

How Do I discuss academic integrity during the first class?

Presented by:

Gary Pavela



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How Do I Discuss Academic Integrity During the First Class?

A Magna 20 Minute Mentor
With
Gary Pavela

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[1] Cheating in high schools: [Washington Post September 15, 2002](#), p. W16

In [Don] McCabe's 2001 survey of 4,500 high school students from 25 high schools around the country, 74 percent said they had cheated at least once on a big test. Seventy-two percent reported serious cheating on a written work. And 97 percent reported at least one questionable activity, like copying someone else's homework or peeking at someone else's test. More than one-third admitted to repetitive, serious cheating.

And few appeared to feel shame. "You do what it takes to succeed in life," wrote one student. "Cheating is part of high school," said another. Fifteen percent had turned in a paper bought or copied from Internet sources. More than half said they had copied portions of a paper from the Web without citing the source. And 90 percent were indiscriminate copiers, plagiarizing from the Net, from books, magazines, even the old low-tech standard, the World Book encyclopedia.

"Students were certainly cheating before the Internet became available. But now it's easier. Quicker. More anonymous," McCabe says. "I can't tell you how many high school students say they cheat because others do and it goes unpunished. Being honest disadvantages them."

[2] Cheating in College

Donald L. McCabe surveyed the extent of self-reported cheating by 1,800 students at nine medium to large state universities. He found that 52% of the students admitted to copying from others on an examination; 38% admitted to some form of test cheating on three or more occasions.

--2002 ["Letter to the Faculty"](#) at the University of Maryland (used with permission at Stanford University)

See recent data in the June 2007 [College Student Journal](#)

[3] "The 20-60-20 theory" (from a 1993 interview with Rutgers researcher Donald L. McCabe):

This is my "20-60-20" theory. As many as 20 percent of college students will cheat no matter what we do. And as many as 20% will never cheat no matter what we do—perhaps due to religious convictions, or the fear of getting caught. We're fighting for that 60% in between. They come as freshmen and hear what we say about academic integrity and say, "Okay, I'm willing to wait to see what happens." If they watch upperclassmen not cheating they tend to go in that direction, but if they see widespread cheating, they'll probably join the cheaters.

[4] Why is academic integrity important?

[a] "A former supervisor at the disabled Three Mile Island nuclear power plant was fined \$2,000 and sentenced to two year's probation for [cheating on relicensing examinations](#). James F. Floyd was supervisor of operations at TMI's Unit 2 in March 1979, when it was the scene of the worst accident ever at a U.S. Commercial nuclear plant. He was convicted in November of two counts of making false statements on the federally required exams in June 1979."

[b] "An instructor at the Federal Aviation Administration's [air traffic control training school](#) has charged that answers to the final exam were circulated among students and might have enabled failing students to pass. The instructor... said a packet of answers to problems from the exam might have been available to students for as long as two years before FAA officials began developing substitute questions."

[c] "Pirated answers to [hundreds of professional qualifying exams](#), in fields ranging from school-bus driving to medical technicians, are openly available, sometimes for as little as \$4 each, from a thriving network of cheating websites, The *Boston Globe* has found."

[d] "The Cheater cheats himself of an education. His actions imply that he either does not understand what a quality education is or does not care about getting one... But what's worst is that cheating contributes to an environment in which otherwise honest students learn to view education as merely the temporary acquisition of facts. And if it's temporary, what can it matter whether it's understood, memorized, or written on a cheat-sheet?"

-- From "[What's wrong with cheating](#)," by Michael Bishop Professor of Philosophy, Florida State University

See: [The Lincoln equestrian](#) statue at SU/SUNY

[5] [Academic integrity and cultural diversity](#)

Consistent with our common human origins, there's substantial agreement among peoples of the world about the basic virtues-- trust, self-restraint, and reciprocity--needed to live in social communities. What's "relative" are *social* conditions, including conditions that could tempt even the most honorable individuals to commit acts they know are wrong.

India has a substantial Hindu population. One of the values of the Hindu faith is summarized by the following statement from a sacred Hindu text (Janet, I. 6.) cited by C.S. Lewis in his book *The Abolition of Man* (p. 112):

A sacrifice is obliterated by a lie and the merit of alms by an act of fraud

Acts of lying and fraud, in other words, are considered just as wrong in India as they are anywhere else.

