UTEP

Department of Civil Engineering

HONOR CODE

I. Background

Civil engineering is a licensed profession that is regulated by each state through a licensing or engineering practice law. Each state requires engineers to protect the public safety and act in an honest and trustworthy manner. These standards of ethical behavior are also codified in ethics guidelines established by the National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE), the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), and the Texas Society of Professional Engineers (TSPE). To summarize from one of the organization's codes, provided here are the Preamble and Fundamental Canons of the NSPE Code of Ethics:

> *Preamble*
> *Engineering is an important and learned profession. As members of this profession, engineers are expected to exhibit the highest standards of honesty and integrity. Engineering has a direct and vital impact on the quality of life for all people. Accordingly, the services provided by engineers require honesty, impartiality, fairness, and equity, and must be dedicated to the protection of the public health, safety, and welfare. Engineers must perform under a standard of professional behavior that requires adherence to the highest principles of ethical conduct.*
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> *I. Fundamental Canons*
> *Engineers, in the fulfillment of their professional duties, shall:*
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> 1. *Hold paramount the safety, health, and welfare of the public.*
> 2. *Perform services only in areas of their competence.*
> 3. *Issue public statements only in an objective and truthful manner.*
> 4. *Act for each employer or client as faithful agents or trustees.*
> 5. *Avoid deceptive acts.*
> 6. *Conduct themselves honorably, responsibly, ethically, and lawfully so as to enhance the honor, reputation, and usefulness of the profession.*
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> (NSPE, 2010, http://www.nspe.org/Ethics/CodeofEthics/index.html, Accessed 30 Nov 2010)

Thus, recognizing the critical nature of ethical conduct in the Civil Engineering Profession, the Department of Civil Engineering (Department) has established this Honor Code to govern the behavior of engineering students being trained to enter this licensed profession.

II.   Department Policy

The Department has established this Honor Code Policy because it has an obligation to the State and the public to prevent students from entering the profession who are not honest and trustworthy in their academic efforts. This Honor Code Policy allows the Department to recommend disciplinary action to the University Office of Student Services and to remove students from the Department who have violated the Honor Code. This Honor Code is consistent with the *Student Conduct and Discipline* Chapter of the *Student Affairs* Section of the *Handbook of Operating Procedures* of the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP, 2010, http://admin.utep.edu/Default.aspx?tabid=30292, Accessed 17 Dec 2010).

The Honor Code applies to graduate and undergraduate students, faculty members, and administrators. The Honor Code is based on these requirements:

- Engineers must possess personal integrity both as students and as professionals. They must ensure safety, health, fairness, and honesty in their undertakings.

- Students in the Department are honorable and trustworthy.

- The students, faculty, and administrators of the Department trust each other to uphold the principles of the Honor Code, and they are jointly responsible for precautions against violations of its policies.

- It is dishonorable for students to receive credit for work that is not the result of their own efforts.

Department students are required to sign an Honor Code Agreement which will be kept on file with the Department. The Honor Code has been established to support and enforce course policies set by instructors. Course instructors have exceptional latitude when preparing the policies for their courses. This can lead to variations between policies of different courses. It is the instructor's responsibility to clearly develop course policies.

Students are responsible for understanding the Honor Code and course policies and should consult with the instructor if they are unclear. If a student consults with the instructor and still feels the policies for a course are not clear or fair, the student should notify the Department Chairperson.

Department students enrolled in courses outside of the Department must abide by the policies of the school or college in which the course is offered. Students who are not members of the Department who take a course offered by the Department are bound by the policies of the Honor Code.

A. Examinations

The instructor will announce the time and place of the examination. At the start of the examination, the instructor's whereabouts during the exam will be communicated to the class in case a question arises. The instructor does not need to be present to enforce the Honor Code. Enforcing the Honor Code is the responsibility of the individual students and other students in the exam who might witness a violation of the Honor Code.

Use of any electronic device is not allowed during exams without written approval by the Instructor.

During the examination, students are free to leave the room. No communication regarding the examination is allowed inside or outside the room. All questions about the examination should be directed to the instructor. Students are not allowed to have electronic devices of any kind in their possession unless the instructor specifically authorizes such possession.

After each examination, students must write or sign acknowledging the following Honor Pledge on their exam document:

> *"I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this examination, nor have I concealed any violations of the Honor Code."*

Instructors are not required to grade tests in which the signed Honor Pledge does not appear. The Honor Code remains enforced whether or not the student signs the Pledge.

B. Use of Computers and Other Facilities

Students may not submit as their own work a computer program or part thereof which is not the result of their own thought and efforts. Contributions to a program from external sources must be acknowledged and properly documented in accordance with course policies.

Computers available for students to use are the property of the UTEP. Software available for students to use is the property of UTEP or is licensed to UTEP. Any unauthorized attempt to copy software or to tamper with computers or software is a violation of federal law, as well as the Honor Code. All laboratories, classrooms, office equipment, and libraries are meant for instruction and learning. Misuse of these facilities is a violation of the Honor Code.

C. Homework and Laboratory Assignments

The principles of the Honor Code apply to homework and assignments. The instructor may allow students to work together on assignments. The instructor is to make clear how much, if any, collaboration is permissible. The instructor may also require that students write and sign the Honor Pledge on their homework and lab reports.

It is a violation of the Honor Code for students to submit, as their own, work that is not the result of their own labor and thoughts. Work that includes material derived in any way from the efforts of another student, non–student, or author should be fully documented. To avoid plagiarism, it is necessary to cite all sources of both ideas and direct quotations. Students must provide enough information so that the original source of material can be located. The following is a more thorough description of plagiarism and an example of directly citing another's work:

Intentional plagiarism is a form of intellectual theft that violates widely recognized principles of academic integrity as well as the Honor Code. Such plagiarism may subject the student to appropriate disciplinary action administered through the university Honor Code Office, in addition to academic sanctions that may be applied by an instructor. Inadvertent plagiarism, although not a violation of the Honor Code, is nevertheless a form of intellectual carelessness that is unacceptable in the academic community. Plagiarism of any kind is completely contrary to the established practices of higher education, where all members of the university are expected to acknowledge the original intellectual work of others that is included in one's own work. In some cases, plagiarism may also involve violations of copyright law.

Intentional Plagiarism—Intentional plagiarism is the deliberate act of representing the words, ideas, or data of another as one's own without providing proper attribution to the author through quotation, reference, or footnote.

Inadvertent Plagiarism—Inadvertent plagiarism involves the inappropriate, but nondeliberate, use of another's words, ideas, or data without proper attribution. Inadvertent plagiarism usually results from an ignorant failure to follow established rules for documenting sources or from simply being insufficiently careful in research and writing. Although not a violation of the Honor Code, inadvertent plagiarism is a form of academic misconduct for which an instructor can impose appropriate academic sanctions. Students who are in doubt as to whether they are providing proper attribution have the responsibility to consult with their instructor and obtain guidance.

Examples of plagiarism include:

Direct Plagiarism—The verbatim copying of an original source without acknowledging the source.

Paraphrased Plagiarism—The paraphrasing, without acknowledgment, of ideas from another that the reader might mistake for your own.

Plagiarism Mosaic—The borrowing of words, ideas, or data from an original source and blending this original material with one's own without acknowledging the source.

Insufficient Acknowledgment—The partial or incomplete attribution of words, ideas, or data from an original source.

Plagiarism may occur with respect to unpublished as well as published material. Acts of copying another student's work and submitting it as one's own individual work without proper attribution is a serious form of plagiarism.

(BYU, 2010, http://saas.byu.edu/catalog/2009-2010ucat/GeneralInfo/HonorCode.php, Accessed 17 Dec 2010)

D. Faculty Committee on Discipline

The Faculty Committee on Discipline (FCD) is made up of several Faculty members of the Department. The FCD will review all the facts presented about the incident and may meet with the student who has an alleged violation. The FCD will review faculty or student reports about the incident to try to make sure the report provided to the Department of Student Services is accurately and comprehensively presented.

III. Applying Honor Policies to Sample Course Assignments

Every course should have a written honor policy describing the nature of allowed and disallowed collaboration within the course. The level of allowed collaboration might differ from one assignment type to another (*e.g.* no collaboration on exams, but significant collaboration allowed and indeed expected on a design project). Students should be reminded of the allowed collaboration policies throughout the term. To provide students with reinforcement, each assignment might include the relevant honor policy in the handout for every assignment.

Please recall that different courses and different instructors have different expectations; do not assume that some level of collaboration is obviously out-of-bounds, because students might be in some other course where that level of collaboration *is* allowed.

The suggested policy statements below attempt to cover a variety of circumstances. It is unlikely that any one class would use them all; indeed some may be inappropriate for your class. These polices are meant to provide a menu of policies for instructor use. These statements can be modified to suit each instructor's educational goals for a particular assignment, exam or project.

A. General Policy Statement: An introductory paragraph for course honor policies

All students are presumed to be decent and honorable, and the Honor Code binds all students in the class. You may not seek to gain an unfair advantage over your fellow students; you may not consult, look at, or possess the unpublished work of another without their permission; and you must appropriately acknowledge your use of another's work. Any violation of the honor policies appropriate to each course shall be reported. Each student has a duty , not an option to report violations. **If you have any questions about the course policy, please consult the course instructor**.

B. Policy Statements for Various Circumstances

1. Exams

Each student must complete the exam solely by her or his own efforts. Questions can be asked only of the course instructors. The exam must be completed within the specified time.

Note: Limitations on calculator types, use of notes, books, etc. are also appropriate. Electronic devices will not be allowed to be in a student's possession during exams without written permission of the instructor.

2. Homework

a. No collaboration

All homework assignments are to be completed on your own. You may receive help **only** from the course instructors. At no time may you receive help from someone who is not a current instructor. You may not consult homework solutions from a previous term or another section of the class.

b. Limited collaboration

You may discuss this homework assignment with your fellow students at the conceptual level, but must complete all calculations and write-up, from scrap to final form, on your own. Verbatim copying of another student's work is forbidden. You may not consult homework solutions from a previous term unless they are made available in a publicly accessible form (no unfair advantage can be sought).

c. Extensive collaboration

You may discuss this homework assignment with your fellow students, and complete the work with other students in the class, including working in a group around a common table and discussing problems as you work on them. You must submit individual work that is not a verbatim copy of any other student's work. Do not forget that even when you work in a group, you are individually responsible for the learning that should accompany homework completion.

3. Group Project Work:

a. No inter-group collaboration

All group work is to be completed only within your own group. Your group can receive help **only** from the course instructors. At no time may you receive help from someone who is not a current instructor. You cannot speak with other groups about the problems, conceptually or otherwise, and you may not at anytime look at, borrow, or possess another group's work.

b. Inter-group collaboration allowed

All group work is to be completed only within your own group. You may receive help from the course instructors and you may consult with members of other groups in the course, but you must complete your group's calculation and project write-up on your own.

4. Work Assignments

a. Individual Projects

All programming projects in this course are to be done on your own. We do encourage students to help each other learn the course material. You may give or receive help on any of the concepts covered in lecture or discussion. You are allowed to consult with other students in the current class to help you understand the project specification (i.e. the problem definition).

However, you may not collaborate in any way when constructing your solution - the solution to the project must be generated by you working alone. You are not allowed to work out the programming details of the problems with anyone or to collaborate to the extent that your programs are identifiably similar. You are not allowed to look at or in any way derive advantage from the existence of project specifications or solutions prepared in prior years (e.g. programs written by former students, solutions provided by instructors, project handouts).

If you have any questions as to what constitutes unacceptable collaboration, please talk to the instructor right away. You are expected to exercise reasonable precautions in protecting your own work. Do not leave your work in a publicly accessible directory, and take care when discarding printouts.

b. Group Projects

All projects in this course are to be done only by your own group. At the same time, we encourage students to help each other learn the course material, but there is a limit to the assistance you can give or receive.

You may give or receive help on any of the concepts covered in lecture, discussion, or the textbook. You are allowed to consult with other students in the class to help you understand the project specification (the definition of the problem). However, you may not collaborate in any way with people outside your group when constructing your solution; your group working alone must generate the solution to a project. You are not allowed to work out the details of the problems with anyone outside your own group or to collaborate to the extent that your work is identifiably similar. You are not allowed to derive your solution in any way from prior project solutions. If you worked on the projects in the past (because you are repeating this course or you started but dropped the class in a prior term), you may not re-use work from the prior semester. If you have any questions as to what constitutes unacceptable collaboration, please talk to the instructor right away. You are expected to exercise reasonable precautions in protecting your own work. Don't let other students borrow your accounts, work or computer, don't leave your program in a publicly accessible directory, and take care when discarding printouts.

5. In-class Personal Response System

During class you may be asked to answer questions using a Personal Response System. You will be told which questions must be answered on your own and which can be answered after discussions with your peers. You may not hold more than one transmitter during the question and answer period (i.e. potentially answering for another student), nor may you enter a response for another student in any way.