History Department Statement on Plagiarism

The most basic definition of plagiarism is the theft of another's intellectual property. The most serious form of plagiarism is the deliberate use of a source without alteration or attribution; cutting and pasting unacknowledged material from the Internet into an essay is one example. Copying the work of another person, failing to cite sources, failing to place borrowed phrasing between quotation marks, failing to paraphrase, and misuse of footnotes/citations may also be considered forms of plagiarism.

The History Department expects that students will cite their sources in their writing, as one of our educational goals is to train students in this critical scholarly practice. History teachers understand that mistakes in citation might occur as part of the learning process and that these mistakes may be unintentional. One of the tasks of the teacher is to notify a student when a form of misuse has occurred, so that a student might avoid this mistake in the future.

However, plagiarism can be a serious issue of academic dishonesty and can lead to disciplinary action. In a case of academic dishonesty involving plagiarism, a teacher must notify the chair of the history department and a discipline case may ensue. We expect that students will follow the guidelines for citing sources, ask their teachers when they have questions about citations, and learn from their mistakes. Above all, we expect that students will be honest in representing their own work and in acknowledging the sources they have used.

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