From Edward Cody, "Eight-Step Program For What Ails China," *Washington Post*, March 23, 2006; A16:

BEIJING -- On bus-stop billboards, newspaper front pages and television news broadcasts, in school classrooms, factory study groups and student counseling sessions, at forums and meetings all across China, the Communist Party propaganda apparatus has been spreading the word from President Hu Jintao: *Do good and avoid evil*.

Hu's fatherly advice, in the form of eight do's and don'ts, was issued two weeks ago as an antidote to the corruption and cynicism spreading across China, a result of the often raw capitalism that has emerged during 25 years of dramatic economic change. Although his aphorisms may sound simplistic to Western ears -- "Work hard, don't be lazy" and "Be honest, not profit-mongering" -- Chinese analysts said they are a response to a deep-seated desire among people here for a moral compass to guide them through the unsettling transformation.

[6] The single best way to promote academic integrity? *Engagement in learning:*

a. Serious discussion about serious topics

"Speaking of his exchange with his pupils, Socrates, the founder of humanistic education, once observed: 'What we're engaged in here isn't a chance conversation but a dialogue about the way we ought to live our lives.' The closer we professors come to following Socrates, the less cheating we're likely to see."

--University of Virginia English Professor Mark Edmundson, "[How Teachers Can Stop Cheaters.](#)" September 9, 2003 *New York Times*

b. "Why are things as they are and not otherwise?" - Johannes Kepler (a sign outside a science building at Colgate University)

c. The [Lincoln equestrian statue](#) on our campus.

[7] Consider the benefits of [classroom honor codes.](#)

Research supporting classroom honor codes can be found in an influential book by Duke University behavioral economist Dan Ariely: *Predictably Irrational: The Hidden Forces That Shape Our Decisions* (2008). Professor Ariely's book was reviewed by Robert Bliwise in the May-June 2008 issue of *Duke Magazine*. Bliwise reported that:

[T]he Enron financial scandal . . . prompted Ariely to explore the value placed on honesty . . .

[H]e and his colleagues [then at MIT] devised studies that would tempt people to cheat. Student subjects, for example, would be paid for each correct answer on a multiple-choice test. In some cases, they transferred their answers to a sheet that had the correct answers pre-marked-meaning they could, if provoked into dishonesty, readily cover up their mistakes. In different versions of the experiment, the test-taking students were asked to sign a statement, just at the moment of temptation, testifying that the exercise fell under an honor system. Alternatively, they were asked first to write down [what they could remember of] the Ten Commandments.

Those gestures had a significant impact on his subjects' behavior. Once they began thinking about honesty through firm reminders, they stopped cheating completely. 'In other words, when we are removed from any benchmarks of ethical thought, we tend to stray into dishonesty,' Ariely observes in the book. 'But if we are reminded of morality at the moment we are tempted, then we are much more likely to be honest.'

[8] What the best college teachers do

Highly effective teachers tend to reflect *a strong trust in students* . . . They often display openness with students and may, from time to time, talk about their own intellectual journey, its ambitions, triumphs, *frustrations, and failures*, and encourage their students to be similarly reflective and candid. They may discuss how they developed their interests, *the major obstacles they faced in mastering the subject*, or some of their secrets for learning particular material. They often discuss openly and enthusiastically their own *sense of awe and curiosity about life*. Above all, they tend to treat students with what can only be called *simple decency*. (Emphasis added)

-- Ken Bain, *What the Best College Teachers Do* (2004)

[9] AAUP [Statement of Professional Ethics](#)

As teachers, professors encourage the free pursuit of learning in their students. They hold before them the best scholarly and ethical standards of their discipline. Professors demonstrate respect for students as individuals and adhere to their proper roles as intellectual guides and counselors. Professors make every reasonable effort to foster honest academic conduct and to ensure that their evaluations of students reflect each student's true merit. They respect the confidential nature of the relationship between professor and student. They avoid any exploitation, harassment, or discriminatory treatment of students. They acknowledge significant academic or scholarly assistance from them. They protect their academic freedom.

