



**Department of Communication & Rhetorical Studies**  
**Department Policies and Services**

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## **Department of Communication & Rhetorical Studies**

### Department Policies and Services

This is a quick reference guide to help students new to the Department of Communication & Rhetorical Studies gain an understanding of 1) basic policies and procedures, and 2) services available through the department. The rules and guidelines outlined here are not meant to be restrictive, but to provide a common set of expectations and reduce uncertainty about how we do things. Items listed here pertain only or primarily to matters dealt within the department. Policies that apply to all students within the university or within the College of Visual and Performing Arts appear in the university or college student handbooks.

### POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

#### **Attendance**

The attendance policy for each course in the Department of Communication & Rhetorical Studies (CRS) is determined by the course professor and is specified in the course syllabus. Students who know in advance that they will have more absences than those allowed in an individual course due to extracurricular activities sponsored by the university or other activities requiring their presence elsewhere *must* discuss this conflict with the course professor *within the first week of the semester*. At this time, the student must also produce a list of anticipated dates when she or he will be absent. While the course professor *may* agree to make reasonable accommodations for students with attendance issues, *all* students enrolled in a CRS course *must* complete *all* course assignments (written and oral), and it remains the *responsibility of the student* to arrange in advance for the completion and submission of required assignments in a manner specified by the professor. Additional requirements for the successful completion of courses for students with attendance issues may include earlier due-dates for assignments and additional assignments to substitute for participation in class discussion. Moreover, it is the *student's responsibility* to obtain notes for classes missed from other students, and students are advised to make these arrangements in advance of any absence.

#### **Absence due to illness**

Students who miss class due to illness retain the responsibility to complete all course requirements. Documentation should be provided to the professor upon the student's returning to the class to certify that the absence was due to illness, unless otherwise specified by the instructor. Normally, the most effective procedure to deal with extended absences (beyond a single class period) is to provide documentation to the College Office of Undergraduate Student Services (204 Crouse College), who then informs all of the student's individual professors. If a student will miss an exam, written assignment, or presentation due to illness, the student must contact the professor or teaching assistant prior to the missed class to request a make-up date.

**The College of Visual and Performing Arts has developed a very thorough policy and specific procedures for dealing with instances of academic cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic misconduct by students (see Appendix Four of the CVPA Undergraduate Student Handbook).** You should be fully aware of this policy and protect yourself from any accusations of misconduct. Students do not always realize when it is or isn't appropriate to work collaboratively with other students on assignments. We strongly recommend that you seek the course instructor's advice any time you are not absolutely certain which forms of collaborative work are allowed. Like traffic and other legal violations, ignorance of the law or policy is not a defense against misconduct. To protect yourself, observe the following:

1. Check the course syllabus for any special requirements or expectations that pertain to academic integrity for that course. If there is no stated policy, ask the instructor about her or his expectations.
2. Submit only your own original work on all assignments, unless you have specific instructions to the contrary. Always provide appropriate citation of sources for any work other than your own, including those taken from the web. Remember, plagiarism is a serious offense.
3. Take the initiative to prevent other students from copying your answers on exams, essays, or other assignments. Do not lend assignments to be turned in to other students.
4. Do not look in the direction of other student's papers during examinations.
5. When an assignment calls for you to locate examples to illustrate a concept or theory, do not assume that sharing the examples you locate with other students is appropriate. The instructor may be testing students' ability to locate and recognize examples independently. Always check with the instructor when in doubt.

Writing Quality. It is expected that all written assignments will reflect college-level writing skills. All instructors share responsibility for the evaluation and improvement of composition skills. Instructors may base grades for written work on the quality of writing.

Late Work. All assignments are due on the dates for which they are assigned. In general, late submissions will be penalized according to specific course policy. Students who anticipate problems in completing an assignment or who have emergencies preventing completion should discuss the circumstances with the instructor at the earliest opportunity. The instructor may reduce or eliminate penalties at his/her discretion.

