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UDG COURSE ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Why do I need this course?

Every student must understand the importance of academic integrity and academic writing.

Academic integrity or honesty implies acting in a fair, respectful, and responsible manner in your studies and academic work. This means applying these values in your own work as well as when dealing with the work and contributions of others. These values are expected from both teachers and students.

This means approaching studies, research, and professional life in an ethical manner, having the courage to make the right decisions, and demonstrating integrity in your actions as part of the University of Donja Gorica community. Academic integrity relates to who you are as a person and how you behave in the most important moments.

The ability to write in an academic style is crucial for disciplined learning and is essential for academic success. Several aspects make academic writing important. However, first, we must understand the importance of academic writing before we start using it. The main purpose of this type of writing is to help improve the understanding of the audience reading us, whether it is an evaluator or the wider public. Academic writing follows a formal tone and style, but it is not as complex as many think. Hence, the idea for this course.

Control over academic writing gives students the ability and power to act in building their knowledge and skills, determining educational practices in specific disciplines, social standing, and career advancement.

That's why this course is important for you.

PART I) ACADEMIC INTEGRITY – CONCEPT AND SIGNIFICANCE

Introduction:

By enrolling in studies at the University of Donja Gorica, you have become a member of the academic community. You have thus become part of UDG and committed to contributing through your activities during and after your studies to achieving the mission of the University of Donja Gorica: to train students to be responsible citizens of the global world. An important part of this is respecting the rules of academic integrity and adhering to the ethical values and standards of the academic community, which are just part of the moral code of responsible citizenship in the global world.

Lesson 1: What is academic integrity?

The word integrity comes from the Latin word 'integritas,' which means completeness, indivisibility, wholeness, as well as personal honesty, independence, correctness, purity, and adherence to certain values and behaviors. Academic integrity is academic behavior that ensures the preservation of academic honesty, the dignity of the profession, the quality of work and products, a spirit of equal collaboration with all participants in the academic process, orientation towards truth as a fundamental value, and respect for legal regulations as the basis of responsibility for members of the academic community, or any behavior that aligns with the principles of academic integrity.

The beginning of your studies marks the start of a new phase in your personal development, and your success in your studies should be based on human and academic honesty,

Lesson 2: Violating academic integrity

There are various forms of violating academic integrity that students should avoid, as they can lead to different consequences. Violating academic integrity includes activities where someone presents another's work as their own or misrepresents something (e.g., through falsified data), as well as any actions that can be characterized as cheating on exams by using unauthorized means or through unauthorized collaboration with fellow students or third parties.

There are several ways to violate academic integrity, with the most common being:

- Plagiarism is taking another's work or parts of that work, other significant scientific knowledge, or their parts, hypotheses, theories, methods, or data obtained through scientific research without citing the author or conducting similar actions by presenting them as authentically your own for personal gain. Simply put, plagiarism is using other people's work without citing sources.
- Fabrication in scientific research is the invention of data and results of scientific research and their publication.
- Falsification in scientific research is altering and modifying data and results of scientific research and their publication.
- Gift authorship includes buying papers (seminar, master's, doctoral, and scientific works and other literature) or writing works on behalf of another and for their account (the entire work or part of it).
- Out-of-context citation is copying or paraphrasing text while citing the author but in a modified context.

Violating the rules of respecting another's authorship risks initiating disciplinary proceedings and punishment, but the strictest penalty remains that you will be remembered in your environment as a transgressor and plagiarist.

Lesson 3: Academic integrity at UDG – importance of rules and consequences of their violation

UDG is recognized as an institution that fosters a culture of academic integrity.

During the first week of classes for the newly enrolled generation, students are introduced to all the rules of studying, which are clearly defined and published on the Faculty's website and individualized student portals. All students and employees at UDG are obliged to respect the predefined rules in all areas and activities (teaching and research), with no possibility for any instance at UDG to discretionarily change the rules. Failure to respect these deadlines and rules entails disciplinary responsibility for both students and all employees.

At the beginning of the academic year, the class schedule, schedule for taking midterms and final exams, and non-working days during the semester are publicly announced. All schedules and deadlines are respected and are publicly available to students for planning activities and obligations. On the individual web portals of each discipline, the academic calendar and information about the subject, rules for organizing classes, grading criteria, etc. are published. All these documents are publicly available to all students. UDG has clearly defined rules for taking written exams (“13 commandments for taking written exams at UDG”) with which students become thoroughly acquainted in the first week of classes for the newly enrolled generation of students.