[10] Focus on the teacher/student relationship.

a. **Human beings are built for cooperation:** [Research from the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Germany](#) (replicated at Duke University)



Photo credit to PR Newswire, MSNBC.com

[N]either chimpanzees nor any of the other 220 species of nonhuman primates have whites of the eyes, at least not that can be easily seen. This means that if their eyes are looking in a direction other than the one in which their heads are pointing, we can easily be fooled about what they are looking at. Why should humans be so different? And yet we are. We can't fool anyone. The whites of our eyes are several times larger than those of other primates, which makes it much easier to see where the eyes, as opposed to the head, are pointed If I am, in effect, advertising the direction of my eyes, I must be in a social environment full of others who are not often inclined to take advantage of this to my detriment — by, say, beating me to the food or escaping aggression before me. Indeed, I must be in a cooperative social environment in which others following the direction of my eyes somehow benefits me.

--Michael Tomasello (co-director of the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology) "[For Human Eyes Only](#)," January 13, 2007 *New York Times*

b. "[Effects of Teacher Greetings on Student On-Task Behavior](#)" by R. Allan Allday and Kerri Pakurar in the *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis* (Summer 2007):

The current research suggests [that]. . . [m]erely greeting a student at the door with his or her name and a brief, genuine pleasantry increased student on-task behavior.

c. Thomas Jefferson on the ethical influence of his teachers and mentors at William and Mary:

"When I recollect that at 14 years of age the whole care and direction of myself was thrown on myself entirely, without a relative or friend qualified to advise or guide me, and recollect the various sorts of bad company with which I was associated from time to time, I am astonished I did not turn off with some of them, and become as worthless to society as they were. I had the good fortune to become acquainted very early with some characters of very high standing, and to feel the incessant wish that I could even become what they were. Under temptations and difficulties I could ask myself what would Dr. Small, Mr. Wythe, Peyton Randolph do in this situation? What course in it will assure me their approbation? *I am certain that this mode of deciding on my conduct tended more to its correctness than any reasoning power I possessed . . .*" [emphasis supplied].

--Fawn Brodie, *Thomas Jefferson: An Intimate History* (Bantam, 1975), p. 27

[11] Academic integrity and social Darwinism

a. From a student interviewed on CNN about high school cheating :

What's important is getting ahead . . . The better grades you have, the better school you get into, the better you're going to do in life. And if you learn to cut corners to do that, you're going to be saving yourself time and energy. In the real world, that's what's going to be going on. The better you do, that's what shows. It's not how moral you were in getting there.

b. On August 26, 2002 the *Wall Street Journal* published a front page story titled "How

Enron Bosses Created a Culture of Pushing Limits." The lead paragraph focused on Chief Financial Officer Andrew Fastow:

When Enron Corp. was riding high . . . Andrew Fastow had a Lucite cube on his desk supposedly laying out the company's values. One of those was communication, and the cube's inscription explained what that meant: "When Enron says it's going to rip your face off," it said, it will "rip your face off."

c. The Columbine Commission described Harris and Klebold as "above average, if not gifted, students." Is it possible they had thought about a philosophical perspective that could be used to justify and channel their feelings? The answer is yes, and it can be found in footnote 51 of the Commission report:

They noted that they had evolved above 'you humans.' The two seemed fascinated with the notion of natural selection: "whatever happened to natural selection?," Klebold asked on the tapes as he spoke of his hatred of the human race. On his web page Harris called natural selection ". . . the best thing that has ever happened to the Earth. Getting rid of all the stupid and weak organisms. . ." Harris also inscribed in a female friend's 1998 yearbook that "natural selection needs a boost, like me with a shotgun." At the time of his death, Harris was wearing a T-shirt with the words "Natural Selection" printed across the front.

[12] Darwin on "the development of moral qualities"

In *The Descent of Man* (Norton Critical Edition, 1979, pp. 200-201) Charles Darwin wrote:

The development of moral qualities [in man] is a[n] . . . interesting problem. The foundation lies in the social instincts, including under this term family ties. These instincts are highly complex, and in the case of the lower animals give special tendencies towards certain definite actions; but the most important elements are love, and the distinct emotion of sympathy . . .

A moral being is one who is capable of reflecting on his past actions and their motives--of approving some and disapproving of others; and the fact that man is the one being who certainly deserves this designation, is the greatest of all distinctions between him and the lower animals . . . Owing to this condition of mind, man cannot avoid looking both backwards and forwards, and comparing past impressions. Hence, after some temporary desire or passion has mastered his social instincts, he reflects and compares the now weakened expression of such past impulses with the ever-present social instincts; and he then feels that sense of dissatisfaction which all unsatisfied instincts leave behind them, he therefore resolves to act differently for the future,--and this is conscience. . .

