POLICIES FOR BLENDED/ONLINE TEACHING AT SPU

Per SPU, courses are defined by the percentage of instructional course time spent in a specific learning environment (NOTE: ‘instructional course time’ does not necessarily mean the introduction of materials or contents; in a flipped classroom students initially engage contents in lieu of homework, and do homework/guided practice/group work during ‘instructional course time.’

• **Face to Face (aka Traditional):** 80% or more instructional course time is spent in a face-to-face learning environment.
• **Blended:** 20% to 80% of instructional course time is spent in a face-to-face learning environment.
• **Online:** 80% or more instructional course time is spent in a digital learning environment.

There is an historic assumption in the rigor of face-to-face learning methodologies as well as the distrust of distance or online learning methodologies. All course objectives and outcomes should be held to high scrutiny; however, it is vital for blended and online courses to use care and an overabundance of outlining when denoting the tracking of outcomes and objectives. Face to face courses allow for a ‘sight test’ that lacks in blended or online courses. Perhaps this is a good thing for the development of blended and online courses; a requirement to be more forward-thinking can result in a more ideal learning environment for students.

Blended and online courses must not only show **why** the learning objectives and outcomes stated are desired, but **how** those elements will manifest for students in a digital learning environment. It is the requirement of the instructor to provide scaffolding for a connection between the purpose of the course and the techniques the course will employ to meet those. How are the outcomes noted in the syllabus happening in a digital space?

**Writing an Online/Blended Syllabus**

The majority of problems with student inauthenticity, cheating or pushback against academic integrity come from a lack of student awareness rather than a wanton disregard of rules. A blended or online syllabus needs to link to expectations of policies for group vs. individual work, plagiarism definitions and examples, SPU’s philosophy on academic integrity, as well as a definition of academic dishonesty and the repercussions of academic dishonesty. These sections need to be active and leading to primary sources and examples, not just language from a face-to-face syllabus.
Protecting Integrity via Assessment

SPU is a high-touch university committed to creating grace-filled citizens of character and wisdom. It is assumed that students adhere to the standards and expectations of social citizenry much less the requirements of SPU.

In the realm of accreditation, connecting the student to the assessment is integral to the validity of the course and subsequently the degree. Showing evidence of learning happens thus through an authentication of the learner: reasonable effort to ensure the person performing the assessments is the person registered in the course and that the assessments are performed rather than copied or pilfered.

There are situations where it is the process that is vital, and practice is given a participation reward. Mathematics textbooks that provide the answers in the back are similar to some of the assessments we can find online; what is important is the student journey through the work and there is a slight award of points for doing the work, with a more heavily weighted assessment later. This is an example of why authentication is considered more vital for mid-term and final examinations or projects.

It is not in the interest of SPU to engage in proctoring software or authentication methods more draconian in nature. Online courses require more scaffolding than F2F courses, however, and that means there must be a how to everything as well as a why; assessments and assignments are no different.

Pedagogically speaking, variation in assessment types and requirements are the most effective manner of authentication. Rather than focusing on a high-stakes summative test, utilizing formative assessments such as capstone projects, writing assignments, reflections, interactions and group work provide a more thorough understanding of a student’s transformation through the contents of the course. Moreover, studies show online teachers have found more confidence in identifying their students' voice through these measures than F2F teachers. These assessments can be peppered with timed quizzes and online exams; it is the multimodal approach that ensures validity.

Courses successful in authentication of student work incorporate more discussion modalities for students – between student and student, student and instructor, and in some instances student and a community external to the course. Writing assignments, threaded discussion, and reflections provide an opportunity to see growth from the perspective of the student.

Writing assignments should be run through Turn It In.

In the instance of a necessary recitation of facts, SPU requires faculty to utilize timed test delivery and banks of test questions. Information on developing a question
bank and maneuvering an assessment to a timed scheme can be found at ETM Faculty Resources. ETM also has a list of procedures for students to enact before engaging an assessment so as to not be logged out or lose access, which should be added to a space in the Course Documents on the LMS.