, you are *not* paraphrasing. Making minor revisions to borrowed text amounts to plagiarism.

- Even if properly cited, a "paraphrase" that is too similar to the original source's wording and/or structure is, in fact, plagiarized. (See additional information on [paraphrasing](#).)

Remember, your instructors should be able to clearly identify which materials (e.g., words and ideas) are your own *and* which originated with other sources.

- That cannot be accomplished without proper attribution. You must give credit where it is due, acknowledging the sources of any borrowed passages, ideas, or other types of materials, and enclosing any verbatim excerpts with quotation marks (using block indentation for longer passages).

Plagiarism & Unauthorized Collaboration

[Plagiarism](#) and [unauthorized collaboration](#) are often committed jointly.

By submitting *as your own work* any unattributed material that you obtained from other sources (including the contributions of another student who assisted you in preparing a homework assignment), you have committed plagiarism. And if the instructor did not authorize students to work together on the assignment, you have also engaged in unauthorized collaboration. Both violations contribute to the same fundamental deception—representing material obtained from another source as your own work.

Group efforts that extend beyond the limits approved by an instructor frequently involve plagiarism in addition to unauthorized collaboration. For example, an instructor may allow students to work together while researching a subject, but require each student to write a separate report. If the students collaborate while writing their reports *and* then submit the products of those joint efforts as individual works, they are guilty of unauthorized collaboration as well as plagiarism. In other words, the students collaborated on the written assignment without authorization to do so, and also failed to acknowledge the other students' contributions to their own individual reports.

Multiple Submissions

Submitting the same paper (or other type of assignment) for two courses *without prior approval* represents another form of academic dishonesty.

You may not submit a substantially similar paper or project for credit in two (or more) courses unless expressly authorized to do so by your instructor(s). (See [Section 11-802\(b\)](#) of the *Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities* for the University's official definition of scholastic dishonesty.)

You may, however, re-work or supplement previous work on a topic with the instructor's approval.

Some students mistakenly assume that they are entitled to submit the same paper (or other assignment) for two (or more) classes simply because they authored the original work.

Unfortunately, students with this viewpoint tend to overlook the relevant ethical and academic issues, focusing instead on their own "authorship" of the original material and personal interest in receiving essentially double credit for a single effort.

Unauthorized multiple submissions are inherently deceptive. After all, an instructor reasonably assumes that any completed assignments being submitted for credit were actually prepared for that course. Mindful of that assumption, students who "recycle" their own papers from one course to another make an effort to convey that impression. For instance, a student may revise the original title page or imply through some other means that he or she wrote the paper for that particular course, sometimes to the extent of discussing a "proposed" paper topic with the instructor or presenting a "draft" of the paper before submitting the "recycled" work for credit.

The issue of plagiarism is also relevant. If, for example, you previously prepared a paper for one course and then submit it for credit in another course without citing the initial work, you are committing plagiarism—essentially "self-plagiarism"—the term used by some institutions. Recall the broad scope of [plagiarism](#): all types of materials can be plagiarized, including unpublished works, even papers you previously wrote.

Another problem concerns the resulting "unfair academic advantage" that is specifically referenced in the University's definition of scholastic dishonesty. If you submit a paper for one course that you prepared and submitted for another class, you are simply better situated to devote more time and energy toward fulfilling other requirements for the subsequent course than would be available to classmates who are completing all course requirements during that semester. In effect, you would be gaining an unfair academic advantage, which constitutes academic dishonesty as it is defined on this campus.

Some students, of course, do recognize one or more of these ethical issues, but still refrain from citing their authorship of prior papers to avoid earning reduced (or zero) credit for the same works in other classes. That underlying motivation further illustrates the deceptive nature of unauthorized multiple submissions.

An additional issue concerns the problematic minimal efforts involved in "recycling" papers (or other prepared assignments). Exerting minimal effort basically undercuts the curricular objectives associated with a particular assignment and the course itself. Likewise, the practice of "recycling" papers subverts important learning goals for individual degree programs and higher education in general, such as the mastery of specific skills that students should acquire and develop in preparing written assignments. This demanding but necessary process is somewhat analogous to the required regimen of athletes, like the numerous laps and other repetitive training exercises that runners must successfully complete to prepare adequately for a marathon.