

## DISRUPTIVE CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR POLICY

Classroom behavior is informed and governed by the Agnes Scott College Honor Code as well as two specific policies adopted by the faculty and appearing in the *Student Handbook*: the Statement on Academic Freedom and Responsibility and the Statement of Academic Rights and Responsibilities sections. While these two policies affirm the fundamental principles of freedom of speech, including controversial positions taken in the classroom, all types of speech and behavior must be balanced with principles of appropriate classroom behavior. It is ultimately the professor who manages the classroom, and if a professor believes the class is being disrupted, the professor has the right to ask a student to leave the class. Resolutions under this policy will be in accordance with the Disruptive Classroom Behavior Procedure provided below.

### What Is Disruptive Behavior?

Behavior that prevents the professor from conducting the class, or other students from learning, is disruptive.

### Faculty Rights and Responsibilities

Agnes Scott respects the right of professors to teach and the right of students to learn. Protection of these rights requires classroom conditions that do not impede their exercise. To ensure these rights, faculty members have the responsibility:

- To establish and implement academic standards;
- To address students regarding problematic behavior, and articulate expectations;
- To involve other appropriate offices when a classroom disruption arises; and
- To document any incidents and outcomes.

### How should I define disruptive behavior?

Disruptive behavior is loosely defined as any behavior that a reasonable person would view as distracting, harmful or disorderly. Examples include unauthorized cell phone use, persistent speaking without being recognized by the professor, making physical threats or acting under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Faculty should be explicit in defining expectations for classroom behavior, participation, attendance and civil dialogue. Faculty should clearly articulate standards and expectations for classroom behavior in the course syllabus and during the first few weeks of class.

### What are consequences for violating classroom decorum?

Consequences for violating classroom behavior could include reduction of participation points, treating violations as an “unexcused absence” and a reduction in the student’s final grade. The syllabus must clearly articulate the consequences for a violation and faculty should maintain records of the date and time of any such violation. More severe outcomes and long-term separations from a class must be preceded by a student conduct meeting.

### How should I respond when classroom disruption occurs?

The Office of Academic Advising, Office of the Dean of Students and the Students of Concern committee are great resources for faculty to discuss proactive strategies to prevent or mitigate classroom disruption. We recommend approaching minor concerns directly first, but not in a way that will embarrass the student or cause additional disruption to the learning of other students. Consider a general word of caution, a warning, or speaking with the student after class. We do not recommend waiting for a pattern of behavior to occur.

### What if the disruption is major or persistent?

Students may be directed by the professor to leave the class for the remainder of the class period and the student should be provided the opportunity to discuss the incident with the professor as soon as is reasonable. Faculty should consult immediately with their department chair and the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards for additional assistance and to file an incident report.