

Sample Syllabus Policies on the Use of Mobile Technology in the Classroom

A **mobile device policy** on the syllabus can help establish expectations for the productive use of technology in the classroom. The policies below offer a range of approaches to the integration of technology in the classroom. Please note that none of the policies suggest outright bans on the use of mobile devices because the use of technology may be an important accommodation to allow all students to participate fully.

Use of mobile devices if not posing as a barrier to engagement:

- (1) I will allow electronics in class (i.e., laptops and tablets only).
 - I know many of you read online or take notes on your laptops or tablets, however, electronics are a major distraction in class and disrupt class discussion. There is literature that supports this claim, one of which includes: Fried, C.B. (2008). In-class laptop use and its effects on student learning. *Computers & Education*, 50(3), 906-914. But, because we often read online, I will allow them. However, if I find they become distracting, I hold the right to disallow them in class.
 - In this vein, I would strongly suggest you print out the PDF and online readings, and bring your books to class. I would also urge you to come to class with written notes on the readings or typed notes on your laptop or tablet. If printing is an issue, please talk to me!
- Brown University course on “Racial and Ethnic Politics and Policy in America,” taught by Yalidy Matos
- (2) Laptop/tablet use in lectures is not recommended. Using your laptop or tablet to take notes often leads to checking email and social media or browsing the internet. This hinders your learning and has also been shown to distract those around you. Therefore, I highly recommend taking notes on paper (as mentioned above, slides are available prior to class, and can be printed.) Also, lecture captures are available (see below). If you choose to use your laptop or tablet in class, please sit in one of the side sections of the lecture hall. **NO LAPTOP OR TABLET USE IN THE CENTER SECTION OF THE LECTURE HALL.** Also, please keep your cell phones on silent and put away in your bag or pocket.

Lecture captures for all lectures will be available on the Canvas site. Because the slides and lecture capture are available, I highly encourage you to engage in your learning during the lecture, rather than mindlessly writing down notes. All the resources will be available to you later if you need to go back to them.

- Brown University course on “Neural Systems,” taught by Monica Linden
- (3) You are welcome to use a laptop or tablet in this class as long as it contributes to your learning. This class, once again, is discussion based. This means that all students are expected to actively listen to one another in order to participate in classroom activities. If you are unable to contribute to the discussion or are otherwise distracted by your computer, cell phone, or table, I will ask that you refrain from using it in class. There will be some class sessions where we will use technology together, and in those instances, all students should make arrangements to bring a laptop or tablet to class. If you have any questions or concerns, please be in touch with me.
- [University of Chicago syllabus](#)

Use of mobile devices for specific course objectives only:

- (1) Human connection is the heart of a modern liberal arts education. *We can't learn without you.* Arrive prepared and ready to think out loud and share confusions. Class meetings involve discussions in a variety of formats, some experimental and perhaps unfamiliar. These varied structures enable different forms of thinking and analysis; they also accommodate diverse personalities and learning styles. In all settings, collaborate thoughtfully and respectfully with your peers. When you disagree with or don't understand something you hear, ask questions. Your peers' questions are as important as mine, so listen carefully.

The use of laptops, phones, or e-tablets in class is not permitted, except when they are integral to small-

group projects or to specific assignments. You should take notes by hand on the general points and methods we discuss in class, and then use your computer after class to help you expand on and clarify your understanding of the class conversation. This method allows you to participate fully and also review your thoughts in a productive way when you have a quiet moment after class. Taking notes can help you think, but it can also keep you from listening, so don't overdo it.

[Rebecca Biron, COLT 1 – Reading the World, Dartmouth College](#)

- (2) You may use laptops or tablets in this class to consult online readings or to take notes. However, any other use of these devices and the use of cell phones is strictly prohibited. Place your phone on mute before you come to class. Violating this policy will negatively impact your participation grade.

- [University of Pennsylvania](#)