

## Disruption of Classes by Students

Adapted from materials by Dr. Raymond “Chip” Tafrate, CCSU Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice.

Students can be disruptive and behave inappropriately in class for many reasons. When such behavior becomes a distraction for the other students in class and to you, you will need to take steps to correct the situation.

- Clearly communicate your expectations of what behavior is appropriate in your class. Be fair, consistent, and firm. It is also a good practice to include these expectations on your course syllabus.
- If you are having difficulty with a student who is disrupting your course, the first thing to do is remain as calm as possible. You don't want to escalate the situation. You do want to ask them to stop the distracting behavior. In many cases, this will be enough to stop the objectionable behavior.
- If a simple request from you does not stop the behavior, you will need to handle the issue outside of class. You should ask the student to meet with you after class, or, if the disruption continues, to leave the class and meet with you afterwards.
- In rare cases, a student will continue to be disruptive despite your best efforts. You may wish to cancel class for the day, if you are unable to get the student to leave on his or her own.
- Give the student a fair hearing as he or she explains their issue or grievance. This does not mean that you have to agree with them. You do need, however, to understand their concerns. You should also emphasize that their disruptive behavior is inappropriate and will not help to resolve their concerns.
- Realize that you may not be able to resolve the issue yourself. You may need to discuss the problem with your department chair. After that, you may begin a formal or informal disciplinary process. These are some of the resources the University has to deal with disciplinary issues.
  - ✓ [Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.](#)
  - ✓ [Office of Student Conduct.](#)
  - ✓ [Division of Student Affairs.](#)
- There may also be non-disciplinary reasons for disruptive behavior. An unruly student may be under considerable stress, have psychological issues, or an underlying disability. In such a case, you may not want to handle the issue on your own. Your department chair is always a good resource. The University does have some other services available to help.

- ✓ If the issue is one where the student may need counseling, you may want to refer your him or her to Student Wellness Services- Counseling (<http://web.ccsu.edu/counselingandwellnesscenter/default.asp>).
- ✓ If you think the student may have an issue with a disability of some sort, contact Student Disability Services (<http://www.ccsu.edu/sds/>).