**Conduct of Classes AA/PPS No. 02.03.02**

**Issue No. 2**

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Sr. Reviewer: Associate Provost**

**01. POLICY STATEMENTS**

01.01 This statement contains information related to the conduct of individuals during class sessions and all other interactions associated with the class including tutoring, office hours, group projects, off-campus experiences, online meetings, and other learning environments. For policies regarding the conduct and planning of courses, see [AA/PPS No. 02.03.01](http://policies.txstate.edu/division-policies/academic-affairs/02-03-01.html), Conduct and Planning of Courses. The terms “instructor” and “faculty member” are used interchangeably.

\*01.02Texas State University encourages a supportive and dynamic learning environment that is conducive to the free exchange of ideas. Students and faculty members have a shared responsibility for creating this environment in all classes including laboratories, traditional classrooms, study abroad, independent studies, private lessons, and other settings.

**02. INSTRUCTOR ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY**

02.01 Faculty members have full responsibility for the conduct and implementation of the classes to which they are assigned. The [Faculty Handbook](https://www.provost.txst.edu/resources-faculty.html) affirms that faculty members enjoy full academic freedom, including the right to freely discuss the subject matter of their area of specialization, as well as academic responsibilities, including:

a. maintaining competence in their fields;

b. conscientiously executing assigned academic duties;

c. not allowing the exercise of academic freedom to interfere with the performance of their academic responsibilities; and

d. avoiding classroom focus on controversial material unrelated to the course subject.

02.02 Instructor responsibility includes an obligation to uphold standards related to the awarding of credit hours for student work and to set expectations for classroom or direct faculty instruction and time spent by students on out-of-class assignments and activities described in [G/PPS No. 02.11](https://policies.txst.edu/division-policies/global/02-11.html), Instructional Contact Time and Academic Credit.

02.03 Faculty members teaching traditional face-to-face courses are expected to meet each of their scheduled classes during the semester for the entire class period. Faculty teaching hybrid courses (50–85 percent online) or fully online courses (85–100 percent online) are expected to engage in structured and direct instruction with students via online and electronic tools in addition to any scheduled face-to-face instruction.

02.04 Exceptions to the class meeting schedule should not be made for classes on days immediately before or after holidays and vacations. If an instructor must be absent, he or she should inform the department chair or school director so that a substitute may be assigned, or an alternative arrangement or assignment may be made.

02.05 A complete statement of the university’s policy concerning absence of instructors is included in the [Faculty Handbook](https://www.provost.txst.edu/resources-faculty.html) under the subtopic “Absences” of the section entitled “General University Policies Affecting Faculty Members.”

**03. COURTEOUS AND CIVIL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT**

03.01 Faculty members are responsible for managing the classroom environment. While in the classroom, faculty should exercise authority with a sense of fairness, focus on relevant issues, set reasonable time limits, assess the quality of ideas and expression, and make sure students are heard in an orderly manner. In general, faculty members should:

* + 1. clarify standards for the conduct of the class by documenting those standards in the course syllabus that should be discussed with students on the first day of class. The [Sample Syllabus Statement on Civility in the Classroom document](http://gato-docs.its.txstate.edu/jcr:94d07a6e-1b31-46f6-a3a9-8692ec428d4f/PPS4-02AttA.doc) provides a statement on civility that faculty may want to include in the syllabus;
    2. follow rules of behavior that apply to students, such as not eating, smoking, bringing pets, or using cell phones during class or otherwise disturbing the academic atmosphere of the class;
    3. begin and end class at the appointed time, report damaged equipment and space to the appropriate academic units, and leave the classroom in a condition suitable for the next class (i.e., desks returned to their original configuration, log-off of computer systems); and
    4. serve as a role model for the expected conduct from students.

03.02 Both students and faculty have responsibilities for maintaining an appropriate learning environment in all class settings, which requires courteous and civil behavior from students as well as instructors.

1. If a student behaves in a manner that the instructor considers to be discourteous to the instructor or to any member of the class, the instructor may, at his or her discretion, request that the student desist or request that the student leave the classroom.
2. If the student’s behavior disrupts the class, the instructor should apply the procedures described below. Faculty members who encounter students whose behavior is extremely disruptive or threatening may want to consult with the Student Behavior Assessment Team described in [UPPS No. 07.10.05](http://policies.txstate.edu/university-policies/07-10-05.html), Student Behavior Assessment Team.

03.03 Academic freedom grants students and faculty members latitude to express their views as they inquire and pursue knowledge. The expression of dissenting or unpopular views does not in itself amount to disruptive behavior, and university policies governing disruptive behavior should not be employed to curtail or punish speech protected by academic freedom or law.

**04. PROCEDURES FOR CLASSROOM DISRUPTIONS**

04.01 Disruptive behavior in the classroom is prohibited in [Section 2.02 of Texas State's Code of Student Conduct](https://studenthandbook.txstate.edu/rules-and-policies/code-of-student-conduct.html). The term classroom disruption means behavior a reasonable person would view as substantially or repeatedly interfering with the conduct, instruction, and education of a class. Examples include:

1. repeatedly leaving and entering the classroom without authorization (including coming to class late or leaving early without a valid excuse);
2. making loud or distracting noises;
3. persisting in speaking without being recognized;
4. resorting to physical threats or personal insults;
5. using cellular phones or other electronic devices during the class;
6. coming to class under the influence of alcohol or a controlled substance other than prescription medicine;
7. eating or drinking in the classroom;
8. sleeping in class;
9. reading the newspaper during class;
10. using a computer in class or other technology on activities not related to the class;
11. abusing others verbally or physically; and
12. otherwise making offensive remarks.

