# Citations, Plagiarism, and Academic Writing

Telecommunications Graduate Writing Workshop

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## Beginning Words

“We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.”

- Aristotle

“Self-plagiarism is style.”

- Alfred Hitchcock
Presentation Overview

- The Writing Center
- Plagiarism
- Citations and Academic Writing

The MSU Writing Center

Locations:
- 300 Bessey Hall
  - 9-5, Monday - Thursday
  - 9-2, Friday
- Main Library
  - 3-10, Sunday - Thursday
- http://writing.msu.edu
- 432-3610
Writing Center Services

- One-on-one Consulting
- Grad Writing Groups
- Digital Writing
- Grammar Hotline
- Reference Library
  - Citation and style manuals
- Free Coffee!

What is Plagiarism?

Imagine these scenarios...
1. Jose finds and uses information on four linked pages of a website and lists only the home page in his works cited.
2. Suzanne uses the specific examples from an argumentative essay in the class textbook to structure her own paper.
3. Marcus finds the term “blogosphere” in a journal article and uses it in his paper.
Plagiarism

Please consider the following questions:

• What is plagiarism?
• Why is it such a serious issue?
• What do you associate with the term “plagiarism?”

From Latin plagiarus, literally, kidnapper, from plagium netting of game, kidnapping, from plaga net (m-w.com)

Highlights of the TC Plagiarism Policy

• “Plagiarism means presenting, as one's own, the words, creative work or opinions of someone else.”
• “Plagiarism occurs when such a sequence of ideas is transferred from a source without the process of digestion, integration and reorganization in the writer's mind, and without acknowledgement.” (Emphasis added)
Causes of Plagiarism

• The way that we define plagiarism is culturally and historically situated.
• There are those who intentionally plagiarize and should be punished accordingly.
• But, what might cause an otherwise thoughtful and well-intentioned student to plagiarize?

Defining Plagiarism

1. Intentional: Outright copying or academic dishonesty
   • Improper copying of text by quoting or paraphrasing a source without citation
     • Not to be confused with misuse of sources
   • Buying a paper/having it written for you

2. Potentially unintentional (or perceived):
   • Using a structure from another paper
   • Using a similar thesis and evidence
   • Building off of an author's ideas
   • ... all without citation

For more information: Duke Library
Examining Plagiarism

- **Plagiarism Sample Quiz**
  - Quotes
    - Appropriate transitions and signaling phrases
  - Citations
    - Author’s names
    - Dates
    - Page numbers
  - Paraphrasing and summarizing

**Is it Plagiarism?**

Before we review citations styles, let’s analyze our initial three scenarios.

1. Jose’s citation of only one website and not the four sub-pages.
2. Suzanne’s use of the example essay’s examples and structure without citing it.
3. Marcus’ use of the term “blogosphere” without citing it.
Proactive Plagiarism Prevention

- When writing, cite all external material
  - Organize as you go
  - Create a bibliography with Easybib or Endnote
  - Know how to use electronic resources
  - Critically evaluate your sources, both print and non-print
  - “When in doubt, cite”
- Use “common knowledge” carefully
  - Indeed, common knowledge should be facts known by and agreed upon by many
  - Opinions are not common knowledge
  - In general, the author’s voice and style bring opinion to facts

In short, be a conscientious researcher.

Strategies to Begin Writing

- Find relevant quotations in the reading
- Pre-write while reading:
  - Respond to and take notes on the reading with the goals of the assignment in mind
  - Analyze the author’s argument
  - Question the author’s assumptions
  - Connect to other ideas in the course
- Organize your sources and relevant summaries and quotes as you work, not at the end!
## In-Text Citations

- Use signaling words and phrases
  - As Smith states; According to Jones
- Direct quotes
  - Uses quotations marks and exact words
- Paraphrasing/Summarizing
  - Uses author’s idea and your own words
- Block quotes
  - Large sections of text from author

## Paraphrasing vs. Summarizing

- Paraphrasing is generally defined as capturing what an author has said using *your own words*.
  - In contrast to summarizing many ideas into a smaller chunk of text, use paraphrasing to capture each idea in an author’s work in your own words.
  - Generally, it is easier and more effective to paraphrase an entire paragraph or a concept than it is to paraphrase a single sentence or a few words.
- Purdue OWL
Citation Styles

- There are many – APA, MLA, Chicago and even journal-specific styles
- Talk with your professors early on in the course to understand their expectations for citation style
- There are many sites online that can offer you advice on different styles
  - See handout for Hacker and Purdue URLs

Ending Words

- Be proactive with organization, time management and citations
- Check with others about citation style, especially professors
- Know what resources are available
  - MSU Library Electronic Resources
  - MSU Library Training for research and Endnote
Conclusions and Questions

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