Antiracist Pedagogy Spring 2022
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Track A-Reworking a lesson, an approach, or a syllabus assignment.

For the Antiracist Pedagogy Workgroup, I was part of a group looking into "Reworking a lesson, an approach, or a syllabus assignment" (Track A). Other participants were Gabriann Hall, Jacqueline Ruggieri, Daniel Montoya, Lisa Merritt, and Sara Henson; this was an awesome group of individuals with which to work. After an initial meeting of all participants on April 11th, our Track A met on May 19, May 26 and June 2 before reporting out to the organizers on June 8th 2022. This made for a busy end of a Spring term, but it was an engaging and exciting workgroup in which to participate.

In our first meeting, our group discussed how antiracist policy is any measure that produces or sustains equity between racial groups. This led to a discussion in subsequent meetings of academic policies in general and policies related to late assignments in particular. All the participants currently teaching had late policies that appear on our syllabi. This led to a fascinating discussion about whether such policies are equitable and inclusive.

In my case, my late policy recognizes that things may come up that cause lateness I ask students to contact me before the due date if they know this will be the case and I am happy to give them a mutually agreed upon deadline extension. While this previously seemed equitable to me, it doesn't really recognize that students have disparate access to technology for communication, varying ability to break away from other duties to communicate with me on a tight deadline, or the underlying power structure that may cause hesitation for members of some cultures to communicate with people in positions of authority.

We had a lively discussion of other late policies, and it was especially great to get Sara Henson's take on this as she has tried numerous other approaches. Some of the approaches could be called "rewards", such as not needing to do a final assignment if all other assignments were submitted on time. Others could be classified as "deterrents", such as taking off points for late submissions. One interesting approach that could use components of both of these strategies is to offer a "grace period" after the due date and before a late penalty begins. Based on Sara's idea and support on its benefits from Teresa De Sitter in our report-out session, I have decided to rewrite my late policy for the coming year.

The following is my current late policy for terms up to and including Spring of 2022, followed by the late policy I plan to include on my syllabus in Fall of 2023.

Current Late Policy:
- Late work will be penalized by 20% per calendar day unless you make arrangements with the instructor **PRIOR TO** the due date. After five days, no credit will be given for late assignments.
- (*NOTE: I'm sure the bold + all caps didn't help lessen the perceived power structure on this policy*)

Revised Late Policy:

- Late policy: Class activities and labs will be due each week (except weeks of the midterm and final exam) on Tuesday at 4:00 pm. If you are having trouble meeting that deadline, you will automatically be given a 24-hour grace period until Wednesday at 4:00 pm. If you still have concerns about completing the assignment, please use the comments section in Canvas by 4:00 pm on Thursday to say how you will approach completing the work and when it will be done. This two-day grace period is designed to give you the opportunity to schedule an appointment with the GIS Tutor or to drop by my office hours (which occur primarily during mid-week). If I have not heard from you by the Thursday deadline, I will begin deducting 20% from your grade per calendar day, which means no credit is available for an assignment/lab by the following Tuesday at 4:00 pm.

Another important point to come up during our workgroup was the benefits of including students in a discussion of a late policy and what they would like to see. I plan to discuss this with my students in the Fall term to start getting more of their input into what an inclusive but equitable policy might look like.