As an important part of academic integrity, rules regarding adherence to academic writing standards and citation are defined. At all faculties and all levels of study, there are mandatory courses related to academic writing. Respecting the rules of academic writing is mandatory at the level of homework, essays, seminar papers, etc. Final papers at all levels of study undergo mandatory checks using anti-plagiarism software, and the rules for mentoring involve mandatory direct consultations with students through which mentors must ensure that candidates master the material they address in their final papers. Failure to respect deadlines in communication between mentors on one side and students on the other in the procedure of creating final papers is subject to disciplinary responsibility. In the second part of this short course, you will get acquainted with the basic rules of academic writing.

II Part: Academic Writing

Lesson 1: What is Academic Writing?

Academic writing represents the standards, principles, and guidelines that individuals should adhere to when writing academic papers. The goal of every academic paper is for students to independently research and articulate a specific problem in writing and, if necessary, prove the correctness of their views during an oral defense.

Academic papers encompass all works written during undergraduate and graduate studies. Doctoral dissertations, depending on the circumstances in which they arise, are also academic papers, while their objectives are scientific works.

Academic papers include:

- Written exam essays
- Seminar papers
- Final graduation papers
- Master's papers
- Doctoral dissertations, etc.

The material below aims to assist students who are beginning to write their first seminar papers and essays, providing recommendations and advice on how to organize their writing.

An academic paper represents independent work in which students process a chosen topic with consultations from a professor-mentor.

The sequence of steps in creating a seminar-scientific paper includes:

- Choosing and formulating the topic
- Gathering materials and searching for documentation
- Writing the paper
- For certain papers, it also includes:
 - Reviewing the paper
 - Printing the paper
 - Publicly defending the paper

Below is a detailed explanation of these procedures.

Lesson 2: Choosing a Topic and Writing Academic Papers

The topic for an academic paper can be proposed by professors or the candidates themselves. In both cases, it is necessary to consider the prior knowledge and interests of the student regarding a particular area, the available literature, and the future plans of the candidate.

An academic paper can be conceptualized as:

1. A systematic presentation of a theory or a group of theories (with conditions and comparisons) or innovations in a particular area,
2. A research project,
3. A combination of theoretical presentation and research.

Each topic, even if it has been addressed previously, can be analyzed in a new way and made current and interesting. Innovation can be reflected in exploring new material, applying a different method, comparing previous research results, applying a known method to different material, interpreting results, or similar approaches.

When choosing a topic, it is also necessary to formulate the title of the seminar paper in a way that clearly expresses the subject of research in a precise and concrete manner.

After determining the topic of the paper, the next step is to gather materials and search for literature that addresses the chosen topic. Familiarity with the literature allows the development of one's understanding of the problem being addressed. When reading literature on the chosen topic, it is advisable to make methodological notes where personal ideas and critical comments can be recorded. Reading literature should enable the student to not only disclose what has already been discovered, but also to keep up with contemporary trends, avoiding merely compiling known works, etc.

After reviewing the literature, one can proceed to writing the academic paper. To start writing and clearly define the goal, the following questions should be considered:

- Why am I writing - for what occasion am I writing?
- What kind of paper do I want to write?
- What is the expected scope of the work?
- What is the main hypothesis I want to prove?

It is generally accepted that the structure of an academic paper, depending on its complexity and scope, includes:

- Title page
- Abstract of the work, in both the native language and English
- Keywords
- Table of contents
- Introduction
- Development of the topic, method of research, and results
- Conclusion

- References

It is also possible to include an index table, a table of abbreviations, or appendices at the end of the academic paper.

The title page of an academic paper is the first contact with the reader and the standard format includes the following information: the name (and logo) of the university and faculty, the location of the higher education institution, the title of the academic paper with a note on the type of academic work (seminar paper, essay, thesis, etc.), the name and surname of the student (author of the paper), as well as the student ID number, city, and date (month and year).

The abstract of the paper should help the potential reader decide whether to read the paper or not, or pique their interest to read it in its entirety. The abstract concisely presents the purpose and essence of the work.

Keywords represent terms that are important for understanding a work, which refer to the overall specific issue of the work.

