

[This copy goes to the student in their packet]

ATTENTION STUDENT: If you've been given this form, most likely a faculty member is charging you with some form of academic dishonesty. Please read the academic honesty policy below. It will explain the process and your right to appeal.

Department of Sociology

ACADEMIC INSTRUCTIONAL INFORMATION

Policy on Academic Honesty

Introduction

As members of the academic community, students are expected to recognize and uphold standards of intellectual and academic integrity. The university assumes as a basic and minimum standard of conduct in academic matters that students be honest and that they submit for credit only the products of their own efforts. Both the ideals of scholarship and the need for fairness require that all dishonest work be rejected as a basis for academic credit. They also require that students refrain from any and all forms of dishonorable or unethical conduct related to their academic work.

The university's policy on academic honesty is published in the *Faculty Affairs Handbook* and the *On Campus: The Undergraduate Co-Curricular Affairs Handbook* and is available to all members of the university community. The policy represents a core value of the university and all members of the university community are responsible for abiding by its tenets. Lack of knowledge of this policy is not an acceptable defense to any charge of academic dishonesty. All members of the academic community -- students, faculty, and staff -- are expected to report violations of these standards of academic conduct to the appropriate authorities. The procedures for such reporting are on file in the offices of the deans of each college, the office of the dean of students, and the office of the provost.

In an effort to foster an environment of academic integrity and to prevent academic dishonesty, students are expected to discuss with faculty the expectations regarding course assignments and standards of conduct. Students are encouraged to discuss freely with faculty, academic advisors, and other members of the university community any questions pertaining to the provisions of this policy. In addition, students are encouraged to avail themselves of programs in establishing personal standards and ethics offered through the university's Counseling Center.

409.02 Definitions and Examples

The examples and definitions given below are intended to clarify the standards by which academic honesty and academically honorable conduct are to be judged. The list is merely illustrative of the kinds of infractions that may occur, and it is not intended to be exhaustive. Moreover, the definitions and examples suggest conditions under which unacceptable behavior of the indicated types normally occurs; however, there may be unusual cases that fall outside these conditions which also will be judged unacceptable by the academic community.

A. Plagiarism: Plagiarism is presenting another person's work as one's own. Plagiarism includes any paraphrasing or summarizing of the works of another person without acknowledgment, including the submitting of another student's work as one's own. Plagiarism frequently involves a failure to acknowledge in the text, notes, or footnotes the quotation of the paragraphs, sentences, or even a few phrases written or spoken by someone else. The submission of research or completed papers or projects by someone else is plagiarism, as is the unacknowledged use of research sources gathered by someone else when that use is specifically forbidden by the faculty member. Failure to indicate the extent and nature of one's reliance on other sources is also a form of plagiarism. Any work, in whole or in part, taken from the Internet or other computer-based resource without properly referencing the source (for example, the URL) is considered plagiarism. A complete reference is required in order that all parties may locate and view the original source. Finally, there may be forms of plagiarism that are

unique to an individual discipline or course, examples of which should be provided in advance by the faculty member. The student is responsible for understanding the legitimate use of sources, the appropriate ways of acknowledging academic, scholarly or creative indebtedness, and the consequences of violating this responsibility.

B. Cheating on Examinations: Cheating on examinations involves giving or receiving unauthorized help before, during, or after an examination. Examples of unauthorized help include the use of notes, computer based resources, texts, or "crib sheets" during an examination (unless specifically approved by the faculty member), or sharing information with another student during an examination (unless specifically approved by the faculty member). Other examples include intentionally allowing another student to view one's own examination and collaboration before or after an examination if such collaboration is specifically forbidden by the faculty member.

C. Unauthorized Collaboration: Submission for academic credit of a work product, or a part thereof, represented as its being one's own effort, which has been developed in substantial collaboration with another person or source, or computer-based resource, is a violation of academic honesty. It is also a violation of academic honesty knowingly to provide such assistance. Collaborative work specifically authorized by a faculty member is allowed.

