

## **Policies on Make-Up Exams, Cheating and Unofficial Withdrawals**

### **Make-Up Exams:**

***During the semester:*** there is no departmental policy regarding make up exams during the semester (quizzes, midterms, etc.)

- Some faculty have a strict "no make-up policy" and do not offer make up exams regardless of cause.
  - These faculty members simply weight the final exam more heavily for students who miss exams during the semester
  - Other faculty members allow students to make up missed exams provided they have a good excuse for missing the test
  - Whichever option you choose, you should make it clear on your syllabus and you should mention it in class when discussing the class administration
- As long as students are informed at the beginning of the semester what the policy is then they will not have cause for grievances about the policy later on.

***At the end of the semester:*** the university governs the administration of missed final exams

- Students who cannot take your final exam (for whatever reason) must petition their school for an incomplete.
  - If the school grants the incomplete, then the student has the right to take a make-up exam
  - The make-up exam will be administered by the school at the start of the next semester
- All faculty should be aware that for courses with undergraduate enrollment, one missed and/or make-up examination will be administered for each class regardless of the number of students who need to take the exam
  - To retrieve any make-up or missed examinations, please see the Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS) because each undergraduate school will contact the DUS rather than the faculty member
  - The DUS then follows-up with the individual faculty member

### **Unofficial Withdrawal:**

The College/GS policy on the grade of *UW* is that a *UW* is to be granted only to students who have

completed no substantial work in a class. The example given in the bulletin is that a student who has taken a midterm for a class is not eligible for this grade. The economics department enforces this policy.

- Unfortunately, many departments at Columbia use the *UW* as a way to avoid failing a student (either by granting it to students who do not show up to the final or who take the final and fail)
- Over the years, the department has noticed that some students become withdrawn and stop participating in class after a poor midterm hoping that you will give them a *UW*
  - These students are dismayed to see the *F* on their transcript.
- To avoid instance like this, you should make the departmental policy explicit on your syllabus and on the first class - students who complete a midterm (or any substantial work that you would like to name) are not eligible for the *UW*.

### **Cheating:**

- Cheating on exams is obviously not tolerated and if you or your TAs suspect cheating on an exam then you should bring it to the Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS) attention.
- Plagiarizing is equally egregious and should be brought to the DUS as well.
- A grey area is cheating on other types of assignments such as a homework assignment.
  - There is no set policy on what constitutes cheating on such assignments and what the penalty should be
  - You are encouraged to set the rules that you would like students to following regarding collaboration on work and assignment submissions (work alone, work in groups, open conversations between students, copying old answer sheets, etc.)
  - Furthermore, feel free to set the penalty for failure to comply with the rules (0 on an assignment, 0 on all assignments, etc.)
- Whatever policy you elect, must be clearly outlined at the beginning of the semester by putting it on your syllabus and pointing it out in class

**In conclusion - the best advice for dealing with all three of these issues is to make these policies explicit at the beginning of the semester. If one of these issues arises during the semester then it is better for both you and the students to have a clear policy to rely on.**