Respect for intellectual property is a central concern in academic work. Scholarly work in every field requires the use of other people’s published—and occasionally unpublished—words, ideas, and work. As participants in the university, students (and others) are required by university, departmental, and classroom policies to abide by the rules of academic honesty. These rules require that the use of others’ work be frankly and completely identified and acknowledged. In its commitment to helping students refine their writing, research, and analytical skills, the faculty of the Portland State Department of English place a high value on academic honesty. Below, we offer key definitions and strategies for ensuring the honest, ethical, and appropriate use of others’ ideas in your own work.

DOCUMEN TATION OF SOURCES
Professors assume that you, the student, are the author of all work (quizzes, tests, papers, lab work, etc.) that you submit, whether for a grade or not. Any ideas, data, or phrases borrowed from others should be fully identified and cited, as explained below. You must document your sources whenever you use the words or the ideas of others—whether it’s via quotation or paraphrase. You should also cite the reference to any facts or information that are not common knowledge.

The effective integration of sources involves more than just correct documentation. At the most basic level, all quotations should be grammatically integrated within your own writing; they

---

1 Modified from the PSU Political Science Department’s document of the same name, with references also drawn from “Guidelines for Essay Writing,” Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Wilfrid Laurier University, 1996. The original document was adapted from “Regulations on Academic Integrity,” Department of Political Science, University of Washington.
should not float on their own. There are a variety of ways to incorporate others’ ideas and words, depending on your purpose. We highly recommend Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein’s *They Say/I Say: The Moves that Matter in Academic Writing* (3d ed., 2016) for models and suggestions.

Conventions for documenting sources vary according to context and discipline, so it’s important to ascertain the expectations of each professor or publication. Below, we offer a general overview of the two most common styles, including resources for more information.

Note that documentation styles are updated regularly, so you should check for the most current version before relying fully on the present document. Perhaps more importantly, don’t rely too heavily on “automatic” bibliography generators like EasyBib, etc. These sites regularly include extra information and/or incorrect formatting—so while they may be helpful as a place to start, those results should be refined through your own reference to documentation guides.

Purdue University’s Online Writing Lab (OWL) contains many helpful resources for documentation in various styles: [https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/)

**Modern Language Association (MLA) Style**

MLA is the most common style used in English and the humanities generally. Please refer to the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 8th Edition* and MLA’s online resources ([https://style.mla.org/](https://style.mla.org/)) for more information. Purdue University’s Online Writing Lab also offers helpful resources for MLA citation at [https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/10/](https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/10/).

**MLA references**

References appear on a new page after the end of your paper, with the heading “Works Cited” centered, without extra spaces beneath it or between sources. Sources should be double-spaced, with a hanging indent, and listed in alphabetic order by authors’ last names. Reference formats vary according to the type of text. Some basic examples include:

Last Name, First Name. *Title of Book*. Publisher, year.

Last Name, First Name. “Title of Article.” *Title of Journal*, vol. #, no. #, year, pp. #-#.

**Notes:**

- For online sources, include a URL, DOI, or permalink to help readers locate the source.
- When a source has multiple authors, order the authors in the same way they are presented in the source. The first given name appears in last name, first name format; subsequent author names appear in first name last name format.
• If you include more than one work by a particular author, the entries should be ordered alphabetically by title; use three hyphens in place of the author’s name for every entry after the first.

**MLA citations**

In-text citations must include authors’ last names and relevant page numbers in this format: (Name #). If authors’ names appear within the signal phrase/sentence, only the page number should appear in parenthetical citations; otherwise, both appear in parenthetical citations.

For a source with two authors, list the authors’ last names in the text or in the parenthetical citation. For a source with three or more authors, list only the first author’s last name, and replace the additional names with et al.

**American Psychological Association (APA) Style**

APA is a common style in many disciplines in the social sciences and is used increasingly within certain sub-fields of English Studies, such as rhetoric, composition, and technical communication.

**APA references**

Like MLA references, APA references appear on a new page after the end of your paper, with the heading “References” centered, without extra spaces beneath it or between sources. Sources should be double-spaced, with a hanging indent, and listed in alphabetic order by authors’ last names. Reference formats vary according to the type of text. The primary difference from MLA is that the source’s publication date appears in in-text citations and earlier within the reference—but there are also subtle variations. Some basic examples include:

Author, A. A. (Year of publication). *Title of work: Capital letter also for subtitle*. Location: Publisher.