The appreciation and the bestowal of praise and blame both rest on sympathy; and this emotion, as we have seen, is one of the most important elements of the social instincts. Sympathy, though gained as an instinct, is also much strengthened by exercise or habit . .

The moral nature of man has reached its present standard, partly through the advancement of his reasoning powers and consequently of a just public opinion, but especially from his sympathies having been rendered more tender and widely diffused through the effects of habit, example, instruction, and reflection.

[13] The economic crisis of 2008: A breakdown of trust

[a] "The government's planned takeover of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, expected to be announced as early as this weekend, came together hurriedly after advisers poring over the companies' books for the Treasury Department concluded that Freddie's accounting methods had overstated its capital cushion, according to regulatory officials briefed on the matter" (emphasis supplied).

--September 6, 2008 New York Times ["Mortgage Giant Overstated the Size of Its Capital Base"](#)

[b] "As the recent events surrounding Enron have highlighted, a firm is inherently fragile if its value added emanates more from conceptual as distinct from physical assets. A physical asset, whether an office building or an automotive assembly plant, has the capability of producing goods even if the reputation of the managers of such facilities falls under a cloud. The rapidity of Enron's decline is an effective illustration of the vulnerability of a firm whose market value largely rests on capitalized reputation. The physical assets of such a firm comprise a small proportion of its asset base. Trust and reputation can vanish overnight. A factory cannot."

--Alan Greenspan, [2002 speech at the Institute for Economic Finance](#)

[c] "I cannot speak for others whose psyches I may not be able to comprehend, but, in my working life, I have found no greater satisfaction than achieving success through honest dealings and strict adherence to the view that for you to gain, those you deal with should gain as well. Human relations--be they personal or professional--should not be zero sum games. And beyond the personal sense of satisfaction, having a reputation for fair dealing is a profoundly practical virtue. We call it "good will" in business and add it to our balance sheets.

Trust is at the root of any economic system based on mutually beneficial exchange. In virtually all transactions, we rely on the word of those with whom we do business. Were this not the case, exchange of goods and services could not take place on any reasonable scale. Our commercial codes and contract law presume that only a tiny fraction of contracts, at most, need be adjudicated. If a significant number of businesspeople violated the trust upon which our interactions are based, our court system and our economy would be swamped into immobility."

--Alan Greenspan, 1999 [Harvard University Commencement speech](#)

[d] "Trust is the expectation that arises within a community of regular, honest, and cooperative behavior, based on commonly shared norms, on the part of other members of that community . . . [P]eople who do not trust one another will end up cooperating only under a system of formal rules and regulations, which have to be negotiated, agreed to, litigated, and enforced, sometimes by coercive means. This legal apparatus, serving as a substitute for trust, entails what economists

call "transaction costs." Widespread distrust on a society, in other words, imposes a kind of tax on all forms of economic activity, a tax that high-trust societies do not have to pay."

--Francis Fukuyama, [Trust: The Social Virtues and the Creation of Prosperity](#)
(Free Press. 1995, pp.27-28).

[14] A renewed focus on ethics in business

Must "business ethics" be a contradiction in terms?

[a] [A 2003 study](#) in the *American Behavioral Scientist* showed that "virtuousness" produced "about a 15 percent increase in shareholder value."

[b] [A 2006 Study](#) from the Business Roundtable concludes that:

The signal from the *95 studies and 30 years of research* reviewed is that a positive relationship exists between social (ethical) performance and financial performance (emphasis supplied).

[c] "And beyond the personal sense of satisfaction, having a reputation for fair dealing is a profoundly practical virtue. We call it "good will" in business and add it to our balance sheets" (Alan Greenspan, 1999 [Harvard University Commencement speech](#)).

[15] Do wise investors pay attention to business ethics?

Practical [advice from Warren Buffett](#): "Three suggestions for investors:"

First, beware of companies displaying weak accounting. If a company still does not expense options, or if its pension assumptions are fanciful, watch out. When managements take the low road in aspects that are visible, it is likely they are following a similar path behind the scenes. There is seldom just one cockroach in the kitchen . . .

Second, unintelligible footnotes usually indicate untrustworthy management. If you can't understand a footnote or other managerial explanation, it's usually because the CEO doesn't want you to. Enron's descriptions of certain transactions still baffle me.

Finally, be suspicious of companies that trumpet earnings projections and growth expectations. Businesses seldom operate in a tranquil, no-surprise environment, and earnings simply don't advance smoothly (except, of course, in the offering books of investment bankers).

