

Helpful Advice for Avoiding Plagiarism and Other Academic Misconduct

by Prof. Patrick Patterson (MMW 4, 5, and 6 professor)

I. HOW TO BORROW -- AND HOW NOT TO BORROW!!! --THE WORDS, IDEAS, FACTS, ARGUMENTS, ANALYTICAL STRUCTURE, ETC. FOUND IN ANOTHER AUTHOR'S WORK

Consider the following original source text:

From Craig et al., p. 491:

"It was, in fact, the constant development and refinement of maritime skill and ship design that enabled Christopher Columbus to embark on his first voyage of New World discovery in 1492. Aware of the nautical innovations of his time, Columbus presented his plan for a westward journey to the Portuguese Crown. Rejected, Columbus turned for support to Spain, where Queen Isabella defied her husband's advisers and funded Columbus' expedition. Her patronage included the outfitting of two square-rigged caravels, the *Niña* and the *Pinta*, and the large cargo vessel, the *Santa Maria*."

Now consider the following hypothetical student submissions based on the original source text:

*Which student submissions give proper acknowledgement to the work of other authors?
Which constitute plagiarism in violation of UCSD rules?*

1. It was, in fact, the constant development and refinement of maritime skill and ship design that enabled Christopher Columbus to embark on his first voyage of New World discovery in 1492.
2. The constant development and refinement of maritime skill and ship design allowed Christopher Columbus to embark on his first voyage of discovery to the Americas in 1492 (Craig et al. 491).
3. The European expeditions of exploration and discovery depended, from the beginning, on the constant development and refinement of maritime skill and shipbuilding techniques.
4. The European expeditions of exploration and discovery depended, from the beginning, on the constant development and refinement of maritime skill and shipbuilding techniques (Craig et. al. 491)
5. The European expeditions of exploration and discovery depended, from the beginning, on continuing evolution of and improvements in navigational expertise and the construction of ocean-going vessels.
6. The European expeditions of exploration and discovery depended, from the beginning, on the "constant development and refinement of maritime skill and ship design" (Craig et. al. 491).

7. The European expeditions of exploration and discovery depended, from the beginning, on the continuing evolution of and improvements in navigational expertise and the construction of ocean-going vessels (Craig et al. 491)

B. THE PROBLEM OF "COMMON KNOWLEDGE"

From Craig et al., p. 491:

"It was, in fact, the constant development and refinement of maritime skill and ship design that enabled Christopher Columbus to embark on his first voyage of New World discovery in 1492. Aware of the nautical innovations of his time, Columbus presented his plan for a westward journey to the Portuguese Crown. Rejected, Columbus turned for support to Spain, where Queen Isabella defied her husband's advisers and funded Columbus' expedition. Her patronage included the outfitting of two square-rigged caravels, the *Niña* and the *Pinta*, and the large cargo vessel, the *Santa Maria*.

1. Christopher Columbus began his first transatlantic voyage in 1492.
2. Christopher Columbus began his first transatlantic voyage in 1492 with the financial support of Queen Isabella and three ships, the *Niña*, the *Pinta*, and the *Santa Maria*.
3. Christopher Columbus began his first transatlantic voyage in 1492 with three ships outfitted by the patronage of Queen Isabella, the square-rigged caravels known as the *Niña* and the *Pinta*, and a large cargo vessel, the *Santa Maria*.

Some sound advice about "common knowledge":

"The belief that an idea or fact may be "common knowledge" is no reason not to cite your source. It is certainly not a defense against the charge of plagiarism, although many students offer that excuse during the disciplinary process. Keeping in mind that your professor is the primary audience for your work, you should ask your professor for guidance if you are uncertain. If you don't have that opportunity, fall back on the fundamental rule: **when in doubt, cite**. It is too risky to make assumptions about what is expected or permissible."

(<http://www.princeton.edu/pr/pub/integrity/pages/notcommon.html>)

II. Some other important UCSD rules

-- like the rules on plagiarism, applicable to ALL work at the university

Multiple submissions without approval of ALL instructors involved

The Code of Student Conduct states: "No student shall submit substantially the same material in more than one course without prior authorization."

If you have any questions about what "substantially the same material" means, ask your instructor. For course work in MMW, in which the writing assignment each term is a separate and distinct task, you should not be recycling more than a few (very few!) sentences from prior work, or work you've done for other classes. It is permissible -- encouraged, even! -- to build on the *knowledge* you've already acquired, but you need to engage in a new process of writing and analysis each time you take a new course.

Fabricated citations or other forms of dishonesty or misrepresentation

Fabrication of a citation (e.g., taking material from one source but crediting it to another, perhaps to cover up that the material really came from a web page or that you didn't really read the book cited) is a form of **intentional dishonesty**, and like all forms of intentional or knowing misconduct, will have **extremely serious consequences**.

For further guidance on plagiarism and other academic integrity issues see:

1. the MMW Style Sheet
(with requirements for ALL writing assignments in MMW)
2. the Ann Raimés writing manual
(part of the required reading for the course)
3. a very helpful online reference:
<http://www.princeton.edu/pr/pub/integrity/index.html>
4. as always, your professors or your TAs!

Remember:

YOU are responsible for seeing to it that everything you turn in at UCSD, in any course, is in full compliance with the university rules on academic integrity. When you turn in an assignment, you are saying, in effect: "The ideas, facts, arguments, words, etc. that I have taken from others are credited as such; everything else is my original work."

UCSD rules provide that any breach of academic integrity may lead to a grade of F for the entire course. (Code of Student Conduct, sec. 22.21.13.10)

Intentional or knowing plagiarism is extremely serious and will likely lead to failure for the entire course, but **even negligent plagiarism** (e.g., "I just wasn't paying attention" or "it was late and I just didn't notice") **is STILL plagiarism** and can have **very unwelcome consequences for your grade and your permanent disciplinary record!!**

When in doubt, cite!!

And if you have any questions, be sure to ask me or your TAs. Our mission is to help you avoid these problems; we want to teach you good practices that will keep you out of trouble in this class and all your others at UCSD and in your future work. Finally, if you can't get the paper done in time without cutting corners and including plagiarized material, by all means **turn it in late so you can go back and fix the problem!** The minor grade reduction you will get (one-third of a letter grade per day on an assignment worth no more than 20% of the course grade) pales in comparison to the consequences of handing in a paper with plagiarism.