**APA Citations**

APA follows the author-date method of in-text citation, for example, (Jones, 1998). A complete reference should appear in the reference list at the end of the paper. If you are directly quoting text, then also include the page number in the citation (Jones, 1998, p. 34).

---

2 This and the following two examples are from [OWL pages on APA Style](https://owl.upenn.edu/).
Unlike MLA, it is not necessary to cite a page number unless you are directly quoting text. This is because most disciplines that use APA style are empirically, rather than textually, based. If you are citing an idea or a whole work, it is sufficient to cite only the author and year of publication:

She stated, “Students often had difficulty using APA style” (Jones, 1998, p. 199), but she did not offer an explanation as to why.

PLAGIARISM

Although plagiarism may be intentional or unintentional on the part of the writer, the university regards plagiarism as a form of academic misconduct, the scholarly counterpart of the bank embezzler or of the manufacturer who mislabels a product. It is therefore the writer’s responsibility to become familiar with proper citation formats and to develop the research writing skills (summary, paraphrase, and quotation) involved in writing at the college level. Ignorance of these methods and protocols is never an excuse for plagiarism.

Plagiarism takes many forms that can be divided into four basic types:

- **Word-for-word copying** of another’s writing without enclosing the copied passage in quotation marks and identifying it in a footnote, or citing it in the text followed by a full reference in an attached bibliography;
- **Patchwriting** strings together directly borrowed words and phrases, with minimal changes beyond synonyms or rearrangement. In the resulting mosaic of other people’s ideas and words, the plagiarizing writer’s sole contribution is the cement to hold the pieces together;
- **Paraphrasing** a source by creating an abbreviated (and skillfully prepared) restatement of someone else’s analysis or conclusion without acknowledging that another person’s text has been the basis for the statement;
- **Appropriating** an idea from another source and presenting it as your own, even when the phrasing of the source has been entirely rewritten.

The examples given below should make clear the dishonest and the proper use of source material. If you are unsure in a particular instance whether or not to reference a source, play it safe and acknowledge your sources.

This is the original text used in the following examples of plagiarism:
The 1932 Micheaux film *Ten Minutes To Live* problematized the location of black heterosexual pleasure within a rigid color caste system that makes the desired object the body most resembling whiteness. In a series of narrative reversals challenging assumptions that whiteness/light skin should be interpreted as signifying innocence, the question of who is good or bad is rendered far more complex than the issue of color. Calling into question the Western metaphysical dualism which associates whiteness with purity and blackness with taint, the subtext of Micheaux’s seemingly simple melodrama interrogates internalized racism and the color caste system.


**Word-for-Word Copying**

In this most egregious form of plagiarism, the writer borrows source material without acknowledging the original in any way, implicitly claiming authorship of the text. An example of word-for-word plagiarism (printed in italics) of the source text printed above follows:

> Yet, in the 1932 Micheaux film Ten Minutes To Live problematized the location of black heterosexual pleasure within a rigid color caste system that makes the desired object the body most resembling whiteness. In a series of narrative reversals challenging assumptions that whiteness/light skin should be interpreted as signifying innocence, the question of who is good or bad is rendered far more complex than the issue of color. Calling into question the Western metaphysical dualism which associates whiteness with purity and blackness with taint, the subtext of Micheaux’s seemingly simple melodrama interrogates internalized racism and the color caste system. Indeed, the simplicity of the film only underscores what Micheaux is calling into question.

In this example, after composing half of a first sentence, the writer copies exactly what is in the original text, omitting the quotation marks and citation: (hooks 135). The last sentence is also the writer’s own. By enclosing all the copied text in quotation marks and referencing the source, the writer would have avoided the charge of plagiarism. A reader might justifiably have felt, however, that the writer had not made a very significant personal contribution to the discussion.
Patchwriting

In “patchwriting” plagiarism, the writer borrows words and phrases near verbatim from the original text, reassembled rather than rewritten. Phrases in italics are direct unacknowledged quotes from the source.

Yet, in the 1932 Micheaux film Ten Minutes To Live we see the location of black heterosexual pleasure within a rigid color caste system challenging assumptions that whiteness/light skin should be interpreted as signifying innocence. This means that the question of who is good or bad is rendered far more complex than the issue of color and the subtext of Micheaux’s seemingly simple melodrama interrogates internalized racism and the color caste system. This makes us question the Western metaphysical dualism which associates whiteness with purity and blackness with taint.

