Contract on Classroom Behavior

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The Business Management, eCommerce and Computer Application programs are preparing students for professional positions where professional behaviors will be expected of them. These behaviors will be reinforced by requiring the students to adopt the rules stated in this contract. Adherence to the rules in this contract will be part of the student’s grade in this class. More serious breaches of student behavior in the classroom will be dealt with through the UMS Student Conduct Code procedures outlined in the conduct code booklet which can be found at the following link.


Most students exhibit appropriate behavior in class, but there is some disagreement what “appropriate” behavior is. At times, a consumer culture creeps into the classroom, with students sometimes perceiving faculty as employees hired to serve them. This is not the appropriate comparison – a professor is not here to give you what you want, but rather to help you obtain what you need. A professor is more like a physician. Just as any doctor who tells you “everything is fine” so that you’ll be happy (when everything isn’t fine) should be sued for malpractice, any faculty member who gives you an “A” regardless of your performance or allows anything to happen primarily because that is what will make you happy is doing you and other students a disservice.

Learning is a group activity, and the behavior of each person in class in some way or the other affects the learning outcomes of others. If we keep these thoughts and the following rules in mind, the classroom experience will be a better one for everyone involved.

Rules:

1. Class begins promptly at the beginning of the class period. You should be in your seat and ready to start participating in class at that time. That same rule also applies to me – I should be ready at the start of class, which means having the technology operational.
   a. Always bring the required supplies and be ready to be actively engaged in the learning process. This communicates preparedness and interest.
   b. If you come into class after an assignment has already been passed back, please do not ask for your assignment until after the class is over. It’s unfair to the other students in class to wait while the professor searches again for your paper because you weren’t there the first time. Just ask for it after class, and I’ll be happy to supply it to you.
   c. In deciding whether to attend class, please do not ask your professor if she/he is covering anything important on that day. The course is carefully planned out – every day is important.
2. If you bring a newspaper or other reading material to class, put it away before the start of class. If you sat in a business meeting and read the Wall Street Journal while the boss was outlining a new strategy, you’d likely be fired or demoted. The same standard applies here. In return, I promise to listen when you are talking to me and to treat you with respect.
3. Similarly, do not study material from other classes during this class. If you feel that you must spend our class time studying or doing homework, please go to the library.
4. If this class is in a classroom furnished with desktop computers, you will be expected to use the computers only when required for this particular class. Browsing the internet, participating in chat sessions, or checking the stock market is not an appropriate educational use and is a distraction to your fellow student and the professor. Repeated violations of this rule will result in termination of a student’s login rights.

5. The use of personal laptop computers is allowed in the class as long as you are using it for educational purposes related to the class but only to the extent that it does not provide a distraction to your fellow students or the professor. Excessive keyboard noise is a distraction; if you must take notes with a laptop, learn to type quietly. You would not attend a board meeting with a laptop unless the laptop was necessary for the board meeting. Using a laptop for entertainment while at a board meeting will most likely earn you a trip to the unemployment line.

6. Ipods, MP3’s and other personal music devices are to be turned off and stowed at the beginning of each class.

7. Turn your cell phone off or to vibrate before the start of class. I’ll also turn mine off.

8. It is fine to bring a drink or a snack to class, as long as it isn’t distracting and the class in not a computer lab. However, please remember that someone else will be coming into the room after your class is done, so PICK UP YOUR TRASH. You wouldn’t visit a friend’s house and leave newspapers, cans, bottles, and wrappers lying around after you left, so please don’t do it here.

9. I expect to have your attention for the full class period. This means:
   a. Avoid conversations with people sitting around you. It’s a small room – even if you whisper, please realize that other people can certainly see you, and that’s distracting to them (and to me.)
   b. Do not start zipping up your backpack and rustling papers before the end of the class period. There’s sufficient time for you to get to your next class to another without disrupting the last few minutes of this class. If one person does it, it seems to trigger others to do it, and it makes the last few minutes (when announcements are often made) less than optimal for everyone.

10. If you know that you’ll need to leave before the class is over, try to sit as close to the door as possible so as not to disrupt others. Similarly, if you arrive in class late, just slip in as quietly as possible and take the first available seat you come to.

11. If you are so tired that you cannot keep your head up, you should leave. I realize that environmental factors affect this, including warm rooms, dimmed lights, and material that may not be interesting to you. However, laying your head on the desk or sleeping in class is rude, and it is distracting to others. (Would you consider me rude if you invited me to a party and I slept on your sofa during the party?) I’ll try to make class interesting, but remember that my primary goal is to teach you, not to entertain you.

12. Turn in assignments on time. Earthquake, fire, flood, and catastrophic illness are the only reasonable excuses for a late submission. You want the professor to know who you are for the right reasons.

13. Being courteous in class does not mean that you have to agree with everything that is being said. However, you will rarely get your way with anybody in life by being rude, overly aggressive or just plain hostile. If you disagree with me (or I with you) it is a good idea to wait and discuss the situation when you are not angry. All interaction with your professor and other students in the class must be of a positive nature. Disrespectful and rude behavior towards the professor or fellow students will not be tolerated and any student that consistently violates this rule will be asked not to return to the classroom.
14. The rules of the syllabus, content of the exams, content of lectures, and calculation of the grade you earned are not a starting point for negotiations. While I am always willing to work with students on an individual basis, I cannot negotiate individual terms with each student.

15. Any questions related to the class are NOT an imposition – they are welcome and one of the professional highlights of my day. Chances are, if you have a question, someone else is thinking the same thing but is too shy to ask it. Please – ask questions! You’ll learn more, it makes the class more interesting, and you are helping others learn as well. But when you have a question or comment, please raise your hand first. Blurtling out a question or comment when someone else has already raised their hand is rude – it’s like jumping ahead of someone else in line.

16. If emergencies arise that require an absence from a session, be sure to get the notes and all other information that was covered in class from a colleague you trust. Expecting the faculty member to outline the class session in an independent message to you is not realistic as a professor typically has approximately 100 + students in his/her classes each semester.

17. Individual and Group assessment of student performance is a critical component of an effective educational system. In order for assessment to be accurate, the work delivered for assessment (grading) must reflect the student or group’s own efforts. The determination of what is group work or individual work is at the discretion of the professor and not the student. A good rule of thumb is that if the assignment has not been specifically identified as a group assignment than it is an individual assignment. It is for these and other reasons that I rigidly enforce the UMFK Student Academic Integrity Policy in this class. Any evidence of student submitting work that is not their own or receiving or giving assistance on graded assignments will result in a formal charge of cheating.

18. As the professor for this course, I additionally hold myself accountable to the following:
   a. be knowledgeable and current on the topics presented in this course
   b. be a role model of a professional in the discipline
   c. provide prompt feedback on assignments and quizzes (within one week)
   d. not to cancel classes without a good reason and inform students promptly if there will be a cancelled class
   e. make time available outside of classes for student-professor meetings
   f. be fair and impartial in student assessments
   g. follow published UMFK policy
   h. be sensitive to issues of gender, diversity, disability and student privacy
   i. “stick” to the syllabus and not make any unnecessary changes to the class that adversely effects student learning outcomes

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