

Modern Languages and Literatures Best Practices

[*last updated: April 27, 2021]

This document offers guidelines for teaching in the MLL department and provides recommendations for advising, grading, syllabi and teaching-related activities. Consult your Program Director for practices specific to your Program. Consult the “Resources for Teaching and Research in MLL” site on Blackboard and the “[Teaching](#)” tab on the MLL faculty blog for examples of syllabi, grading rubrics, writing practices, policies on TAs and graders, etc.

Practices for Teaching:

- 1) Aim to use the target language as much as possible in class, unless the nature of the course presupposes the use of English.
- 2) In order to resist grade inflation:
 - a. aim for no more than 30-40% of the grades to be in the A & A- range.
This is calculated as an average of all your classes over a 3-year period.
 - b. aim to keep participation to 10% - 15% of the total class grade
 - c. aim to keep ungraded assignments (graded done or not done) to a maximum of 5-10% of the total class grade
- 3) Participation: it may be helpful to keep in mind the following
 - a. Have a rubric for grading participation
 - b. Provide feedback to students
 - c. Discuss the meaning of and expectations for participation in class
 - d. Create assignments and opportunities for students to participate
 - e. Provide more than one way for students to participate
 - f. Participation can include activities outside class: film screenings, language house, etc.
- 4) Attendance policies. Have a clearly stated attendance policy on your syllabus.
Failure to attend more than a specified number of classes can be factored into the final course grade, provided you state this on your syllabus.
- 5) Do not let students take or audit a course for which they do not have the required prerequisites. This practice serves the students in two ways: (a) by ensuring that they don't register for courses beyond their abilities, and (b) it respects the other students in class who have completed the approved course prerequisites.
- 6) Prepare in-class activities that encourage full participation.
- 7) Aim to return assignments within a two-week time frame.
- 8) Have a variety of methods of evaluating students.

- 9) Have grading rubrics for assignments (papers, presentations, etc).
- 10) Design your syllabus so you are able to return some graded assignments to students before the withdrawal deadline.
- 11) Do not use the same final exam year to year. Add in new material to discourage cheating.
- 12) Proctor your exams.

Material for syllabi:

Model Language on the Honor Code:

[N.B.: The Dean of Students periodically updates this language and will send out reminders in the Digest at the beginning of the AY.]

The W&M Honor Code is in effect for this class. You are expected to abide by its rules. You are required to do all work individually unless otherwise specified by the professor. Student work will be submitted through an antiplagiarism site called *SafeAssign*. If you have any questions regarding what constitutes plagiarism, see the instructor and also consult the Honor Code:

<http://www.wm.edu/offices/deanofstudents/services/studentconduct/honorcode/index.php>

Translation Software:

The use of translation software is not allowed in this class unless given prior approval of the instructor.

For placement in 101-202 language classes:

See <https://www.wm.edu/as/modernlanguages/undergraduate/placement/index.php>

Student Accessibility Services:

[N.B.: SAS periodically updates this language and will send out reminders in the Digest at the beginning of the AY.]

William & Mary accommodates students with disabilities in accordance with federal laws and university policy. Any student who feels they may need an accommodation based on the impact of a learning, psychiatric, physical, or chronic health diagnosis should contact Student Accessibility Services staff at 757-221-2512 or at sas@wm.edu to determine if accommodations are warranted and to obtain an official letter of accommodation. For more information, please see www.wm.edu/sas

Statement on summer language classes:

In summer sessions we necessarily condense one semester of more than sixty days into only twenty-four; this is nearly three times the rate of language courses in the regular fall/spring semesters. The schedule of this course cannot be altered, and flexible

deadlines cannot be accommodated within this format, so some students may wish to consider taking this course in the usual course sequence rather than in the summer.

Land and Slavery Acknowledgment:

[Following the department's April 2020 meeting, faculty voted to include the following language in all our syllabi:]

William & Mary occupies the ancestral lands of the Powhatan people. In 1677, near our historic campus, the Pamunkey leader, Cockacoeske, negotiated Articles of Peace, with England, on behalf of several indigenous tribes. We acknowledge the Native youths who attended the Brafferton Indian School in the eighteenth century. At present we acknowledge and honor Virginia's seven federally recognized tribes and the Commonwealth's four state-recognized tribes. William & Mary acknowledges that it owned and exploited slave labor from its founding to the Civil War; and that it had failed to take a stand against segregation during the Jim Crow Era.
