

**Department of Religious Studies
California State University, Chico
Academic Integrity Policy**

**Revised Spring 2007
Effective for Academic Years 2007-2008 and 2008-2009**

Plagiarism and cheating are viewed as grave violations of the academic integrity policy of the California State University, Chico. This policy (EM 04-36) is posted at http://www.csuchico.edu/prs/EMs/EM04/em04_36.htm. The Department of Religious Studies views plagiarism and cheating as serious offenses. The policy of the Department of Religious Studies is that anyone found to have blatantly cheated or plagiarized on an assignment will automatically fail the course and be referred to Student Judicial Affairs for further disciplinary action. Students are required to take the Plagiarism Tutorial prepared by the Department of Religious Studies, which establishes the cornerstones of academic honesty, provides important definitions of cheating and plagiarism, gives examples of each, and requires the completion of a self-test on academic honesty. This policy applies to all RELS courses:

1. **Education:** Students in RS courses will undergo an educational experience, taught or administered by the instructor near the beginning of the semester (preferably before the first assignment but after the final class list has been established), to define and explain plagiarism and cheating, and to clarify the consequences of engaging in such activities. This educational experience can take the form of a Web CT tutorial or a written test or even a probing class discussion in which students furnish evidence that they have mastered the tenets of academic integrity.
2. **Definitions:** The Department of Religious Studies policy distinguishes instances of blatant or deliberate cheating and plagiarism from unintentional misuse of sources. It addresses *unambiguous* cases of plagiarism or cheating--cases in which there is no doubt that the student has acted in a duplicitous manner. Examples include lifting sentences from the Web without attribution or handing in someone else's work. The following definitions should help to maintain the distinction between cheating, plagiarism, and misuse of sources.

Cheating : Cheating is intentional fraud or deception for the purpose of improving a grade or obtaining course credit and includes all behavior intended to gain unearned academic advantage. Cheating includes either helping or attempting to help another person cheat (adapted from the Office of Student Judicial Affairs at California State University, Chico, "Cheating, an Ounce of Prevention").

Misuse of Sources: Misuse of sources is defined as "carelessly or inadequately citing ideas and words borrowed from another source. . . . Ethical writers make every effort to acknowledge sources fully and appropriately in accordance with the contexts and genres of their writing. A student who attempts (even if clumsily)

to identify and credit his or her source, but who misuses a specific citation format or incorrectly uses quotation marks or other forms of identifying material taken from other sources, has not plagiarized. Instead, such a student [has] failed to cite and document sources appropriately” (Council of Writing Program Administrators. "Defining and Avoiding Plagiarism: The WPA Statement on Best Practices." *WPA Position Statements and Resolutions* Jan. 2003, 12 Feb. 2004 <http://www.wpacouncil.org/positions/WPAplagiarism.pdf>).

Plagiarism “Plagiarism occurs when a [student] attempts to deceive by using someone else’s language, ideas, or other original (not common-knowledge) material without acknowledging its source” (Council of Writing Program Administrators. "Defining and Avoiding Plagiarism: The WPA Statement on Best Practices." *WPA Position Statements and Resolutions* Jan. 2003, 12 Feb. 2004 <http://www.wpacouncil.org/positions/WPAplagiarism.pdf>).

3. **Consultation with other Faculty:** RS faculty should consult (with evidence of the infraction in hand) the chair or another member of the department when they discover instances of cheating or plagiarism. This is intended to confirm that the identified offense actually rises to the level of “deliberate” or “blatant” cheating or plagiarism, and to encourage follow-through until the investigative process reaches its conclusion. It is not the intent of this policy to turn faculty into inspectors. Nonetheless, the policy admonishes RS faculty never to turn a blind eye to instances of cheating or plagiarism.
4. **Consequences:** *Any student who has deliberately or blatantly cheated or plagiarized on any graded assignment shall fail that course---not merely the assignment---and shall be reported to Student Judicial Affairs.*
5. **Force of the Policy:** This policy does not in any way impinge on academic freedom or on the way in which a professor chooses to teach his or her course. This policy enumerates that which is “strongly recommended,” but does not articulate a “requirement,” strictly speaking. As such, failure to apply the policy will not result in censure or sanction of any sort.

Other Sources: In addition to sources introduced in this policy and the plagiarism tutorial, the following websites may be helpful in discussions of this policy.

“Plagiarism,” by Earl Babbie, at
<http://www.csubak.edu/ssric/Modules/Other/plagiarism.htm>