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Instructor

Handbook



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Overview

Welcome to the College of Media, Communication and Information! We are excited that you are joining us and contributing to our undergraduate curriculum. This handbook contains a brief overview of information and resources available to help you navigate teaching and includes undergraduate policies for both the college and the University. We hope this handbook is useful, but if you need information or assistance at any time, please contact your department chair or associate chair for undergraduate studies

The College of Media, Communication and Information at the University of Colorado at Boulder is a vibrant community of scholars and artists whose members share a commitment to excellence and innovation in research and teaching. The college offers programs leading to bachelors, masters, and doctoral degrees. The information contained in this handbook is focused on undergraduate teaching policies and resources. Please contact the chair or associate chair for undergraduate education within your department if you need further information or assistance with teaching issues not addressed in this handbook.

# Course Syllabus, University Policies and Syllabus Statements

Your course syllabus is an important document. Please be sure that you have aligned the syllabus with learning expectations within the department and, if teaching a course with a supervisor, the course expectations that have been identified by the course supervisor. Be sure to include in your syllabus information about office hours, how students can reach you, and grade structure for the course. It is also recommended that you provide a schedule of reading/assignments and include information about the final examination date/time for your course.

You MUST share a copy of your course syllabus with the administrative assistant within your department so that it can be archived, and your office hours can be recorded. If you are teaching a course with a course supervisor, please also share a copy with that individual.

The university has policies related to each of the areas of classroom conduct listed below. You should review these policies (links below) so that you are familiar with university expectations regarding each of these issues. The following statements are provided by the university, and instructors are expected to include them in their syllabus. You may wish to elaborate on issues such as plagiarism or classroom behavior, but these statements reflect campus policy that forms a foundation for each topic.

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# Syllabus Policy Statements: <http://www.colorado.edu/academicaffairs/policies-customs-guidelines/required-syllabus-statements>

CMCI has a college policy statement regarding diversity that should be included in your syllabus. The statement designed to help make students aware of resources available to students and of CMCI’s commitment to diversity. The statement and materials about implementing the policy are available on the CMCI intranet under Teaching Resources: <https://www.colorado.edu/cmci/cmci-intranet>

Accommodation for Disabilities:

All faculty assume responsibility for ensuring that their individual courses and content are accessible to all students. Please utilize principles of Universal Design when creating new courses; otherwise, make appropriate alterations to existing material to accommodate students who require assistance. You may contact our Universal Instructional Design Consultant on [the Academic Technology Design Team](http://www.colorado.edu/oit/services/academic-technology/academic-technology-design-team) in the Office of Information Technology for more information by calling 303-735-4357 (5-HELP).

Faculty consultations with an Access Coordinator in [Disability Services](http://www.colorado.edu/disabilityservices/faculty-staff) serve as an opportunity to provide clarity and guidance regarding the implementation of accommodations and working with students with disabilities.  To request an appointment with an Access Coordinator, contact Disability Services at [dsinfo@colorado.edu](mailto:dsinfo@colorado.edu) or 303-492-8671.

Please see the section below on Accommodation of Disabilities for further information about making accommodations for learning differences, chronic illness, and other needs.

Classroom Behavior:

Faculty and students should be aware of the campus [Classroom and Course-Related Behavior policy](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/student-classroom-and-course-related-behavior) which describes examples of unacceptable classroom behavior and provides information on how to handle such circumstances should they arise.  Faculty are encouraged to address the issue of classroom behavior in the syllabus, and to understand their [professional rights and duties](https://www.colorado.edu/facultydevelopmentandsupport/professional-rights-and-responsibilities-faculty-members).

Discrimination and Harassment:

CU-Boulder prohibits discrimination,[1] harassment and/or related retaliation based on protected class in admission and access to, and treatment and employment in, its educational programs and activities.[2] For purposes of this CU-Boulder policy, "protected classes" refers to race, color, national origin, sex, pregnancy, age, disability, creed, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran status, political affiliation, or political philosophy.

This prohibition applies to all students, faculty, staff, contractors, patients, volunteers, affiliated entities and other third parties. Any violations may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including, expulsion or termination of employment, as applicable. CU-Boulder will consider what appropriate potential actions should be taken, including contract termination and/or property exclusion, regarding third party conduct that is alleged to have violated this policy; however those options may be limited depending on the circumstances of the arrangement.

This prohibition applies to conduct that occurs on campus. It also applies to off-campus conduct, including on-line or electronic conduct, if the conduct (1) occurred in the context of an employment or education program or activity of the University or (2) has continuing adverse effects on campus.

CU-Boulder takes prompt and effective steps reasonably intended to stop any form of discrimination, harassment, and/or related retaliation, eliminate any hostile environment, prevent its recurrence and as appropriate, remedy its effects.

Faculty who have concerns about discrimination or harassment or who encounter students who report such concerns, can visit the following resource for information about reporting: <https://www.colorado.edu/institutionalequity/reporting-options>

Honor Code:

The Boulder campus has an [Academic Integrity Policy](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/academic-integrity-policy) and a [student Honor Code](http://honorcode.colorado.edu/); individual faculty members are expected to familiarize themselves with its tenets and follow the approved procedures should violations be perceived.  The campus has been working diligently to make this process work better and to provide guidance on ‘gray areas’ at the [Honor Code website](http://honorcode.colorado.edu/).

Religious Observance:

It is the responsibility of every instructor to explain clearly her or his procedures about absences due to religious observances in the course syllabus so that all students are fully informed, in writing, near the beginning of each semester’s classes.  [Campus policy regarding religious observances](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/observance-religious-holidays-and-absences-classes-andor-exams) states that faculty must make reasonable accommodations for students and in so doing, be careful not to inhibit or penalize those students who are exercising their rights to religious observance. Faculty should be aware that a given religious holiday may be observed with very different levels of attentiveness by different members of the same religious group and thus may require careful consideration to the particulars of each individual case.

For more information on the religious holidays most commonly observed by CU Boulder students consult the [online interfaith calendar](http://www.interfaith-calendar.org/).

See the [campus policy regarding religious observances](http://www.colorado.edu/policies/observance-religious-holidays-and-absences-classes-andor-exams) for full details.

# Office Hour Guidelines

Office hours are designated times that instructors make themselves available to students for help outside of class. Anyone teaching within CMCI is expected to hold at least 2 hours of office hours per week, so that students can receive individualized help if needed. Please remember that although 2 hours per week is required, there may be points in the semester where offering additional time would be appreciated by students. TAs should discuss office hour expectations with their course supervisor.

Please schedule office hours with student learning in mind and try to hold them at times students will be able to take advantage of them. Also, remember that students may need to discuss personal issues or problems with you during office hours, so it is important to conduct them in a professional setting. For individuals in shared offices, everyone should try to be sensitive to the needs of students and instructors during discussions with students.

# Course Rosters and Waitlist Process

Your official course roster can be found on MyCUInfo. Be aware that during the first two weeks of class, your roster will include both students who are enrolled and those who are waitlisted. (You’ll see a column with this information on the roster.)

Here is how waitlists work: During registration and drop/add periods, students may be able to place their names on a waitlist if the course is full. These students may attend your class during the first week hoping that they will be added to the course. Please be aware that while students often want to talk with instructors about being added to the course from the waitlist, the department and registrar have developed a system for waitlists that needs to be followed.

Most courses use a Resequenced Wait List. This is a priority system to determine who enrolls in a course as spaces open up. Priorities are established prior to registration. Students in the major are typically given priority in courses; also, students with a higher number of credits are given priority because they may need the course to graduate. So, a student’s position on the wait-list does NOT reflect when he/she requested registration for the course.

Instructors generally should NOT ask staff or advisors to enroll wait-listed students into their course. When a space opens up in a course, a student will be automatically enrolled in the class from the wait list. A notification e-mail message will be generated from the wait list to the student. Please note that students often have lengthy and complex accounts of why they need a particular course. Given competing student needs, it is very difficult to honor specific student requests regarding work schedules, other courses, or registration problems. If students seem to have a legitimate problem or concern, please refer them to their academic advisor.

Positioning on the wait-list can change during the registration and drop/add periods, so it is a good idea for students to check their schedule frequently to find out their position on the wait list.

Student Add/Drop Process

Students can add and drop courses via myCUinfo.

In general, add deadline is:

* after 5:00 PM the Wednesday of the second week of the semester; after this point, an instructor’s signature is required.
* after 5:00 PM the Friday of the third week of the semester, a dean’s signature is required.

In general, drop deadline is:

* before 5:00 PM on the Wednesday of the third week of school, a student can drop without being assessed tuition and fees and without receiving a W (withdraw) on their transcript.

However, a student has until the end of the 10th week of the semester to drop a course, but a W will appear on the transcript and no tuition or fees will be refunded. To initiate a drop after the third week of classes, the student must contact the registrar’s office.

