Learning Objectives

To prepare for this class students should watch the Academic Misconduct Video, complete the Ethics Quiz and the Academic Integrity Quiz. After completing these preparation activities students will have a solid foundation to determine the ethical solution to a moral dilemma, as well as different ways to arrive at a conclusion. The core learning objectives for class 3 are as follow:

1. Introduce and Define Ethics
2. Note the Importance of Academic Integrity
3. Develop a Process for Responding to Ethical Problems
4. Understand the Role of Engineering Codes of Ethics

1. Please view the following video:
Here is a link the video on Academic Misconduct (8:34).

1. Introduction to COAM

At Ohio State the Committee of Academic Misconduct (COAM), under the Office of Academic Affairs, "...is charged with maintaining the academic integrity of The Ohio State University by establishing procedures for and investigating all reported cases of alleged academic misconduct by students." (http://oaa.osu.edu/coam.html)

The OSU Code of Student Conduct defines academic misconduct as "...any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University, or subvert the educational process." General examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to):

- Violation of course rules in the syllabus.
- Providing or receiving information during quizzes or exams submitting plagiarized work.
- Falsification, fabrication, or dishonesty in reporting research results.
- Engaging in activities that unfairly place other students at a disadvantage.

You can read more about what specifically constitutes academic misconduct at COAMs website.

Any cases of suspected misconduct must be reported to the University Committee on Academic Misconduct. Any students observing academic misconduct should report it to the course instructor. The role of the instructor is to provide the information to COAM regarding the suspected academic misconduct, and then COAM will decide if academic misconduct has occurred. The decision is not up to the instructor. Below is a flowchart explaining the process, as supplied by Dr. Tim Curry of COAM.
3. Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a broad topic, but it is defined by COAM as, "The representation of another's work or ideas as one's own. It includes the unacknowledged verbatim use and/or paraphrasing of another person's work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person's ideas. For the purposes of academic misconduct, plagiarism of published resources (e.g., books, journals, etc.), the Internet, or other printed/electronic resources (e.g., course syllabi, instructors' manuals, etc.) are considered violations of the University's Code of Student Conduct." ([http://www.oaa.osu.edu/coam](http://www.oaa.osu.edu/coam)).

There are many ways to avoid plagiarism, including the following:

- If you include someone else's material verbatim, use quotation marks and reference the source
- If you use someone else's ideas, even if you put them in your own words, always give that person credit with a reference without using quotes
- Don't copy anything from others from anywhere
- Don't modify a few words and then claim it as your own
- Don't give your homework to another student
- Don't copy someone else's homework
4. An Example Scenario about Academic Integrity

Read the following scenario and then consider how you would answer the three questions that follow.

Annie had just finished tomorrow’s homework assignment for ENGR 1181 and saved it on her flash drive. Her good friend, Matthew, missed class due to oversleeping. Matthew tried to solve the homework assignment himself but because he missed the class presentation, he was not able to do it. He asked Annie for her flash drive so he could see her solution and learn how Annie solved the assignment. Matthew promised that he would not copy the solution. After looking at Annie’s work, Matthew then submitted the homework which was based on Annie’s solution.

1. Does this constitute academic misconduct? What do you think?
   a. No. Because Matthew promised not to copy Annie’s solution, the situation is similar to discussing the assignment and helping others in the class. But in the end, Matthew would do the assignment on his own.
   b. Yes. Matthew had the advantage over other students (including Annie) who did not have the opportunity to see and learn from other students’ completed solutions.

2. What would you do in Matthew’s situation?
   a. I would ask Annie to explain the assignment to me but I would avoid being exposed to the solution of any problems.
   b. I would do the same thing as Matthew and ask for the solution- this way Annie is not bothered with having to explain it to me.

3. What would you do if you were in Annie’s situation?
   a. I would tell Matthew that it would not be appropriate for me to share my assignment with anyone, because giving another student my answer would jeopardize my academic integrity and could also constitute academic misconduct.
   b. I would do the same thing as Annie because teamwork is often encouraged in ENGR 1181, and I think that what Annie did was part of the teamwork process.

Let’s review the three questions about the scenario and see how your answers compare to ours:

- **Does this scenario constitute academic misconduct?**
  o Yes. Matthew would have had the advantage over other students (including Annie) because he had the opportunity to see and learn from the solutions of other students.

- **What could Matthew have done to uphold academic integrity in this situation?**
  o There are many options to uphold academic integrity in this situation. Some options include: you could have asked Annie to explain the assignment while avoiding being exposed to the solution of the problem—it is ok to ask for help and explanations, but not for answers; you could have asked your instructor, GTA, or UTA for help in explaining the assignment; or you could have spent more time working through the assignment on your own and submitted it late for partial credit.
What could Annie have done to uphold academic integrity in this situation?

- She should have told Matthew that it would not be appropriate to share her completed work with anyone because sharing solutions with other students constitutes academic misconduct. Additionally, she could have helped Matthew work through the problem without specifically telling him how to do it or giving him any answers.

This case of Annie and Matthew may not seem to be as straightforward as other examples of academic misconduct, especially because Matthew promised not to copy Annie’s work. Here are three other points to consider when analyzing this case of academic misconduct:

1. Because Matthew used Annie’s solution to generate his homework, he used someone else’s idea without giving them credit. This is plagiarism.
2. Because Annie gave her solution to Matthew, Matthew was not required to think the problem through on his own. A potential consequence of Matthew’s copying is that he may not understand the material as well as he would have, had he completed the assignment on his own.
3. The penalty of turning in a late assignment is very small compared to the possible violation of academic integrity. One incident of academic misconduct can have lasting effects on a student’s academic career, while one missed or late assignment likely has a small effect on a single course grade.

5. Plagiarism and Working in Teams

Our First Year Engineering Program and the instructors in ENGR 1181 encourage teamwork on many class assignments and projects. Working in teams has many benefits, but it is important to avoid any scenarios of perceived or actual plagiarism. Because you are working with others, the issue of plagiarism can get more complicated than when working alone (many names are on one assignment, writing tasks are divided among team members, etc.). Below are a few tips on ways to avoid plagiarism when working with your team.

On Homework:

- Make sure all team members contribute to all discussions and assignments.
- If one teammate asks ‘How do you do this problem?’, help the teammate think through a solution rather than just supplying the answer.
- Ensure that all team members cite outside sources or references when they are used.

On Lab Write-Ups:

- Ensure that all team members understand what constitutes plagiarism, that it is NOT acceptable in your team, and that it can impact the entire team even when one student is at fault because ALL of your names are on the work.
- As a team, review all written work before submitting it to ensure that sources are cited appropriately (this is easy to overlook if you are in a hurry!).
Using others’ data without reference also constitutes plagiarism! If there is an occasion where your instructor provides you with data, or you are told to use data from another team, be sure to note that the data was collected by others.

6. Final Observations

- Academic misconduct often occurs when students are under pressure or procrastinate. Plan ahead to ensure you have enough time to complete your assignments.
- It's better to turn your assignment in late than it is to cheat and turn it in on time. If there are extenuating circumstances that prevent you from coming to class or completing an assignment, talk to your instructor about your problem and see if you can set a new deadline.
- When multiple homework problems or lab reports are graded by the same person (as they are in ENGR 1181), it is fairly easy to detect copied assignments... especially with CAD Drawings and MATLAB files.