D. Falsification: It is a violation of academic honesty to misrepresent material or fabricate information in an academic exercise, assignment or proceeding (e.g., false or misleading citation of sources, the falsification of the results of experiments or of computer data, false or misleading information in an academic context in order to gain an unfair advantage).

E. Multiple Submissions: It is a violation of academic honesty to submit substantial portions of the same work for credit more than once without the explicit consent of the faculty member(s) to whom the material is submitted for additional credit. In cases in which there is a natural development of research or knowledge in a sequence of courses, use of prior work may be desirable, even required; however the student is responsible for indicating in writing, as a part of such use, that the current work submitted for credit is cumulative in nature.

409.03 Evidence and Burden of Proof

In determining whether or not academic dishonesty has occurred, the standard which should be used is that guilt must be proven by a preponderance of the evidence. This means that if the evidence which indicates that academic dishonesty occurred produces a stronger impression and is more convincing as to its truth when weighed against opposing evidence, then academic dishonesty has been proved. In other words, the evidence does not have to be enough to free the mind from a reasonable doubt but must be sufficient to incline a reasonable and impartial mind to one side of the issue rather than to the other. Evidence as used in this statement can be any observation, admission, statement, or document which would either directly or circumstantially indicate that academic dishonesty has occurred.

409.04 Procedures for Resolving Matters of Academic Dishonesty

The following procedure is the only approved means for resolving matters of academic dishonesty, except for matters arising in the College of Law which has its own Honor Code for handling such matters. It is available to all members of the academic community who wish to pursue an action against a student for academic dishonesty.

A. Initiation

If a member of the academic community believes that a student has engaged in academic dishonesty in a course, on a test, or as a part of an academic program, that individual is responsible for initiating action against the student or bringing the matter to the attention of an individual who may initiate action against the student. In allegations of academic dishonesty involving course requirements, the course faculty member is generally responsible for initiating the action. If the alleged violation involves a departmental program requirement (e.g., comprehensive examination or language competency examination) or an institutionally-required test (e.g., test of Georgia/United States history or Georgia/United States constitutions), or if the individual who discovers the incident is not a faculty member, the individual should bring the matter to the attention of the faculty member and administrator who has responsibility of overseeing the activity (e.g., departmental chair, director of the Testing Office). If that administrator decides to bring charges of academic dishonesty against the student, then that administrator becomes the initiator. (Test proctors, laboratory assistants, and other individuals who are not course faculty

members should bring any instances of alleged academic dishonesty to the attention of the course faculty member or their administrative superior. That individual, after weighing the evidence, may become the initiator by formally charging the student with academic dishonesty.)

The channel of review, recommendation, and decision-making follows the administrative lines associated with the course or program requirement involved. In any instance, however, when the alleged incident does not occur within the context of a course and when it is unclear which college of more than one college involved should have jurisdiction in review and decision-making, either unit may initiate the case.

For the sake of brevity the following processing procedures are written from an "academic unit/college" perspective. Nonacademic units (i.e., Testing Center) would substitute appropriate supervisory personnel at the respective levels. Herein the "initiator" will be referred to as "faculty member" and the "administrative unit head" will be referred to as "chair," designating the departmental chair. "Dean" will refer to appropriate administrative supervisory personnel at the overall college or division level.

While the matter of academic dishonesty is pending, the student will be allowed to continue in the course and register for upcoming terms. Should a grade be due to the registrar before the matter is resolved, a grade of GP (grade pending) will be reported for the student in the course involved. Withdrawal from a course does not preclude the imposition of penalties for academic dishonesty.

B. Penalties to be Imposed

Penalties to be imposed in incidents of academic dishonesty are classified as "academic" or "disciplinary." Academic penalties include such sanctions as assignment of a failing grade for a particular course requirement, or for the course itself, or for other tests or program assignments. They are set by the faculty member. Disciplinary sanctions can be sought in addition to those considered academic and could include, but are not limited to, the following penalties: suspension, expulsion, transcript annotations. Disciplinary penalties can be requested by the faculty member, in consultation with the chair; they must be reviewed by the University Senate Committee on Student Discipline and they are set by the provost.