04.02 Rudeness, incivility, and disruption are often indistinguishable, and they may intersect. Speech becomes disruptive when it becomes abusive or threatening in which case it is appropriate to use university policies on disruptive conduct to address it. Rudeness can become disruptive when it is repeated, especially after a warning has been given.

04.03 In specific situations of potential or actual classroom disruption, faculty members should:

a. consider a general word of caution to the class, rather than publicly warning a particular student, if inappropriate behavior is occurring for the first time;

b. speak to the student after class if a student's behavior is irritating but not disruptive;

* + 1. speak to the student during class, if a student's behavior is disruptive. Be firm but courteous, and indicate that further discussion can occur after class. Avoid public arguments and harsh language;

d. direct a student to leave the classroom for the remainder of the class

period if the student persists in disrupting a class. Discuss the matter with the student, the department chair or school director, and the assistant dean of Students for Student Justice within 24 hours;

* 1. refrain from using force or threats of force, except in immediate self-defense; and
  2. prepare a written account of the incident.

**05. PROCEDURES FOR STUDENT SUSPENSION FROM CLASS**

05.01 If an instructor seeks to suspend a student from class after the class period in which the disruption occurred, the instructor must obtain approval from the department chair or school director and the college dean for an interim class suspension. An interim class suspension will be for the day of the initial incident and up to two additional class days.

05.02 Within 24 hours day of issuing an interim suspension, the faculty member must present the matter to the assistant dean of Students for Student Justice.

05.03 The assistant dean will handle the matter as expeditiously as possible, using the procedures in the Texas State [Code of Student Conduct.](https://studenthandbook.txstate.edu/rules-and-policies/code-of-student-conduct.html)

05.04 Upon completion of the review, if the faculty member and student have not themselves reached a mutually agreed upon conclusion to the matter, then the assistant dean of Students for Student Justice will issue a decision in the matter. If the student does not agree to the decision, the assistant dean of Students for Student Justice will refer the matter to the Hearing Committee using the procedures outlined in the Texas State [Code of Student Conduct](https://studenthandbook.txstate.edu/rules-and-policies/code-of-student-conduct.html).

05.05 The Hearing Committee will render a decision on the matter. Either party may appeal the decision of the Hearing Committee to the vice president for Student Success (VPSS). The VPSS's decision is final.

**06. PROCEDURES FOR RECORDING OF CLASSROOM LECTURES, MATERIALS, AND DISCUSSIONS**

06.01 Students are prohibited from photographing and recording during classes, and from transmitting classroom lectures, instructor materials, and discussions by students unless written permission from the class instructor has been obtained and all students in the class as well as guest speakers have been informed that photographing or audio and video recording may occur. Permission to allow the audio and visual recording is not a transfer of any copyrights to the material recorded. Photographs, reproductions, videos, and audio recordings may not be uploaded to publicly accessible web environments or social media, including Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. An exception to this will be any student determined by the Office of Disability Services (ODS) to be entitled to education accommodations, to exercise any rights protected under [Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973](https://dredf.org/legal-advocacy/laws/section-504-of-the-rehabilitation-act-of-1973/) and the [Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990](https://www.ada.gov/pubs/ada.htm), including needed recording or adaptions of classroom lectures or materials for personal research and study.

06.02 Public distribution or the sale of lecture and discussion recordings and other instructional materials may constitute copyright infringement in violation of federal or state law, or university policy (see [AA/PPS No. 02.03.31](http://policies.txstate.edu/division-policies/academic-affairs/02-03-31.html), Commercial Use of Class Notes and Materials for a discussion of copyright ownership). Violation of this policy may subject a student to disciplinary action via the university Honor Code detailed in [UPPS No. 07.10.01](http://policies.txstate.edu/university-policies/07-10-01.html), Honor Code.

**07. SEXUAL MISCONDUCT**

07.01 The university does not tolerate sexual misconduct. The university's policy concerning sexual misconduct is detailed in the [TSUS Sexual Misconduct policy](https://www.tsus.edu/about-tsus/policies.html).

**08. PUBLICATION REQUIRED**

* 1. A summary of and a reference to this policy must be published in the [Student Handbook](http://www.dos.txstate.edu/handbook.html) and the [Faculty Handbook](https://www.provost.txst.edu/resources-faculty.html) each year that the handbooks are published.

**09. PROCEDURES FOR ATTENDANCE VERIFICATION**

09.01 On the census day of each semester (e.g., 12th class day of each fall and spring semester), the course instructor will complete and submit the census day roster to the Office of the University Registrar. This roster serves as the university’s official documentation of a student’s attendance in their registered courses. In addition to being used as supporting documentation for the university’s enrollment count, the roster information is also used to verify to the federal government that a Title IV aid recipient began attendance in courses and to document any related proration of the Pell Grant, Iraq Afghanistan Service Grant, and TEACH Grant.

**10. REVIEWERS OF THIS PPS**

**10.01 Reviewers of this PPS include the following:**

**Position Date**

**Associate Provost November 1 E4Y**

**11. CERTIFICATION STATEMENT**

This PPS has been reviewed by the following individuals in their official capacities and represents Texas State Academic Affairs policy and procedure from the date of this document until superseded.

Associate Provost; senior reviewer of this PPS

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs