The Hidden (and some not-so-hidden) Rules in a Lecture Class

The William & Mary Neurodiversity Working Group
A lecture is...

- Typically a large class where the professor talks the majority of the time.
- A situation where you need to focus on the professor’s presentation for a significant length of time.
- A class where you listen and/or take notes more than interact with others in the class.
Students have opportunities to ask questions often at a time designated by the professor.

Students actively make connections between different topics discussed or relate the material to issues outside of class.

Students leave the lecture with more knowledge than they brought to it.

Students may take comprehensive notes as they learn the material presented in the lecture.
The professor does not allow some time for comments or questions from the class.

Students do not respect one another’s comments and questions.

Students do not leave the seminar with different perspectives nor a deeper understanding.
Students are expected to:

- Allow others to speak without interruption. There are many different forms of diversity in this class. People have different backgrounds, experiences and opinions.

- Students will be respectful of the opinions expressed by other students and the professor, even when they disagree with those opinions.

- Prepare for class.

- Raise their hand with a question or comment. Wait to be called on.
Students are expected to:

- Not dominate the class with too many questions or make too many comments. You can go to office hours if you need to ask more than 1-2 questions (see Hidden Rules for Office Hours).
- Limit distractions to others (e.g., noise, movement).
- Be mindful of other’s space and whether your belongings are crowding others.
- Refrain from talking to other students during the lecture.
How to prepare for lecture

- Make sure to do all of the assigned reading and take notes on this material, including questions you have for the instructor.

- Consider the differing points of view and information that may be expressed in the readings.
How to prepare for lecture

- Review your notes before class.
- If provided, bring PowerPoint slides, notes, or other materials to class.
Technology Rules

- It’s rude and distracting to use technology for personal, non-academic use in any classroom. You may feel more anonymous in a large class, but your use of technology is usually quite obvious and distracting to others, including the professor.

- If you need a laptop to take notes, make sure you are on task. It may be helpful to turn off your wireless connection to maintain focus.
Make sure your laptop (and cord) does not take up too much space at your desk.

Make sure your cell phone is off.

Unless needed for disability accommodation, do not wear headphones or earbuds in class.
To maximize learning, be sure to budget enough time to complete the readings and review concepts. Do not wait until the last minute to study for tests or complete assignments.

If you don’t understand something, but are uncomfortable talking in class, contact your professor as soon as possible over email or during office hours (see our Hidden Rules for Office Hours).

If you are a full-time student, consider college as a job and make it your first priority.
Some students may require accommodations, such as more time on an exam or taking the exam in a quieter location.

If the above statement applies to you, you should work with the Dean of Students to develop an accommodation plan that you can then share with your instructors.
Evaluation and feedback

- Have you had a lecture prior to this one?
- Have you ever encountered an explicit presentation like this one about lectures?
- On a scale of 1-7 (1 is least, 7 is most), did you find the material:
  - Relevant?
  - Helpful?
  - A good reminder?
  - Possibly of use in other classes?