NCSSM Academic Programs

Reminders for Faculty, 2015-2016
(See NCSSM Student Handbook for further institutional policies.)

Academic Honesty
An instructor who suspects that a student has violated academic honesty expectations should discuss the situation with the student and, on the basis of that discussion, decide whether the perception is accurate or inaccurate. If the instructor believes that a violation did occur, the procedures stated in the Code of Student Conduct should be followed. In accordance with school-wide policies, the instructor sets the standard for what does or does not constitute academic dishonesty in a specific course.

Remember to have all students sign an Academic Honesty statement at the beginning of each course.

Homework Time Expectations
As our students face a challenging workload in multiple courses each trimester, instructors in core academic courses are expected to limit out of class assignments to that which most students can reasonably complete according to the following table. Double credit courses, such as American Studies, are allowed up to two additional hours of “out of class” time per week.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class time per week</th>
<th>Out of class time per week</th>
<th>Total time per week</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 hour</td>
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<td>9 hours</td>
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<td>5 hours</td>
<td>6 hours</td>
<td>11 hours</td>
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Turning in Homework Assignments
Homework assignments (whether in written or electronic format) can be made due at any time between 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. on a regular academic day, but should **not** be made due any time between 10:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m. If an assignment will be due at any time on the day after it is made, the instructor must have at least alerted students in class on the day it is made and provided the full assignment with instructions (in written or electronic format) **no later than 5:00 p.m.**

Assignments over Extended Weekends and Breaks
Ensuring that students are able to fully relax and visit with family during scheduled Extended Weekends and Breaks (i.e. Winter, Trimester, etc.) in the academic calendar benefits the entire school community. Thus, no assignments will be made that obligate students to complete them during such holiday periods.

Specifically, no major written or electronic assignments (see definition under Scheduling of Major Assignments and Tests below) will be due within the first 24 hours of the students’ anticipated return to campus from a scheduled holiday. For example, if an Extended Weekend ends at 12:00 midnight on Monday, no major written or electronic assignments will be due prior to the beginning of the class day on Wednesday. This includes assignments announced in advance on the course syllabus.

As for reading assignments or other non-major activities required to effectively participate in the first class following a holiday period, all such preparatory assignments will be made at least 24 hours prior to the students’ anticipated departure from campus. For example, if students are expected to depart for
Spring Break at 5:00 p.m. on Friday, all reading or other non-major preparatory assignments necessary for the first day back will be made by the end of the regular class day (i.e. 5:00 p.m.) on Thursday.

Late or Make-Up Work
Instructors may establish further procedures regarding late work for particular courses in the statement of Courses Expectations distributed at the beginning of each course. However, no such work (except the trimester examinations) may be accepted after the last class day in each grading period. Trimester examinations must be completed no later than the examination period scheduled for that course.

When students do not complete and submit assigned work due to an excused or approved absence, they are allowed to make up the work on a schedule established by meeting with the instructor. If at all possible, this meeting should occur prior to the day of the absence. The additional time to make up the work will vary depending on the subject and the nature of the assignment. All sections of the same course, however, have the same policy for make-up work.

Important Reminder Regarding Late Work at the End of the Trimester
NCSSM school policy does not allow teachers to extend due dates for assignments into the final exam period, even in cases of illness. Trimester Exams must be completed no later than the examination period scheduled for that course. The only provision for turning in an assignment after the last day of classes or to take an exam after the scheduled exam period is to receive an Incomplete for the course and to complete the work after the trimester ends. If, because of a serious, compelling reason, a student needs to request an Incomplete, he or she should contact the instructor(s), who will then submit a formal request to the Vice-Chancellor for Student Life, whose approval is required.

Grading Expectations
A minimum of six graded assignments, two of which are major assignments, are to be expected in every course for each Trimester grading period. Major assignments include tests, papers, laboratory reports, presentations, portfolios, and others that cover a substantial amount of material and comprise at least 10% of the Trimester grade, as determined by the teacher. Minor assignments include quizzes, homework problem sets, reader responses, class participation, and others that cover less material and comprise less than 10% of the Trimester grade, as determined by the teacher. At least one major and two minor assignments are to be graded and returned to the student prior to the Midterm Progress Report.

For the best learning environment, students should receive feedback as soon as practical after they submit an assignment. Therefore assignments are expected to be graded and returned as follows:
Major Assignments no later than ten academic days after the due date.
Minor Assignments no later than five academic days after the due date.

Despite individual differences in instruction, the grading scale and weighting of assignments is the same for all sections of multi-section courses, and there are roughly the same number of major assignments (plus or minus one) per Trimester grading period for all sections of the same course.

Scheduling of Major Assignments and Tests
For the purposes of the Testing and Major Assignments Calendar, any individual assessment activity (test, quiz, etc.) that requires over 25 minutes of a class block (or lab), or which accounts for 10% or more of any trimester grade, is considered a test. Any written assignment, portfolio, or other project
outside of class that requires four or more hours of homework time, or which accounts for 10% or more of any trimester grade, is considered a major assignment.

In order to effectively distribute the academic workload and to allow our students to do their best work, major assignments and tests are scheduled throughout each Trimester according to a weekly calendar developed by Academic Programs. Please pay particular attention to the weeks allowable for your Department, especially during the “split weeks”.

**Midterm Progress Reports**
During each trimester, Midterm Progress Reports are issued for each student in every course. At least one major and two minor assignments are to be graded and returned to the student prior to the Midterm Progress Report. The Midterm Report represents the instructor’s best estimate of the student’s progress to that point and is reported as A, B, C or D. Distinctions of “+” or “-” are not part of the midterm assessment. A grade of D is failing. Consultation with the instructor is recommended if a student is not performing well.

**In Danger of Failing Reports (IDFs)**
Approximately two weeks prior to the end of each term, an additional progress report is issued by teachers for any student with a 50% or greater likelihood of failing the term or the course. In such instances, a progress report of “IDF” is recorded. The teacher includes a comment with the assessment summarizing the student’s performance to date.

**Grade Transparency**
Teachers ensure that students are given access to a compiled list of their grades sometime before and sometime after mid-term grades are issued—in the learning management system (LMS) used by the teacher, in the School student database, emailing grades via a mail merge, in hard copy, or other ways that maintain confidentiality.

**Alternate Exams**
Alternative activities in lieu of Trimester exams are those that the students complete at a time other than the exam period assigned in the published exam schedule. The format (e.g. written, oral, performance) does not affect whether it is considered to be an alternative activity. Instructors planning an alternative activity in lieu of trimester or final exams notify their Dean three weeks prior to the end of the trimester in which they intend to use it. With approval from the Dean, an alternative activity may be due at any time up to and including the period assigned in the published exam schedule.

**Parent Contact**
It is essential that faculty maintain an open channel of communication with parents/guardians regarding the performance of students in their classes. Contact parents, as well as the student Support Team (Counselor, Advisor & Student Life Instructor), in whatever format—e-mail, telephone, text—that is most effective regarding any significant issue or concern. Faculty should do their best to respond to any parent/guardian request for information on the day it is received, and must respond within 24 hours (weekends excepted). Your Dean can offer support in the case off any negative parent interaction.