C. Action at Administrative Unit (Department Level)

As soon as possible after the alleged incident, the faculty member should discuss the matter with the student. This discussion should be conducted in a manner which protects the rights and confidentiality of students. If the faculty member believes that academic dishonesty has occurred, the faculty member (with the advice of the chair if necessary) will determine the appropriate academic penalty. The faculty member will complete a "notice of academic dishonesty" form describing the incident and indicating the academic penalty imposed. Any recommendation for a disciplinary penalty must be reviewed in consultation with the chair.

The faculty member will deliver to the student the notice of academic dishonesty which includes a statement of appeal rights. If there is difficulty in delivering the notice to the student, the faculty member/chair should request assistance from the college dean in determining the most expeditious way to inform the student that a notice of academic dishonesty has been filed.

Once the student has been informed, the chair forwards the documentation, including the notice of academic dishonesty and an indication of when the student was informed, to the dean to be held pending possible appeal. Until the student has been given the opportunity to appeal, a grade of GP (grade pending) should be submitted for the student for the course involved.

D. Student Action

The student will have 20 business days after receipt of the notice of charges of academic dishonesty to submit a written appeal denying the charges and providing any rationale for the appeal. The appeal should be addressed to the college dean of the initiator. In the event the student is found guilty of academic dishonesty, the student does not have the right to appeal the academic penalty assessed by the faculty member, unless the student can prove that such penalty was arbitrarily imposed or discriminatorily applied.

If the student wishes to challenge a disciplinary penalty, the student must submit a written rationale for challenging the disciplinary penalty within 20 business days of receipt of the notice of charges of academic dishonesty. The statement of challenge should be addressed to the college dean. The college dean will forward the challenge to the dean of students for inclusion in the review of the disciplinary penalty by the University Senate Committee on Student Discipline. All disciplinary penalties are automatically reviewed by the University Senate Committee on Student Discipline, regardless of student appeal.

If the student has also filed an appeal denying the charges of academic dishonesty, any review of disciplinary penalty recommended will be delayed pending review of the charges of academic dishonesty by the college hearing committee.

E. College Action

1. No Appeal by the Student. If the student does not submit a written appeal to the college dean within 20 business days, the dean will notify the chair/faculty member to post any pending grade(s) immediately. The dean will then forward the notice of academic dishonesty to the dean of students for inclusion in the student's disciplinary file. Any recommendation of a disciplinary penalty will also be forwarded to the dean of students for appropriate review by the Senate Committee on Student Discipline.

2. Appeal by the Student. If the student submits a written appeal within 20 business days, the dean will notify the registrar to issue a grade of GP (grade pending) for the course(s) in question on all transcript requests for the student pending outcome of the appeal. The dean will forward the charges of academic dishonesty to the chair of a college hearing committee and will notify the faculty member to set forth in writing a comprehensive statement describing the incident of academic dishonesty. This statement will be presented to the committee and to the student at least five (5) business days prior to the hearing.

3. Student Hearing Committee Process. The following guidelines will be used to govern the hearing of the appeal by the college student hearing committee:

a. Within ten (10) business days after the committee receives the charges of academic dishonesty, a hearing date will be determined. The committee will notify the faculty member and the student of the time, date, and the place of the hearing. Copies of all charges of academic dishonesty and related materials for the hearing will be provided to the student at least five (5) business days in advance of the hearing.

b. The faculty member and the student will be allowed to make oral presentations, call witnesses, and present any documentary evidence regarding the incident in question. The hearing will be recorded on audio tape. The hearing will not be open to observers.

c. At the conclusion of the hearing, the committee will meet in closed session and will make its recommendation as to the guilt or innocence of the student based on a preponderance of evidence with respect to the charge of academic dishonesty. The committee chair will forward to the college dean its findings and recommendations in a written report within five (5) business days of the hearing.

