Policies on Behavior in the Classroom

If this is your first term at Rutgers, large lecture classes like this one may be a new experience for you. But if this is not your first term here, it is likely that you’ve had large lecture classes before. And if you have, then you know that deportment in large lectures is often appalling. Some students come late and some leave early, stepping on toes and allowing the door to slam shut. Some students hold private conversations, pass notes, use their cell phones, read newspapers, surf the web, or take naps. Occasionally they even snore! All of this, of course, distracts other students, makes it much more difficult for both the instructor and the students to focus on the material being discussed, and creates an atmosphere in which high quality teaching and serious learning are all but impossible.

I don’t know why some instructors tolerate this sort of disruptive behavior in their classrooms. Perhaps they just don’t care about the quality of their students’ learning experience. Perhaps they think there is nothing they can do about it. I want to make it very clear that I do care about the quality of your learning experience, and that I do not permit the sort of behavior that makes good teaching and exciting learning impossible.

To foster an atmosphere conducive to thinking and learning, the following policies will be in effect in this course:

- Cell phones, pagers and similar devices must be turned off before the class begins. If your cell phone rings or your pager goes off during class, or if you use your cell phone for “instant messaging,” I will stop the lecture and ask you to leave.

- Private conversations, passing notes, reading newspapers, surfing the web and taking naps are not permitted. If I notice any of these behaviors I will stop the lecture and ask you leave. If, on any given day, for whatever reason, you cannot stay awake and attentive, don’t come to class.

- Students are expected to arrive on time and to stay for the entire class. I realize that the bus system sometimes makes late arrivals inevitable. Thus I will ask that the last three rows of the room be left empty at the beginning of the lecture. If you arrive late, take a seat in one of the last three rows, and do it as quietly as possible. I will always end the class on time or a few minutes early. If you come to class, you are expected to stay for the entire lecture. If you can’t do that, don’t come. The first i>Clicker quiz question will usually be presented between 5 and 10 minutes after the class begins. The second i>Clicker quiz question will usually be presented at the end of the class. If you come late or leave early, your grade for the quiz question that you miss will be zero.