

REASONABLE EXPECTATIONS

1. A student's life outside of class is independent of the workload for the class.

Nearly all UNO students are employed while attending college. Most are employed more than 30 hours per week. In addition, many students have familial commitments as parents or as dutiful children. These choices have no impact whatsoever on the expected work load of a student. The content of a course and the amount that a student needs to learn are independent of lifestyle choices of the student. Of course, these choices will make success far more difficult to achieve for some students than for other students in the class. UNO expects undergraduate students to spend an average of 3 hours studying for each credit hour (e.g., 12 credit hours of class plus 36 hours of studying equal a full time student). Graduate work is more rigorous (i.e., more studying), hence a full time graduate student takes 9 credit hours per semester.¹

2. One way college is different than high school is the amount of independent study a student must complete.

Students are expected to *read the assigned reading prior to class*, not after. College does not use the "spoon feed" method of "education" (e.g., spending class time on the students' only exposure to the material). Your basic understanding of the material will come from your reading of the assigned readings, not from lecture. Lectures will seek to develop a deeper understanding of the material.

3. College students are expected to knowledgably participate in classroom discussions.

Oral communication skills are critical to success in life and the business world. In this classroom, "I don't know." will not be accepted as an answer unless the question is one to which the student *should not* know the answer. If the answer is one that the student should know, but does not know, then the student shall attempt an answer rather than ceasing all exploration for an answer. When, during class participation, a student's ignorance² is displayed to peers that student can experience intense embarrassment and/or a sense of intimidation or fear. The instructor's subjective intent is to **not** create feelings of embarrassment,

¹ Your instructor may know what you are going through. Your instructor worked 40 hours per week for all of his sophomore, junior, and senior undergraduate years, as well as for all but one of his five years of classroom graduate study.

² Note the difference in the meanings of the words "stupid" and "ignorant." A person who is stupid is not capable of learning and therefore is not capable of knowing. Stupid people are as rare as geniuses. Ignorant people are far more common. An ignorant person is a person who does *not now have* knowledge. While all stupid people are ignorant, the vast majority of ignorant people are not stupid. Since "bounded rationality" afflicts all humans in all contexts, it is most accurate to say that all persons always are ignorant. In common parlance we ignore bounded rationality and use "ignorant" to refer to a lack of reasonably expected knowledge. For example, a student who has not read an assigned reading will display ignorance when called upon for class participation. [For more on "bounded rationality" consult the handout on "Critical Thinking".]

intimidation, or fear. Rather, the instructor's subjective intent is to explore the assigned readings so as to deepen the students' (note plural) understanding.

4. College level concepts can be very difficult to grasp.

The quantity of concepts can be very large. The inherent difficulty of some concepts can be very great. The interrelationships of concepts compounds the complexity and dramatically increases the overall difficulty. Some students will grasp some concepts easily, while other concepts will be very difficult for that student. Also, what is easy for one student may be hard for another. The mastery of these difficult, numerous, complex, and interrelated concepts is a reason college educated persons garner more respect and income.

5. Rote memorization, while extensive, is limited to the tools of analysis.

College requires a large amount of rote memorization. This is unavoidable and is desirable. However, the purpose of college memorization is very different from the purpose of grade school memorization (e.g., multiplication tables 1x1 through 12x12). *College memorization focuses upon the elements of complete analysis. Omission of an element of analysis will (most likely) result in an erroneous analysis regardless of the quality of the fractional analysis that is conducted.* (If you desire some assistance with memorization, then consult the handout "Memorization Techniques".)

6. Students are encouraged and expected to ask questions based on the readings, especially contemporaneously with the lecture on those readings.

A student who asks a question displays the maturity. That student displays the maturity of self-identifying ignorance and attempting to eliminate that ignorance. The ideal question reflects the basic understanding gleaned from a prior reading of the assigned readings. However, even with a prior, close reading of the readings it is not the least bit unusual for a student to be confused by the concepts and their application: hence, the need for student questions.