

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is epidemic at the University. Most of it is unintentional. **Plagiarized papers will either be returned to you without grading, or will receive an F,** depending on how pervasive the plagiarism is. **Severe cases will be referred to Student Affairs.**

I will talk to the class several times about plagiarism to save us all the mortification of dealing with unintentional plagiarism. Here are the critical things to avoid:

- You may not use another person's words, not even just a phrase, without directly quoting the author. You will not be permitted to use quotes in your paper, so there should be **absolutely no occasion for you to use someone else's words.**
- You may not substitute words or phrases into someone else's sentences. This is still plagiarism.
- For every topic, there are some commonly used phrases. Using these phrases is not plagiarism. For example, Overkill Hypothesis is a standard way of referring to the idea that humans caused the Pleistocene large mammal extinction. Using the phrase is not plagiarism.
- Unintentional plagiarism almost always happens because you cut and paste material directly from your sources. **THIS IS A BAD IDEA.** Instead, you should **take notes** from your sources – either longhand or on your computer – or mark up paper copies of your sources. When students cut and paste sentences from their sources, those sentences often get pasted into the paper itself. **THIS IS PLAGIARISM,** whether you intended it to be or not.
- Students often say, “But I was paraphrasing my source”. **Don't. Paraphrasing is not good writing – it's not even good summarizing.** Your job is to synthesize information from multiple sources. Thinking of your job as paraphrasing your sources will just produce a bad paper with a high probability of plagiarized material.

To help you learn to synthesize in your writing without leaning too heavily on your sources, you will submit your paper using Turnitin. You will get a separate handout on how to use Turnitin