# Email

Official university emails are sent to faculty and students' colorado.edu email addresses; hence, this email address should be used for all official correspondence. It is possible to forward emails from this address to another personal account, but please be aware that forwarded emails will continue to build up in the colorado.edu email's inbox, and if the account storage limits are reached, incoming emails will be returned to sender undelivered. This is the case for both students and faculty.

# MyCUInfo

MyCUInfo (<https://mycuinfo.colorado.edu> ) is the CU records/information system used to access course rosters, submit final course grades, and to provide access other information relevant to CU records (such as pay information). The system updates regularly, so it can provide information about enrollments in your course as well as a link to request an online course management site for your course. This system also provides you with an email distribution list for each course you are teaching; this is one way to send email to the official CU email addresses of all students in your course roster at once.

# Using Canvas

Canvas is the learning management system utilized by the university. Faculty are strongly encouraged to build their online course materials on Canvas.

Canvas provides tools for sharing materials with students, such as study guides or reading. It also provides discussion boards and announcement features. Please note that if you have readings for students to access, this is the best way to make them available to students.

An important aspect of Canvas is the opportunity to post the course syllabus, assignments and grades. A link to request a Canvas (or D2L) course is available on the MyCUInfo page where you access your course roster. Online tutorials are available as well as training sessions. Please visit: <https://oit.colorado.edu/services/teaching-learning-tools>

# Grading Policy/Grading Expectations

Each instructor is responsible for determining the requirements for a course and for assigning grades on the basis of those requirements. Grading basis must be indicated in the syllabus.

**The Canvas default grade ranges are as follows. If you wish to use a different set of ranges, please set your information up in your Canvas course to avoid confusion:**

A- < 94% to 90%

B+ < 90% to 87%

B < 87% to 83%

B- < 83% to 80%

C+ < 80% to 77%

C < 77% to 73%

C- < 73% to 70%

D+ < 70% to 67%

D < 67% to 63%

D- < 63% to 60%

F < 60% to 0%

Please note that CU uses +/- grades to determine GPA. Information about the campus grade basis and how it relates to student GPA can be found here:

<https://catalog.colorado.edu/undergraduate/credits-grading/#gradingtext>

Grade of Incomplete (I)

If a student encounters a significant health problem or other emergency late in the semester, it may be appropriate to provide a grade of “incomplete” and to make arrangements for the student to complete the remaining work after the semester is over. A grade of incomplete is only appropriate when the student has successfully completed a significant portion of the work in the course. When an incomplete is awarded, the actual grade that appears is an IF (incomplete fail). IF denotes “incomplete fail.” This does not mean that the student is failing the course—it means that if the student does not complete necessary work for the course, a grade of F will be assigned. Instructors should discuss awarding a grade of incomplete with their course supervisor or the associate chair for undergraduate studies BEFORE awarding such a grade to ensure that case is appropriate for an incomplete.

A student must request an IF—the instructor may not give this grade in an attempt to help a student avoid earning a low grade. IFs are to be given only when students, for reasons beyond their control, have been unable to complete course requirements. A substantial amount of work must have been satisfactorily completed before approval for an “incomplete” grade is given.

If an instructor grants a student request for Incomplete (I), the instructor sets the conditions under which the course work can be completed and the time limit for its completion—although all work must be completed within one year. The conditions for completing the work must be outlined in the Incomplete Grade Contract. This contract is completed and signed by the instructor, the student, and the chair or associate chair for the department; it is then submitted to the Dean’s office. It is the instructor's and/or the student's decision whether a course should be retaken as a means of resolving the IF, but typically students are only required to complete the outstanding coursework. If a course is retaken, it must be completed on the Boulder campus or in Boulder evening classes, and the student must re-register for the course and pay the appropriate tuition.

Important: After a student completes the necessary work, the instructor must submit a change of grade form. This form is completed in the department and then the department submits it to the Dean’s office. The final grade (earned by completing the course requirements or by retaking the course) does not result in deletion of the IF from the transcript. At the end of one year, IF grades for courses that are not completed or repeated are automatically changed to F.

Pass/Fail

Courses taken on a pass/fail basis are not noted on class rosters or final-grade lists, nor are instructors notified that a student is taking the course pass/fail. Instructors assign a grade for the course; a grade of D- or above is converted to a P; and F remains an F.

XF and QF grades

Both appear on transcripts as an F, but are recorded in the student's file as an unearned F. The XF should only be used if a student never attended class and never turned in work. The QF should only be used if a student stopped attending and failed to complete the course.

Online Grade Submission

The University of Colorado requires online grade submission. The online grading roster is contained in MyCUInfo. Grades are due 96 hours after the assigned final exam day for your course. Timely submission of grades is important because this information can impact students’ financial aid, scholarships, demonstration of adequate degree progress for special programs, etc.

