Sample Syllabus Statements on Technology in the Classroom

The following sample syllabus statements, grounded in research, teaching literature, and practice-based experience, were developed by Dr. Kaley Carpenter, Associate Teaching Professor, Augustine Culture Seminar (ACS) Program and VITAL Faculty Associate, spring 2020.

The statements, written for the student audience, serve as an instructional resource and link to related university policies. *Please adapt and/or cut and paste directly into the pertinent section of your syllabus.*

**Technology in the Classroom:**

Villanova has no university-wide policy on digital technology in the classroom *except for accommodating documented student need*. Individual faculty determine how and whether digital devices are used. In our class, technology is coordinated with course material to enrich your learning. To make this possible, use common sense and courtesy as described in the *Student Handbook* (esp. pp. 8, 13): silence, turn over, turn off, or put away your devices to avoid audible and visual distractions. Use them for class-related purposes only; non-instructional or unprofessional use may impact your final grade. Consider these additional facts when working outside of class as well: counter to common belief, we are not good at multi-tasking because it leads to distraction. Once distracted, our brains take significant time to refocus (2-23 minutes) and our learning is impacted (e.g., lower test scores and grades). Paying attention pays off. Practicing digital self-control will greatly enhance the learning experience for everyone.¹

[Link](#) to syllabus statement regarding accommodations for students with disabilities (provided by Learning Support Services)

**Laptops in Note Taking:**

Even when devices like laptops are diligently used for typed note-taking, studies show they invite rote transcribing versus mental processing or thinking. This leads to poorer academic performance. Consider hand-writing your notes in class for potentially more efficient, deeper, real-time learning.²

---


Social Media Use for Coursework:
Coursework completed with social media must conform to the policies of common sense and courtesy set forth in the Student Handbook (esp. pp. 8, 13) and follow class “Netiquette” guidelines (see below). In order to complete these assignments safely and effectively, social media accounts must be set up as outlined in the syllabus and per faculty instruction.

“Netiquette” (short for “Net Etiquette”) Guidelines – Standards of Behavior While On-Line:

1. **Face-to-face** communication should guide on-line communication: if you would not say it in person, then do not say it on-line. Avoid sarcasm or other speaking styles that need facial expressions or vocal nuance to register properly with others.

2. **Formality**: While the digital, on-line medium lends itself to informal, even abbreviated, communication with family and friends, your use of this medium for class is with professionals, peers, and potentially the public. Craft your content with appropriate formality, courtesy, accuracy, and restraint.

3. (not so) **Fast**: Spend time familiarizing yourself with your on-line space, like checking whether your chosen topic/question has already been covered on a list serve, before you post. Then be brief in what you offer (respect people’s reading/viewing time). Proofread and spell check your work. Finally, be cognizant that, in a medium used by different people at different times, you may have to wait longer for a response; communication within the course context is not instantaneous.

4. **Forgive**: Even in this digital world, we are all human. The Golden Rule works on-line as well as off. Treat others as you want to be treated, especially when mistakes have been made. One-on-one communication is often more appropriate in clarifying, consulting with, or correcting others than broadcast messages.

---

3 Twitter, Instagram, TikTok, etc., are public resources and not authenticated by Villanova. Thus they open the door to the potential of people outside of Villanova to join the discussion. To minimize this possibility, we recommend having students set up a separate Twitter and Instagram account for the purposes of the course (separate from the personal account they may already have). We recommend students set up this account under faculty guidance in class and select a common course-based name for both accounts that does not identify them by their name; e.g., vufirstinitiallastnamecourse#.