Incompletes. Normally students are expected to complete all coursework within the time constraints of a single semester. Incompletes are not granted except in extraordinary circumstances. Usually reasons of health are the basis for granting an incomplete. However, incompletes are not automatically granted. Students have the responsibility to request an incomplete from the instructor. Instructors have the discretion to issue incompletes. The request requires the completion of a "Request for Incomplete" form which stipulates the reason for the request, the nature of the outstanding work to be completed, the time frame for completion, and the default

grade. Incompletes are recorded as an "I" on the transcript and computed as an "F" with zero grade points. Unless removed by satisfactory completion of the required work by the due date, an Incomplete remains on the transcript. "Request for Incomplete" forms are available through the department secretary in 100 Sims Hall.

Beyond the regular schedule of courses, the Department of Communication & Rhetorical Studies offers students the opportunity to learn and apply advanced material in an independent and self-sustaining manner.

### **CREDIT FOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING**

The Department is governed by College of Visual and Performing Arts (CVPA) and general university policies for experiential course credits. CVPA limits students to a maximum of *12 credit hours* among the following categories of courses:

#### **Internships (SUIP 470)**

Internships are recommended for students as a means of obtaining career/vocational experience. Students normally enroll for intern hours during the junior or senior year. Department faculty members serve as advisors to interns. The Syracuse University Internship Program (SUIP) administers all internships. Information on internships is available through the SUIP office.

The following are general guidelines:

1. Internships are for variable credit ranging from 1-6 hours. For each hour of credit, the intern must complete 45 contact hours (3 hours/week in a 15 week semester).
2. Students may select from internships arranged through SUIP or develop their own contacts with an agency and then seek SUIP approval. In either case, the student completes an application for the internship and requests a faculty member to sponsor him/her.
3. The faculty sponsor will specify requirements for satisfactory completion of the internship. Requirements may include a journal, paper, or other indicators of learning.
4. Internships are graded either "pass" or "fail."
5. Student must have a 2.5 GPA or better to qualify for an internship.

In addition to the basic requirements, the following policy governs earned academic credit for internship experiences. The policy takes the form of a one-credit internship and a variable (1-6) credit internship.

#### **The One-Credit Internship**

A one-credit internship is primarily an opportunity to observe or participate in a work position that requires a basic grounding in communication theory or performance skills. The following constraints apply to the department-sponsored one-credit internship:

- limited to freshman and sophomore majoring in communication & rhetorical studies who have not yet completed the core.

- students are not eligible to register for the internship until the end of their first year at Syracuse.
- limited to one academic credit per individual internship experience.
- individual students are limited to a total of three (3) one-credit internship experience(s).
- the internship must be registered with SUIP and must follow the guidelines established by that program.
- a faculty member from the Department of Communication & Rhetorical Studies must serve as the faculty sponsor.
- the student must write a daily journal linking observations of communication behavior in the workplace to concepts and theories discussed in previous Communication & Rhetorical Studies classes (or an equivalent assignment appropriate to the job responsibilities of the internship).

### **The Variable-Credit Internship**

A variable-credit internship is a work experience monitored by an on-site supervisor as well as a faculty sponsor in which the student applies and analyzes communication theory and skills. The following constraints apply to department-sponsored internships:

- limited to students who have completed at least 54 credit hours and have completed a majority of the core curriculum courses (currently 3 out of 4 courses) in the Communication & Rhetorical Studies major.
- available for variable credit (1-6 credits), with 3 credits being the norm.
- individual students are limited to a maximum of 12 credits for all types of independent learning experiences (e.g., one-credit and variable-credit internships, experience credits, and independent studies).
- the internship must be registered with SUIP and must follow the guidelines established by that program.
- a faculty member from the Department of Communication & Rhetorical Studies must serve as the faculty sponsor.
- the student must complete a set of academic assignments appropriate to the student's job responsibilities, previous coursework, and the number of credits for which the student is registering. The assignments are defined by the student and faculty sponsor to the satisfaction of the faculty sponsor.

All internship credits are counted toward the student's 30 credits of General Electives. They do not count as CRS credits.

### **Experience Credit (CRS 470)**

Students may serve as undergraduate teaching assistants for designated Communication & Rhetorical Studies courses or function in specified responsibilities such as CRS ambassadors. Unlike internships, these are administered through the department. These courses require the approval of the course director who stipulates the assignments and responsibilities of the undergraduate teaching assistant or similar responsibilities. These courses are normally for three (3) credits and are graded "A-F." Specific requirements are set by the course director. Students must

complete a form for "Experience Credit" available through the secretary in 100 Sims. A student may not enroll for CRS 470 without prior approval by the course director.