# Grades and Information Security

Keeping student records secure: Instructors are responsible for keeping accurate, secure records of student grades. In order to keep grades secure, grade information that is kept in a computer file should be stored on a computer that is password protected. Canvas contains a grade book function which can be used, and we strongly recommend this approach. Instructors may keep grade books by hand (in hard copy form) but should ensure that these are kept in a secure location, and they should ensure that students receive clear information about their grade progress.

The university has determined that records which contain both student name and student number can pose a security risk for students. So, you should ensure that your grade book contains either student names OR student ID numbers, or that files containing both this aspects be password protected. The exception to this is grades kept on the campus learning management system (information kept in this system is stored on a secure university server and will contain both).

Submitting records of student grades: Final grades for courses are submitted to the registrar online, but records of your gradebook may be requested by your department in order to address any future grade appeals. Please consult your department to determine what records you need to submit and keep after the semester ends.

Why these records are needed: Course grade records are needed in case of student grade appeal or retroactive request for withdrawal from the university. It is particularly helpful if instructors can note in their grade book any student who stopped attending class altogether, as this is the most common situation where students make appeals for special consideration to the dean’s office. Typically, it is good practice to store student work which was not returned to students (for instance, final exams or final papers) for one year after completion of the course (in case of student inquiry or grade appeal). Graded student work that is ready to be destroyed should be shredded; submit items for shredding to the department office.

# Technology in Classrooms

OIT (Office of Information Technology) is in charge of the technology in most classrooms (such as projectors for Powerpoint and video). Most classrooms are equipped with projectors and speakers for use with your computer; there also should be a VGA and/or HDMI cord in the classroom for your use. If you encounter any problems with technology use in your classroom, there is should be a phone on the wall with a direct line to OIT; you can also call 303-735-HELP for assistance.

Resources for Students of Concern

If you encounter a student who appears to be in need of psychological or emotional help, who encounters a significant personal problem (e.g., is a victim of a crime or close to someone who is a victim) or whose behavior makes you concerned, there are resources on campus to address this. Faculty can encourage students to use these resources and can also contact the Office of the Dean of Students to get assistance in determining how to help a student.

This link provides some information about how to determine what type of assistance might be if you encounter a student of concern and how to report a student of concern:

<http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/student-concern>

The following link provides information about counselling services available on campus and about the Office of Victim Assistance:

<http://www.colorado.edu/ova/>

Please also notify the chair or associate chair of undergraduate studies in your department if you have a student of concern whose behavior is impacting class dynamics or your teaching.

Disability Accommodations for Students

Students who have documented disabilities related to testing and note-takers will to provide faculty with an official letter of notification about the course accommodations that are appropriate for the disability. Many times, these accommodations involve extended time for a test or a quiet, secluded room for an exam, although they could entail making reading materials available to be audio-recorded or other adjustments for learning differences.

The students should provide a letter about the disability accommodation within the first two weeks of the semester, so that instructors are aware of what is needed to assist students.

Students with documented health concerns that may impact attendance and flexibility with assignment due dates will meet with Disability Services, and then Disability Services will request that faculty complete a form indicating their ability to accommodate missed classes and flexibility with deadlines. Faculty MUST complete this form quickly, and they should indicate what is possible in the course based on course policies and learning activities. The goal of completing this to ensure that the faculty member and student understand what is possible in the class regarding attendance and flexibility with assignments.

Further information about Disability Services at CU is available here:

<http://disabilityservices.colorado.edu/>

Many accommodations for students involve extended time for exams or quiet environment for exams. The administrative assistant in your department can help you find space to administer an exam with accommodations. Generally, instructors should expect to be available in the department while a students is taking an exam with accommodation. This is important both in terms of exam supervision and assistance to students who might have questions. If extenuating circumstance make it impossible for you to be available to give the exam with accommodation, the office staff may be able to help. Please contact them about this before you schedule the exam to find out if this is possible.

Honor Code & Honor Code Violations

Students at CU are expected to follow the CU Honor Code. This code seeks to set expectations for student academic conduct. Please refer to the CU Honor Code Office for information about this code.

<https://www.colorado.edu/osccr/honor-code>

Instructors should, as appropriate, use resources to ensure academic honesty in student work. For instance, Canvas (and D2L) provides plagiarism detection software that be helpful in assessing the authenticity of written work.

