

## GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY LAW CENTER

**DATE:** December 5, 2016  
**TO:** All Georgetown Law Students  
**FROM:** Professor Steven Goldblatt, Chair, Professional Responsibility Committee  
Professor Michael S. Frisch, Ethics Counsel  
**RE:** Exams, Papers, and the Student Disciplinary Code

Examinations start tomorrow and we want to alert you to the types of Student Disciplinary Code violations that are of special importance at this time of year. You are being trained to become lawyers and adherence to rules is essential in our profession. You are responsible for knowing and complying with all rules governing exams and papers whether referenced here or not.

All students should be familiar with the terms of the Student Disciplinary Code, provided in the [2016-2017 Student Handbook of Academic Policies](#), in much the same way that you will be expected to be familiar with the rules of professional conduct when you graduate and enter the practice of law. Ignorance of these rules is not a defense now or when you enter the practice of law.

Special concerns are addressed below:

A. Plagiarism is prohibited conduct under Section 101 of the Student Disciplinary Code. Plagiarism is the use of the words or ideas of another as one's own and without proper attribution to the source. Law students who engage in plagiarism in examinations, papers, articles, or other law school-related assignments may be charged with administrative or disciplinary violations of the Code. See §§ 102 and 103.

Some of the circumstances under which plagiarism can occur are discussed more fully on the Georgetown University Honor Council website, <https://honorcouncil.georgetown.edu/whatisplagiarism>. The following topics are listed there:

1. *They Said It So Much Better. Shouldn't I Use Their Words?*

<https://honorcouncil.georgetown.edu/system/what-is-plagiarism/i>

2. *What is a Paraphrase, Anyway?*

<https://honorcouncil.georgetown.edu/system/what-is-plagiarism/ii>

3. *My Friends Get Stuff From the Internet*

<https://honorcouncil.georgetown.edu/system/what-is-plagiarism/iii>

4. *I Don't Have Time to Do It Right*

<https://honorcouncil.georgetown.edu/system/what-is-plagiarism/iv>

5. *A Citation is Not a Traffic Ticket*

<https://honorcouncil.georgetown.edu/system/what-is-plagiarism/v>

6. *What If My Roommate Helped Me?*

<https://honorcouncil.georgetown.edu/system/what-is-plagiarism/vi>

7. *In My Country/High School, Using Someone Else's Work is a Sign of Respect*

<https://honorcouncil.georgetown.edu/system/what-is-plagiarism/vii>

8. *I Really Didn't Do It!*

<https://honorcouncil.georgetown.edu/system/what-is-plagiarism/viii>

9. *What About Copyright?*

<https://honorcouncil.georgetown.edu/system/what-is-plagiarism/ix>

10. *Examples of Plagiarism*

<https://honorcouncil.georgetown.edu/system/what-is-plagiarism/x>

11. *Acknowledging Work of Others*

<https://honorcouncil.georgetown.edu/system/what-is-plagiarism/xi>

All law students are expected to review and be familiar with the Law Center's prohibition against plagiarism and the above-referenced links may be of assistance to students who are unsure or unfamiliar with plagiarism rules or want to double-check their understanding. When in doubt, law students should consult with faculty and administrators consistent with other Law Center rules and policies regarding submitted work.

**B. COLLABORATION ON TAKE-HOME EXAMINATIONS IS PROHIBITED.** Students are expected to strictly follow the rules for take-home examinations and discussing the exam with anyone while the exam is being taken is no more appropriate in a take-home exam than it would be in a monitored exam. Unless specifically permitted by the professor, students may not discuss an examination with anyone prior to submitting the completed examination to the Office of the Registrar. Students should be aware that any discussion—with other students, faculty, or anyone else—about the examination, no matter how casual, may be considered a violation of the Code. For instance, any online discussion of an examination is prohibited. Students are not permitted to share examination questions or their work product with others. Collaboration is a serious ethical violation that compromises the integrity of our examination processes. The Law Center carefully investigates whenever there is a suggestion that there may have been collaboration on take home examination answers. In aid of such investigations, advanced software programs are used to compare examinations for substantially similar answers suggesting collaboration.

**C. ANONYMITY IN EXAMS.** Do not reveal to your professor any information in the exam answers that would in any manner identify you as the author of your examination.

**D. POST-EXAMINATION COMMUNICATIONS.** If you have an issue relating to an exam or exam instructions, you have one place to go to and that is the Office of the Registrar. **DO NOT CONTACT THE PROFESSOR.** Sending an anonymous email or note to a professor that relates to the

examination violates this rule. Any questions about the examination must be directed to the Office of the Registrar, not the professor or anyone else.

E.               DISCUSSING EXAMS WITH FELLOW STUDENTS. Because exams are not all administered at the same time, you may not discuss the exam with other students until grades are posted.

F.               IN-CLASS EXAMINATIONS. Listen to and follow the instructions on the examination video.

G.               Students should review Section 402(a) through 402 (c) of the Code, pages 102-105 of the Student Handbook, which outlines how the Law Center treats the late return of take-home examinations, late arrivals and missed examinations, and the submission of the wrong document (paper or examination) for grading. Although housed in the Code, these Sections includes infractions that may not be violations of the disciplinary code infractions, depending on the nature of the conduct. Regardless of how the misconduct is classified, the penalties may be significant, including the possible receipt of an AP or AF grade for the course.

\* \* \*

The purpose of this memorandum is to alert all law students to be careful to comply with these rules. Students should be sure that they understand the concept of plagiarism, the terms of the late submission rules and the prohibition against collaboration. In this regard our goal is to educate and we hope that these rules are never violated. We also strive to protect the 99++ percent of our students who comply with the rules and to ensure that those few who choose to disregard them do not gain an unfair advantage.