4. College Decision on Appeals. Within five (5) business days of receiving the committee's written report, the college dean will make the final decision regarding guilt or innocence. The dean will notify all appropriate parties of the decision.

If the dean finds the student "not guilty," the matter will be terminated and no notice of charges will be filed with the dean of students. The dean will notify the chair to post the pending course grade promptly and will notify the registrar to remove the GP (grade pending) on the student's transcript.

If the dean finds the student "guilty," the notice of charges of academic dishonesty will be forwarded to the dean of students for inclusion in the student's disciplinary file. The academic penalty stipulated by the faculty member will be imposed. The dean will notify the chair to insure that any pending grade is posted promptly. The dean will notify the registrar to remove the GP (grade pending) on the student's transcript if only an academic penalty was involved. If a disciplinary penalty has been recommended, the dean will notify the registrar to continue the GP (grade pending) annotation until the disciplinary penalty can be reviewed by the University Senate Committee on Student Discipline.

5. Appeal of the Decision of the Dean. If the student or initiator wishes to appeal the decision of the college dean regarding guilt or innocence of the charges of academic dishonesty, the student or initiator may appeal to the provost. The subsequent appeal route would be to the president and then the Board of Regents. The student or initiator must submit a written statement of appeal to the provost within 20 business days of notification of the dean's decision. The basis of the appeal must be on the grounds that the decision was arbitrary, capricious, or discriminatory.

6. University Senate Committee on Student Discipline Action. In cases where a disciplinary penalty has been recommended, the Senate Committee on Student Discipline will conduct a hearing to review the disciplinary penalty. The committee will review the faculty member's notice of academic dishonesty and the student's statement of challenge of the disciplinary penalty, if any. The faculty member and the student will be allowed to appear at the hearing to discuss the imposition of disciplinary penalties. Only the recommendation concerning the disciplinary penalty to be imposed will be considered by this committee. Issues of guilt or innocence are determined at the college level (see IV.3 and IV.4 above).

The Senate Committee will conduct the hearing in accordance with its regular hearing procedures. Copies of these procedures may be obtained from the Provost's Office and/or the Dean of Students.

The Senate Committee on Student Discipline will provide its recommendation within five (5) business days of its hearing to the provost regarding appropriateness of the disciplinary penalty recommended by the college and/or whether other disciplinary penalties are to be imposed in addition to or in lieu of those already recommended by the college.

F. Provost Action

1. Decision of the Provost. The role of the provost in handling student appeals regarding the charge of academic honesty has been explained (see IV.5.5 above). Based on the recommendation, the Provost will render a decision within ten (10) business days of receipt of the recommendation of the Senate Committee. The provost will notify the student, the referring dean, the department chair and the faculty member of the Senate Committee's recommendations and of the provost's decision. At that time the provost will also notify the registrar to annotate the student's transcript, if necessary.

2. Appeal of the Decision of the Provost. If the student wishes to appeal the decision of the provost regarding the imposition of a disciplinary penalty, the student may appeal to the president, and then to the Board of Regents. The student must submit a written statement of appeal to the president within 20 business days of notification of the provost's decision. The basis for such an appeal must be on the grounds that the decision was arbitrary, capricious, or discriminatory.

G. Students Involved in Two or More Incidents of Academic Dishonesty

A student is subject to disciplinary action in addition to any already undertaken once it is determined that the student has been found guilty in a previous incident of academic dishonesty. In such cases, the dean of students will forward a report to the University Senate Committee on Student Discipline regarding the incidents of academic dishonesty which have been reported. The dean of students is responsible for initiating this report within twenty (20) business days of completion of proceeding of any subsequent finding of academic dishonesty.

The University Senate Committee on Student Discipline will review the report of the dean of students. The student may submit supplemental written documents for the committee's review and may request to appear before the committee in its deliberations. After reviewing the matter, the committee will send a report to the provost with the recommendation for disciplinary penalty to be imposed. The provost will proceed as in IV.7 above.