The table of contents presents a numerical-textual representation of the academic paper and gives insight into the structure of the work as well as the pages where certain titles and subsections of chapters can be found.

The introduction is the first chapter of the paper and presents the research problem being analyzed. It is customary for the introductory chapter to contain:

- The subject and goal of the work (where the problem and hypothesis of the work are defined)
- Sources of data and methods of collection (where the literature used for writing the paper and the methods of data collection are specified)
- Content and structure of the work (where the chapters that follow are briefly presented)

The obligatory part of the paper involves defining the research hypothesis, or setting the research objective. A hypothesis is, simply put, an assumption about the yet unknown properties of the research subject. This assumption is verified through further research and subsequently accepted, partially accepted, or rejected depending on the results. Thus, hypotheses are declarative sentences expressing expectations about the connection between phenomena being analyzed.

The development of the topic, method of research, and results represent the most extensive part of the paper and cover 60-80% of the academic work. In this part, the phenomenon being researched is described, significant characteristics are analyzed, and results are interpreted and systematized. When writing this section, it is useful to apply (if possible) the following arrangement:

- The previous development of the given problem,
- The current state and existing problems,

- As well as an eventual forecast for the future that provides certain solutions and measures.

The conclusion is the last chapter of the academic paper, where concise and clear conclusions about the posed question are drawn, indicating whether the obtained results have achieved the set goals of the research.

The references section lists all sources of literature used during the research and writing of the paper. References are listed by the author's surname, followed by their name. Each cited source must include standardized information: for example, in the case of a monograph: surname, first name of the author (year of publication), title of the work, publisher, place of publication.

Lesson 3: Plagiarism and Proper Citation of Literature and Writing Style

Plagiarism is the representation of the words, ideas, or works of other authors without citing the source. In other words, plagiarism includes:

- Changing just a few words or phrases or only the order of words,
- Not citing sources,
- Or not using one's own words.

When writing a paper and using literature, it is necessary to clearly separate what has been read and taken from the literature, as well as one's own observations. For this purpose, the following methods are used:

- **Quotations** are used to literally transfer excerpts from the read literature. They are marked with quotation marks ("...") and it is mandatory to provide in the footnote the surname, first name of the author, (year of publication), title of the work, publisher, place, and page number from which the quote is taken;
- **Paraphrasing**: is written after a colon (:) and is used to simplify a larger portion of text, reducing it to the main idea or a significant fact. In paraphrasing, accuracy is required and it is necessary to faithfully convey what the given author intended to say. (When writing paraphrases, the following introductions can be used: as XX said, it is written, XX argued in his work XX, established, etc.);
- **Summaries**: are written after a colon (:) and they present only the main idea of a certain work or indicate that a particular author dealt with the topic in question.

There are different styles for citing used sources: APA, Harvard, Chicago, Vancouver, and others, depending on the field of research (natural sciences, social sciences), the journal in which the work is published,... Detailed instructions for citation can naturally be found on the internet depending on the style. After defining the style to be used when writing the academic paper, it is essential to be consistent in using it. In other words, the entire work must be written using the same citation style. The relationship between the bibliography, citations, and footnotes must be carefully established. Each citation, paraphrase, or summary must have a footnote, and every item in the footnote must be found in the references at the end of the paper.

If tables, graphs, or images are used in an academic paper, it is mandatory to label the table, graph, or image above (centered) and below the table, graph, or image it is mandatory to cite the source. The work or source of the specific graph, table, or image must also be included in the references at the end of the academic paper.

The writing style of an academic paper should be appropriate for the topic, type of work, and field being addressed. For a style to be considered appropriate for writing an academic paper, it must possess clarity, simplicity, naturalness, moderation, and diversity. When writing the paper, it is necessary to adhere to spelling rules.

The most common weaknesses in writing style: personal informalities (when writing in the first person singular or plural, which is not allowed for academic work), the use of certain jargon, and inappropriate word choices. Words in sentences, sentences in paragraphs, paragraphs in sections, and sections in larger units of text should be arranged clearly, maintaining a natural sequence and continuous flow. Long and difficult sentences that cannot hold the reader's attention should be avoided.

Every form of plagiarism (whether intentional or unintentional) will eventually be discovered and carries serious penalties. Therefore, we suggest that you familiarize yourself thoroughly with the rules of academic writing. If you are unsure, consult professors, teaching assistants, or colleagues and take their advice into account when writing your future academic papers.