

Examples of Troublesome Behavior in the Classroom

Troublesome behavior in your classroom may be classified as anything that disturbs you or your students during the class period. Listed below are a few examples of troublesome behavior you may have experienced in your classroom:

- Cellular phones and beepers
- Challenges to your authority
- Demanding special treatment
- I paid for this... mentality
- Eating or drinking in the classroom
- Excessive tardiness
- Leaving the lecture early
- Making offensive remarks
- Missing deadlines
- Prolonged chattering
- Reading newspapers during class
- Sleeping
- Talking out of turn
- Arriving late to class
- Dominating discussions
- Shuffling backpacks and notebooks
- Overt inattentiveness



Memo to Faculty

Faculty are encouraged to include a statement in their course syllabus related to classroom behavioral expectations such as:

“Students are expected to assist in maintaining a classroom environment that is conducive to learning. In order to assure that all students have the opportunity to gain from time spent in class, unless otherwise approved by the instructor, students are prohibited from engaging in any other form of distraction. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom shall result, minimally, in a request to leave class.”

Departments should establish guidelines for dealing with troublesome and/or odd behavior in the classroom and/or repeated violations or any deviation from behavior in the recommended civility statement in the syllabus. Recommended procedures are:

1st Incident - Instructor talks with student about his/her inappropriate behavior immediately and follows up after class or with a scheduled meeting.

2nd Incident - Instructor should refer the student immediately to the department chairperson and/or the Student Counseling Center. Department chairperson may inform the student that repeated deviations from expected classroom behavior shall result in an immediate referral to the Student Mediation Center for disciplinary action in accordance with the *Code of Student Conduct* described in the [Student Affairs Handbook 2002-2003](#) at Texas Tech University.

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FACULTY GUIDE

Civility In The Classroom

Tips for dealing with
Troublesome Behavior
2002-2003

Start with an Effective Syllabus

Begin the first day of the semester with an effective syllabus that lets the student know you are serious about university policies. Syllabi serve as contracts between you and your students. Your policies should be clearly defined in your syllabus in order to decrease confusion.

Syllabi Tips

List your name, title, office hours, primary and/or secondary methods of contact; list prerequisites required for class; define what will be considered excused or unexcused absences; and clearly outline the consequences regarding attendance, tardiness, or missed deadlines; give a detailed and clear course outline with deadlines and exam dates; inform students of the need for blue books or scantrons for projects and exams; let students know about writing style (APA, MLA) required for papers; list possible extra credit opportunities or whether you will consider extra credit throughout the semester; outline specific procedures for making up exams, and determine a reasonable period of time students should wait in the event you are late to class.



Class Attendance

Be a role model for your class by establishing policies and expectations in the beginning. Attendance Tips ...

- If you're going to be absent, inform your students ahead of time
- Have a ritual at the beginning of class that students would hate to miss
- Speak privately to chronically late students
- Make your lecture content and learning activities in class crucial information that students find useful for exams and professional life
- Have logical consequences for missing class and being late. You do not own the problem or need to reteach the class; and do not rescue students, let them be responsible for retrieving information they have missed.

Challenges to Authority

At times students are vocal about their challenges to authority. Suggested responses to challenges:

- Don't become defensive
- Explain instructional objectives and how your assignments pertain
- If students press you in class, ask to discuss the matter after class
- Be honest if something is really not working
- Say "no" assertively, not aggressively or submissively.

Talking and Inattention

Some tips...

- Make direct eye contact
- Stop lecturing and stop whoever is talking in class
- Don't continue your lecture until you have the students' attention
- Physically move to the problem area
- Vary your presentation methods and speak to students privately.

Addressing Hostility

Students sometimes become verbally abusive in situations they see as beyond their control. They displace frustration and anger onto others, fear rejection, and possess feelings of righteous indignation.

In these situations it is important to handle all students consistently and with respect. Speak to the student privately in a neutral setting. Consider writing a letter to the student explaining how his/her behavior disrupts the class and restate your expectations.

- Do ...** allow students to vent and recognize their feelings. Tell them you will not tolerate verbal abuse.
- Do ...** immediately report all suspected violations of law, including verbal and physical threats, to University Police services.
- Don't ...** get in an argument, press for an explanation of the behavior, walk away from the student, or get others to help you quiet down a student.

TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY

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