[For faculty member's information]

Sociology faculty member: The Notice of Academic Dishonesty form (Form C) asks you to suggest academic and/or disciplinary penalties. Here is a description of those penalties and the process by which to proceed, for your reference:

DEFINITION OF ACADEMIC PENALTY: Sanction sought for academic dishonesty will be considered an academic penalty if the initiator wishes to assess penalty for academic assignments only, such as a failing grade to the student for a particular course assignment, or for the course itself, or for other tests or program requirements involved in the incident. The academic penalty cannot be challenged.

DEFINITION OF DISCIPLINARY PENALTY: Sanction sought for academic dishonesty will be considered a disciplinary penalty if the initiator wishes to seek sanction in addition to those considered as academic. Disciplinary penalties could include, but are not limited to, the following sanctions: suspension, expulsion, transcript annotation(s). Students may challenge a disciplinary penalty regardless of whether the student accepts findings of academic dishonesty. All disciplinary penalties are automatically reviewed by the University Senate Committee on Student Discipline.

STUDENT DISCIPLINARY RECORD: The Dean of Students' Office maintains a disciplinary record on any student who has been reported for any disciplinary sanction, including cases of academic dishonesty. This record is not a part of the student's permanent academic record (unless disciplinary sanction imposed is specifically designated to be public record). If two or more incidents of academic dishonesty are filed against a student, or if record of other disciplinary problems exists, additional disciplinary sanctions may be sought.

SUMMARY OF REVIEW AND PROCESSING PROCEDURES: For the sake of brevity, the following review and processing summary is written from an "academic unit/college" perspective. Non-academic units (i.e. Testing Center) would substitute appropriate supervisory personnel at the respective levels.

1. The faculty member gives the student notice of academic dishonesty and forwards the notice to the college dean to hold pending a possible appeal by the student.
2. The student must appeal in writing within 20 business days to the college dean if the student wishes to deny the finding of academic dishonesty or challenge a disciplinary penalty.
3. If the student does not appeal within 20 business days, the college dean forwards the notice of academic dishonesty to the dean of students.
4. If the student appeals the charges, a college hearing committee conducts a hearing and reports its findings to the college dean regarding guilt or innocence. If the student is found not guilty, the notice of academic dishonesty is destroyed and the faculty member is notified to assign an appropriate grade. If the student is found guilty, the dean forwards the notice of academic dishonesty to the dean of students and if necessary to the registrar.
5. Any recommendation for a disciplinary penalty and a challenge of that disciplinary penalty submitted by the student, if any, is reviewed by the University Senate Committee on Student Discipline. Based on the committee's recommendation, the provost makes a decision and takes action regarding any disciplinary sanction.
6. The dean of students maintains the disciplinary records on all findings of academic dishonesty and is responsible for forwarding notice of multiple findings.

[Notice to Sociology faculty member: Please keep one copy of this form, give one to the student in their packet, give one to the Director of Instruction, and pass another along to the Chair (who will forward it to the Dean of Arts and Sciences for their files).]

**Georgia State University
Notice of Academic Dishonesty**

TO THE STUDENT: This serves as notification to you that the below signed individual has found you in violation of the University policy on academic honesty and has established the penalty(ies) described below.

You have a right to deny this finding of academic dishonesty and request a college hearing to determine your guilt or innocence. The academic penalty recommended below cannot be challenged. If a disciplinary penalty has been recommended below, you have a right to challenge the disciplinary penalty (whether or not you accept the finding of academic dishonesty) and to appear before the University Senate Committee on Student Discipline; this committee automatically reviews all recommendations for student disciplinary sanctions.