Charlie and I not only don't know today what our businesses will earn next year – we don't even know what they will earn next quarter. We are suspicious of those CEOs who regularly claim they do know the future -- and we become downright incredulous if they consistently reach their declared targets.

Managers that always promise to "make the numbers" will at some point be tempted to make up the numbers."

--(Berkshire/Hathaway Report, 2003).

[16] Realistically, doesn't making more money bring greater happiness?

Psychologist David G. Myers' research on happiness

During the last four decades, the average U.S. citizen's buying power more than doubled. The 1957 per-person after tax income, inflated to 1995 dollars, was \$8500; by 2002, thanks partly to the rich getting richer and to women's increasing employment, it was \$23,000. Did this more-than-doubled wealth—enabling twice as many cars per person, and TVs, DVD players, laptops, air conditioners, and cell phones—also buy more happiness?

The answer is *no*:

[T]he average American, though certainly richer, is not a bit happier. In 1957, some 35 percent said they were "very happy," as did slightly fewer—30 percent—in 2002.

Why not?

Pause a moment to consider: What was your most satisfying moment in the past week? Kennon Sheldon and his colleagues (2001) asked that question of American and South Korean collegians, then asked them to rate how much this peak experience had satisfied various needs. In both countries, the satisfaction of self-esteem and relatedness/belonging needs were the top two contributors to the peak moment. And in both countries, the satisfaction of money-luxury needs contributed least. Similar results were obtained when asking others to reflect on the last month or last semester.

[17] Views from religious/ethical perspectives

[a] Jewish Law Homepage:

"Rabbis teach us that through adherence to ethics in our business, we bring the redemption, we bring Messiah because we create a peaceful world, a world where we're not looking after number one, a world where we have a shared sense of community and that, in turn paves the way for the Messiah, paves the way for the ultimate redemption of the Jewish people that we hope and pray for, that the light of Chanukah commemorates. Torah teaches us to live in this world. We know that in this world, the world is a mixture of good and evil and we know that we live in a world where other people don't play by the same rules. But the test of a moral person is not whether he behaves morally when others are behaving morally to him. The test of an ethical and moral person is one who can adhere to those values even if everyone else fails to adhere to them."

--*Rabbi Yitzchok Breitowitz:*

[b] An Islamic approach to business ethics

"The seller and the buyer have the right to keep or return the goods as long as they have not parted or till they part; and if both the parties spoke the truth and described the defects and qualities [of the goods], then they would be blessed in their transaction, and if

they told lies or hid something, then the blessings of their transaction would be lost.
(*Bukhari*, No: 1937)"

[c] [A Confucian view:](#)

" From the son of heaven down to the common people, all must regard cultivation of personal life as the root or foundation. *There is never a case when the root is in disorder and yet the branches are in order*" (emphasis supplied).

--Confucius, "The Great Learning" in Wing-Tsit Chan, *A Sourcebook in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton, 1963) p.86-87.

[d] Aristotle's Ethics:

"For the things which we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing: men become builders by building houses, and harpists by playing the harp. Similarly, we become just by the practice of just actions, self-controlled by exercising self-control, and courageous by performing acts of courage . . . [W]e must see to it that our activities are of a certain kind . . . Hence *it is no small matter whether one habit or another is inculcated in us from early childhood; on the contrary, it makes a considerable difference, or rather, all the difference*" (emphasis supplied).

--Aristotle, *Ethics*

[e] Ralph Waldo Emerson:

"Every man takes care that his neighbor should not cheat him. But a day comes when he begins to care that he does not cheat his neighbor. Then all goes well. He has changed his market-cart into a chariot of the sun."

[18] Why due process is important ("hear the case before you decide it")

From Robert Bolt "A Man for All Seasons (1960)." The dialogue is between Sir Thomas More and his son-in-law Roper:

Roper: So now you'd give the Devil benefit of law!

More: Yes. What would you do? Cut a great road through the law to get after the Devil?

Roper: I'd cut down every law in England to do that!

More: Oh? And when the last law was down, and the Devil turned round on you — where would you hide, Roper, the laws all being flat? This country's planted thick with laws from coast to coast — man's laws, not God's — and if you cut them down do you really think you could stand upright in the winds that would blow then? **Yes, I'd give the Devil benefit of law, for my own safety's sake.**