

Disruptive Classroom Behavior¹

Disruptive behavior in the classroom can negatively affect the classroom environment as well as the educational experience for students enrolled in the course. Disruptive behavior is defined as any behaviors that hamper the ability of instructors to teach or students to learn. Common examples of disruptive behaviors include, but are not limited to:

- Eating in class
- Bringing children to class
- Monopolizing classroom discussions
- Failing to respect the rights of other students to express their viewpoints
- Talking when the instructor or others are speaking
- Constant questions or interruptions which interfere with the instructor's presentation
- Overt inattentiveness (e.g., sleeping or reading the paper in class)
- Creating excessive noise
- Entering the class late or leaving early
- Use of pagers or cell phones in the classroom
- Inordinate or inappropriate demands for time or attention
- Poor personal hygiene (e.g., noticeably offensive body odor)
- Refusal to comply with faculty direction

Students exhibiting these types of behaviors can expect a warning from the instructor or dismissal for the lesson in which the behavior occurs. Failure to correct such behaviors can result in dismissal from the course.

More extreme examples of disruptive behavior include, but are not limited to:

- Use of profanity or pejorative language
- Intoxication
- Verbal abuse of instructor or other students (e.g., taunting, badgering, intimidation)
- Harassment of instructor or other students
- Threats to harm oneself or others
- Physical violence

Students exhibiting these more extreme examples of disruptive behavior may be dismissed from the lesson or the entire course.

Students dismissed from a lesson will leave the classroom immediately or may be subject to additional penalties. Dismissed students are responsible for any course material or assignments missed.

Students dismissed from a course have the right to appeal the dismissal to the Department Chair responsible for the course. Appeals beyond the Department Chair may also be pursued. If no appeal is made or the appeal is unsuccessful, the student will receive a grade of WF (withdrawal – failing) regardless of the current grade in the course.

Conditions attributed to physical or psychological disabilities are not considered as a legitimate excuse for disruptive behavior.

¹ The description of disruptive behavior and listings of examples of disruptive behavior are taken from the Web sites of James Madison University, the University of Delaware and Virginia Tech.