If an instructor encounters a situation where they believe violation of the honor code has occurred (plagiarism, cheating on an exam, etc.), they should report the violation to the Honor Code Office. It is often useful to discuss the situation with the associate chair of undergraduate studies before submitting a report of the violation to get insight about the process and standards.

# Final Exam Schedule & Policy

It is the policy of the University of Colorado Boulder to adhere to the final examination schedule as published in the Registration Handbook and Schedule of Courses each semester. While it may be appropriate not to give a final in some cases, such as laboratory courses, seminars, and colloquia, final examinations are integral parts of the instructional program and should be given in all other undergraduate courses. Faculty are expected to administer the final exam on the day/time noted in the Final Exam Schedule. Instructors are encouraged to provide students with information about the assigned final exam day/time for their class in the course syllabus. It is a violation of final exam policy for faculty to ask students to take the final exam on a day/time different than what is posted in the final exam schedule. However, please be aware that CU has a policy that allows students who have three or more final exams in one day to request an accommodation from faculty to ease their schedule. Faculty who are unsure about such a request should consult the associate chair for their department.

<http://www.colorado.edu/policies/final-examination-policy>

# Faculty Course Questionnaires (FCQs)

Every term, CU-Boulder students evaluate each of their courses and instructors using a standard questionnaire called the FCQ or Faculty Course Questionnaire. FCQs will be provided to you during the week before the last week of regular classes. You must administer FCQs according to the instructions provided in the FCQ packet.

FCQs are administered online during the next to last week of classes. A link for the evaluation form is distributed to students in your course by the campus, and students have about 10 days to complete the evaluation. More information (including how to interpret the FCQ ratings that are returned to you) is available on the website at <https://www.colorado.edu/fcq/>

Cancelling a Class Session

If illness or an unexpected emergency results in the need to cancel a single class session, please do the following. If possible, use email to notify students. Contact the administrative assistant in your department to notify them about the cancellation as they may be able to post a sign in your classroom to let students know class is cancelled. TAs and instructors teaching in courses with a supervisor should notify their course supervisor; other adjunct instructors should notify associate chair for undergraduate studies.

# Undergraduate Student Advisors

The academic advisors help students as they navigate the academic requirements and access student resources. Students must make appointments to see their advisor using the online system.

Faculty and TAs should refer student with questions about major requirements, prerequisites, degree progress, etc. to the academic advisors.

# Additional Information

Administrative Drops

If a student fails to attend class in the first week of the semester and has not notified the instructor in advance of the upcoming absence, s/he may be administratively dropped at the discretion of the department offering the course. Students may also be dropped at the discretion of the department if they do not have the proper course prerequisites. Note: Class non-attendance does not constitute withdrawal and the student may still be charged for her/his classes unless s/he officially withdraws (or is administratively dropped) before the published deadline. Instructors who wish to drop a student for non-attendance during the first two weeks of class should consult with the chair or associate chair in their department.

## 

## Prerequisites for Undergraduate Classes

Students in lower-division courses (1000 and 2000-level) may or may not have any prior coursework. For upper-division courses, see the course catalog for required and recommended prerequisites for specific classes. Required class prerequisites are enforced and a student will not be able to register if s/he has not met them. For courses with recommended prerequisites, students are encouraged to have met the prerequisites but will not be stopped from registering.

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## Campus Closure Procedures

The campus closure policy can be accessed at the University's website. The decision to close campus due to weather will be made by 5:30 a.m. and posted to the university website (as well as on local media).

<http://www.colorado.edu/policies/campus-closing-procedures-during-emergencies>

## University Official Calendar

## The university’s official calendar is available on the University's website.

## <http://www.colorado.edu/academics/academic-calendar>

Ordering Books for Courses

Faculty are expected to place book orders through the CU Bookstore so that the books needed for a course are part of the university record. Placing this order does not obligate the student to purchase books from the bookstore, but it does help the university comply with regulations that require a record of books students need to buy.

Resources for Improving Teaching

The university provides resources for both graduate student teachers and faculty who wish to develop their knowledge of and skills for teaching.

Faculty and instructors can access the Center for Teaching and Learning workshops and consultation services to support teaching.

<https://www.colorado.edu/center/teaching-learning/>

Student Grievance Procedures

CMCI has a grade appeal policy, published in the CU Boulder Catalog. The college policy for grade appeals applies to final courses grade and requires that students first initiate discussion with the instructor about grade disputes. If the grade dispute cannot be resolved, the student may file an appeal with the chair/associate chair of the department in which the course is offered.

Full information on grade appeals is available at:

<https://catalog.colorado.edu/undergraduate/colleges-schools/media-communication-information/policies-requirements/#academicstandardstext>