### **Independent Study (CRS 290/490)**

Independent studies are individually negotiated courses of study which address specific subject material not available through the regular curriculum. An independent study/directed readings may not normally be taken to cover the same material available through an existing class. The following procedures apply to proposals for independent study/directed readings:

1. Make sure you meet the minimum criteria for applying for an independent study (i.e., GPA of 2.5 or better and junior/senior status)
2. Identify a topic you are interested in studying in depth.
3. Review Department course offerings to make sure course does not already exist.
4. Outline a proposed course of study, including:
  - a. Goals and Objectives of study
  - b. Potential assignments (papers, training materials, handbook, creation of video etc.)
  - c. Comprehensive reading list
5. Discuss proposal with advisor or another faculty sponsor. Faculty member may accept, decline, or suggest revisions to the proposal.
6. Complete "Proposal for Independent Study" form (available Sims 100) and submit to Office of Undergraduate Students (200 Crouse College).
7. Independent studies normally earn 1-6 credits; typically 3 credits. Faculty member will identify the criteria by which a grade of A-F will be assigned.

Every major in the Department is linked to a particular faculty member for advising purposes. In addition, peer advisors, teaching assistants, other faculty, and the chair of the department are available to discuss important issues related to your plan of study. Each freshman is encouraged to develop a special relationship with his or her advisor, as the first year requires the most significant adjustments. It would not be unusual to meet with your advisor four or five times during your first semester at S.U. If you do not know who your advisor is, you should call the main office to find out.

### **Faculty Advisors**

If you're like most students, you probably wish that faculty members were available around the clock to advise you as the need arises. What you may not realize is that faculty members' teaching activities (designing courses, preparing and delivering lectures, marking papers and exams, and advising students) make up only part of a university professor's responsibilities. In addition to teaching, professors are expected to: 1) provide extensive "service" to the University and the profession, and 2) produce new knowledge by actively engaging in research. As part of their service requirements, faculty serve on departmental and university committees, help administrate professional organizations, and serve as advisors to student organizations. As part of research, faculty members write and deliver conference papers at regional and

national conventions and write articles and books. To keep up with new developments in their field, they spend many hours per week reading journals and books and interacting with colleagues at other universities. All of these activities enrich the instructional process, but they also take a great deal of time. While faculty members generally enjoy spending time with students, they often do not have the luxury of spending many hours per week in conference with students. For these reasons, faculty set aside "office hours" during which any student can drop in to discuss problems or concerns. Office hours are posted outside each faculty member's office and are listed in the main office. Please try to see your advisor and other faculty members during their office hours if at all possible. When this is not possible, make an appointment to speak to him or her at a mutually agreeable time. You may also leave a message in the professor's mailbox or email your faculty advisor. It is a good idea to leave a phone number where you can be reached. The faculty member will try to reach you in a timely manner. If you follow the procedure above and are repeatedly unable to contact a faculty member, please inform the chair.

### **Teaching Assistants**

Teaching Assistants are graduate students who teach recitation sections of large, introductory lecture courses and perform other duties for the department. Like faculty, they play several roles. They are full-time students who, like you, must study, take exams, and write papers in addition to their teaching responsibilities. They are good sources of information about departmental activities/policies, but we ask that you respect their time as well. Contact them during their posted office hours whenever possible.

### **Peer Advisors**

Every freshman is assigned a peer advisor, an upperclassman in the same major, and prior to entering school in the fall semester. This person can be especially helpful during the first few weeks of the semester, but the function of a peer advisor is to help new students throughout the first year. This means that you may consult your peer advisor about course options, study habits, and other academic or social concerns. You should keep this person's name and phone number in a handy location.

### **The Department Chairperson**

The Department Chairperson is available when you have concerns that cannot be resolved through other means or when you want to make a suggestion or volunteer to assist in departmental functions. You will need the Chair's signature on several forms. Please see the departmental secretary to schedule an appointment or to leave the form for the chair's signature.

Some specific reasons you may need to see the Chair or get the Chair's signature:

1. to approve and sign paperwork for petitions, course substitutions, proposals for independent study, experiential credit, intra-university transfers, minors, waivers for closed courses
2. to resolve and discuss dissatisfactions with a grade received from a course/instructor, difficulties in working with advisor, other problems with an instructor/class