Only rewriting will save this paragraph. Even if a citation followed the passage, the reader would be uncertain whether it referred to the last few sentences or the entire paragraph. As in the first example, putting every stolen phrase within quotation marks would reveal how little of the thought belonged to the writer.

Unacknowledged Paraphrase

Unacknowledged paraphrasing of another writer’s ideas also counts as plagiarism. The original and the paraphrased passage have been printed in tandem in the example below:

Original:

The 1932 Micheaux film Ten Minutes To Live problematized the location of black heterosexual pleasure within a rigid color caste system that makes the desired object the body most resembling whiteness. In a series of narrative reversals challenging assumptions that whiteness/light skin should be interpreted as signifying innocence, the question of who is good or bad is rendered far more complex than the issue of color. Calling into question the Western metaphysical dualism which associates whiteness with purity and blackness with taint, the subtext of Micheaux’s seemingly simple melodrama interrogates internalized racism and the color caste system.

Paraphrase:
The 1932 Micheaux film *Ten Minutes To Live* raises the problem of black heterosexual pleasure, as it exists within a racial hierarchy that privileges whiteness. The movie’s plot twists ask us to question which characters are good or bad, showing that this is a much more complex issue than the simple idea that white skin is a symbol of innocence. In this way the film questions the idea of blackness as a taint and, within the seemingly convention-laden genre of melodrama, interrogates internalized racism and the color caste system.

Original:

The 1932 Micheaux film *Ten Minutes To Live* problematized the location of black heterosexual pleasure within a rigid color caste system that makes the desired object the body most resembling whiteness.

Paraphrase:

*The 1932 Micheaux film Ten Minutes To Live raises the problem of black heterosexual pleasure, as it exists within a racial hierarchy that privileges whiteness.*

Original:

In a series of narrative reversals challenging assumptions that whiteness/light skin should be interpreted as signifying innocence, the question of who is good or bad is rendered far more complex than the issue of color.

Paraphrase:

*The movie’s plot twists ask us to question which characters are good or bad, showing that this is a much more complex issue than the simple idea that white skin is a symbol of innocence.*

Original:

Calling into question the Western metaphysical dualism which associates whiteness with purity and blackness with taint, the subtext of Micheaux’s seemingly simple melodrama interrogates internalized racism and the color caste system.

Paraphrase:

*In this way the film questions the idea of blackness as a taint and, within the seemingly convention-laden genre of melodrama, interrogates internalized racism and the color caste system.*
When paraphrasing, the writer substitutes approximately equivalent terms for those in the original. If properly referenced, paraphrasing does not count as plagiarism. For example, if the writer began the paragraph with: “As hooks says in *Black Looks*,...” and concluded the paraphrased passage with a reference giving the additional identification necessary, the form would be correct. Similarly, the writer could have indicated the paraphrase directly, starting, “To paraphrase hook’s idea...” and then concluding with a reference. Honesty about the source material is vital.

*Appropriating Ideas*

Original:

The 1932 Micheaux film *Ten Minutes To Live* problematized the location of black heterosexual pleasure within a rigid color caste system that makes the desired object the body most resembling whiteness. In a series of narrative reversals challenging assumptions that whiteness/light skin should be interpreted as signifying innocence, the question of who is good or bad is rendered far more complex than the issue of color. Calling into question the Western metaphysical dualism which associates whiteness with purity and blackness with taint, the subtext of Micheaux’s seemingly simple melodrama interrogates internalized racism and the color caste system.

Plagiarized version:

*Micheaux’s* Ten Minutes to Live questions standard cultural associations between whiteness, beauty, and virtue. It is never clear which characters are good or bad, and therefore skin color is not a reliable index to moral worth. Through undermining the audience’s narrative expectations, the film problematizes the idea that the ideal object for black male desire is the light-skinned woman.

**VIOLATIONS AND CONSEQUENCES**

Plagiarism is a serious offense. It may lead to failure of the course and disciplinary action by the Office of Student Affairs and the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Plagiarism is proscribed by the PSU Student Conduct Code. Further information on the university’s policies and procedures regarding academic misconduct (including plagiarism) can be found at https://www.pdx.edu/dos/academic-misconduct.

**RESOURCES**

- PSU Writing Center: [https://www.pdx.edu/writing-center/](https://www.pdx.edu/writing-center/)
- PSU Library research help: [https://library.pdx.edu/research/citing-sources/](https://library.pdx.edu/research/citing-sources/)
● Purdue Online Writing Lab resources: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/