To deny the finding of academic dishonesty or to challenge a recommendation for a disciplinary penalty, you must submit within 20 business days of receipt of this notice a written statement to the college dean requesting either or both of these actions. If you do not respond within 20 business days, it will be assumed that you have accepted this finding of academic dishonesty and that you have waived the right to challenge the disciplinary penalty, if any, recommended below. This notice of academic dishonesty will then be included in your disciplinary file in the Dean of Students' Office. This information (unless the disciplinary penalty recommended below, if any, specifically indicates otherwise) is not included in your permanent academic record and is used for disciplinary purposes only. Multiple findings of academic dishonesty may result in additional recommendations for disciplinary sanctions.

Definition of penalties and a summary of review and processing procedures are contained on the reverse of this notice. A complete copy of the university's policy and procedures regarding academic honesty can be obtained from the dean of the college or the dean of students.

Student Name _____ Panther ID _____

Course _____ Comp # _____ Term/Yr _____

Instructor _____ College _____

Statement of finding of academic dishonesty by initiator:

(cheating on examination, plagiarism, falsification, etc.)

(Full description; can include attachments)

Academic penalty recommended:

Disciplinary penalty recommended, if any:

Initiator's Signature

Date

Chair's Signature

Date

| |
|---------------------------------|
| Date student notified: _____ |
|---------------------------------|

Social Sciences Research and Instructional Council
Teaching Resources Depository:
Other Teaching Tools

Plagiarism

by

Earl Babbie

**Plagiarism is the presentation of
another's words or ideas as your own.
It is a *bad* thing.
Don't do it.**

Turning in a paper actually written by your room-mate and saying "I wrote this" would be a flagrant example of plagiarism. The same would be true if you were to buy a term paper from a "paper mill."

The lightest punishment for plagiarism of this sort would be a grade of **zero** for the paper. Other common punishments are **failing** the course or even **expulsion** from school. As you can see, plagiarism is a very serious offense in academia.

Plagiarism is wrong for several reasons.

First, it is **lying**. If you have been asked to write something as evidence that you have grasped the materials of the course you are taking, offering someone else's work as evidence is a lie. It is no different from having someone else take an examination in your name.

Second, it is an **insult** to your fellow students. When you plagiarize, just as when you cheat on an exam, you treat unfairly those who play by the rules. You seek an unfair advantage over them, and inevitably, you will find yourself looking down on those who devote their time and energy to the task which you have cheated on.

Third, when you use other people's words and ideas without their permission, it is **stealing**. It would be wrong to sneak into a factory and steal the products manufactured there during the day, and in the academy, words, ideas, paintings, compositions, sculpture, inventions, and other creations are what we produce. It is wrong to steal them and claim them as your own.

Plagiarism is a big deal in the academy.

There are many forms of plagiarism, some less flagrant than the examples I began with. However, you need to understand and avoid all forms of plagiarism. Presenting someone else's words or ideas as your own--in any form--constitutes plagiarism. Some forms of plagiarism are probably not obvious to you, so I want to spell them out in detail. I think much plagiarism is inadvertent and unknowing. I want to help you avoid that potential embarrassment.

Let's suppose you were assigned to write a book review of Theodore M. Porter's book, *Trust in Numbers: The Pursuit of Objectivity in Science and Public Life* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995). In preparing to write your paper, you come across a book review by Lisa R. Staffen, published in *Contemporary Sociology* (March, 1996, Vol. 25, No., 2, pp. 154-156).

Staffen's review begins as follows:

It has become fashionable to reject the notion of absolute objectivity on the grounds that objectivity is simply unattainable or, even if attainable, is undesirable.

Staffen's opening is good, active prose. Let's suppose you like it. More important, you imagine that your instructor would like it a *lot*. You decide to start your paper as follows. (I've indicated Staffen's original comment in red.)

Plagiarism: I feel it has become fashionable to reject the notion of absolute objectivity on the grounds that objectivity is simply unattainable.

This would be a clear case of plagiarism and therefore unacceptable. Adding "I feel" at the beginning is a nice personal touch, but it doesn't change anything. Let's tell the truth: you have probably not spent a lot of your waking hours agonizing over "the notion of absolute objectivity," much less worrying about whether others would reject the notion or embrace it with passion.

