

***Message from the Director on Academic Integrity******January 2021***

As we head towards the end of January, I wanted to take an opportunity to remind everyone of the University policy on academic integrity. Academic integrity is intellectual honesty and responsibility for academic work that you submit or work on with others. It involves commitment to the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. It is expected that students will respect these ethical values in all activities related to learning, teaching, research and service.

For our school, Academic integrity is about respecting and honouring the dedicated scholarship from authors, whether it is a book, article, website, report, lecture, it is necessary and respectful to acknowledge this work. Critically, we have noted over the years there is little understanding and/or respect for Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) scholarship. Although you may work closely with the Centre for Academic Communication or with other editors, we ask that you carefully consider how your support system is knowledgeable about BIPOC writing and scholarship. Another piece that has been problematic is student understanding of the pedagogical approach to storying. Storying, storytelling and 'writing stories' is very challenging. Storytelling is a methodology utilized to research, analyze and write. In this, it is complex, yet a powerful method of writing. In your academic journey and as you write from a decolonial equity lens, please ensure your work properly references all methods of writing, whether it is writing a story, a research paper or social work case note. Please ensure you communicate with your professor/instructor regarding appropriate referencing, specifically recognizing BIPOC scholarship.

The School of Social Work adheres to UVic's Policy on Academic Integrity and works to help students meet requirements of that Policy. As most courses in our School involve composing original posts to Brightspace discussion forums, writing essays, or providing other forms of written communication, plagiarism can become a particular concern. Students sometimes cite ignorance or confusion about what constitutes plagiarism however it is the responsibility and obligation of the student to know the policies, and what constitutes a finding of plagiarism. Plagiarizing is a serious academic and relational offence.

While it is difficult to itemize every type of plagiarism, the following examples highlight situations that are considered plagiarism:

- Hiring an editor for your written assignments without your instructor's approval. Different departments have different ideas on this, so it's best to ask your instructor.
- Buying or accessing a paper (in whole or in part) from the Internet or a social media site (such as Facebook)
  - Includes requesting access to papers/assignments completed by past students on a social media site.
- Having someone else write your paper or parts of it
- Failing to properly cite ideas or excerpts from the work of others (this includes online discussion posts)
- Failing to indicate a paraphrase of someone else's words (this includes online discussion posts)
- Using someone else's writing as your own, even just parts of it (this includes online discussion posts)
- Patch-writing: using pieces of different articles and joining the pieces with some of your own words
- Using someone else's idea as your own without citing it
- Having someone extensively revise your paper without prior permission from your instructor
- Self-plagiarism: using something—or even parts of something—that you wrote for one course in another course
- Multiple submissions of 'one' assignment, i.e. writing a paper for one course and re-submitting the paper in its entirety for another course

The School of Social Work has a responsibility to ensure that standards of academic honesty are met. In the fall of 2019, the School responded to instances of plagiarism related to students submitting or partially drawing upon assignments accessed through Facebook from their colleagues in our program. We have also responded more recently to instances where students failed to properly cite the ideas/theorizing of authors who had informed their work, to include what are direct quotes but cited as paraphrased ideas, and including another author's work without citing it, and leaving the reader to assume ideas were that of the student. Sometimes students respond to allegations of plagiarism by focusing on intentionality and arguing instances of plagiarism were unintentional and should not be considered serious violations of academic integrity. As a School, we approach these incidents from a decolonial equity lens which focuses on student relationality with and accountability to the author's they draw upon, and in particular, recognize that the scholarship of BIPOC scholars has a history of epistemic racism and exclusion, which must be honoured and respected. Inevitably, a student who fails to fully cite an author's work, especially the work of BIPOC authors and scholars, contributes to a climate of anti-Indigenous, anti-Black racism, disrespect, demonstrates a lack of accountability, and knowledge appropriation. The School expects that student intentions be guided by a commitment to decolonizing, equity practices.

As noted above, as a School we are committed to confronting plagiarism from a decolonial equity lens, and as such, each instance of plagiarism is assessed on an individual basis, with particular focus on the severity of plagiarism identified and student's willingness to take responsibility for their actions. Past responses ranged from giving students a warning, offering students an opportunity to re-write the assignment, receiving a failing grade for the specific assignment, and lastly, in a couple of instances students failing the course. It is important to know that under the "UVic Policy on Academic Integrity", instructors are granted the authority to assign a failing grade to an assignment due to "single or multiple instances of inadequate attribution of sources" (Undergraduate calendar, 2021).

Students who are unsure about the standards for citing or referencing their sources are required to access the extensive collection of information about this matter that is available on the University website at: <https://www.uvic.ca/current-students/home/academics/academic-integrity/index.php>. Further, you can reach out to The Centre for Academic Communication at: <https://www.uvic.ca/learningandteaching/cac/> for guidance if you are unsure about whether you are meeting standards. We strongly encourage you to study and become knowledgeable about varying referencing processes such as APA. Our goal is to support you as students, so please if you are unsure about your written text, do not hesitate to contact your instructor!

Sincerely,

*Kundoqk, Jacquie Green/Director*

*Gayle Ployer and Jennifer Nutton/ Co-Associate Directors for Field Education & Student Support*