Plagiarism: I feel it has become stylish to reject the idea of absolute objectivity on the grounds that objectivity cannot be achieved.

Even editing the passage as I've done above would constitute plagiarism. While you have changed some of the words--"stylish" for "fashionable", "idea" for "notion," etc.--the idea being expressed, along with many of the phrases, have been taken from someone else, without acknowledging that fact.

Leaving off "I feel," by the way, wouldn't absolve the sin. Anything you write in a term paper, unless you indicate otherwise, is assumed to be your own, original thought. It's fine to have original thoughts, incidentally. In fact, we encourage it. We're happiest when your thoughts and opinions are based in evidence and reasoning rather than rumor and belief, but don't feel that your professors are somehow perversely thrilled by the mindless parroting of ideas they already know about. (I know it sometimes seems like that.)

Plagiarism: Many people today have rejected the idea that there is such a thing as absolute objectivity since they do not believe that it can be achieved.

Even though few of the original words remain in the passage above, the thought expressed has been taken from another writer and offered as your own. Even if you found a way to express Staffen's idea without using *any* of her original words, that would still constitute plagiarism. Sorry. If you're going to use someone else's words and/or ideas, you have to give them due credit.

Use someone else's words and ideas, go to jail. Well, it's not quite that bad, but academics don't have much sense of humor about cheating. I'll admit, I kind of enjoyed the student who turned in a paper his friend had written for the same course the preceding semester. He just whited-out his friend's name and typed his own over it--and you could read the original name from the back of the page. He took the course again.

There is nothing wrong with presenting someone else's words and ideas in a term paper or in a published, scholarly work. In fact, any field of thought evolves as people read each other's ideas, learn from and build on those ideas. The key to doing this properly lies in *acknowledgement* and *citation*.

When we borrow words and ideas from others, we acknowledge that we are doing so, and we give our readers a full bibliographic reference so they would be able to locate and read the original.

It might be useful for you to leaf through some academic journal articles. It will be clear that academics think it's fine to use other people's words and ideas. It's just important to use them appropriately. Use them as resources for building your own unique contribution to the ongoing conversation of ideas.

You might want to create a sculpture of an elephant. No problem. Get a block of granite and chip away everything that doesn't look like an elephant. Just don't pretend that you created the granite. (Unless you did, in which case I *really* apologize.)

Here's an example of how you might properly include Staffen's comment in your term paper, with a bibliographic entry at the end of the paper.

Proper use: Lisa Staffen (1996:154) begins her review of Porter's book by suggesting "It has become fashionable to reject the notion of absolute objectivity on the grounds that objectivity is simply unattainable or, even if attainable, is undesirable."

This gets the information out for the reader, and it would be accompanied by an appropriate bibliographic citation at the end of your paper:

Bibliography: Lisa R. Staffen, "Featured Essays," *Contemporary Sociology*, March, 1996, Vol. 25, No., 2, pp. 154-156.

Here are some other acceptable ways to use Staffen's passage. Each would be accompanied with a bibliographic entry at the end of the paper.

Proper use: In her review of Porter's book, Lisa Staffen (1996:154) says the idea of absolute objectivity is now commonly rejected as "simply unattainable or, even if attainable, [as] undesirable."

Proper use: According to Lisa Staffen (1996:154), it has become fashionable to reject the idea of absolute objectivity altogether.

In summary, it is quite acceptable -- even desirable -- to include the ideas of others in your term paper. This can be a sign of good scholarship, as well as assuring your instructor that you've done some of the reading for the course. (We like to think you read some of it.)

However, it's important that you *acknowledge and cite materials properly*. The key is that your reader know what you are borrowing and how to look up the original materials.

By the way, if your instructor asks you to write a report on plagiarism, don't copy what you've just read here unless you cite it properly...

© *The Author; Last Modified 26 October 1998*