

## I. Plagiarism



Photo © Peter Garfield

### What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is a category of academic malpractice. It occurs when identifiable textual elements (ideas, lines of argument, phrases, sentences and paragraphs) are taken from someone else's publications – including internet publications – without acknowledgement. Students have a duty to comply with the University's regulations regarding plagiarism: ignorance is not an excuse.

Cases of plagiarism include:

- copying extensively from previously submitted works of your own
- copying from someone else's term paper
- copying from other publications without a clear acknowledgement of the source

### How it can be avoided

1. On no account attempt to cobble together an academic paper from undigested, and possibly incompatible, secondary texts. If you do this, you will have nothing of your own to show for your efforts, and the temptation to pass off someone else's ideas and arguments as your own will be strong. You will not, however, be tempted to do this, if you in fact *have* good ideas and arguments of your own.
2. Read widely among the primary and secondary texts of your field of study, until you have a clear perspective on it.
3. When you have a paper to write, don't begin until you have found a topic you want to explore, an argument you want to prosecute. This will allow you to use your

*acknowledged* sources innovatively and creatively, and ensure that they are a vehicle for your thinking, rather than vice-versa!

4. There is no reason to credit common knowledge to anyone in particular, and your own ideas, of course, are to be credited to no-one but you. Otherwise: *citation needed!*
5. Bearing this in mind, take time carefully to scrutinize any paper to you intend to submit, to ensure that you have not committed plagiarism inadvertently.

### **What are the consequences of plagiarism?**

The immediate consequence of detected plagiarism is clear: the academic paper in question will be awarded 5.0 ('insufficient' – to all intents and purposes a 'fail'). In some cases plagiarism will also lead to further disciplinary action on behalf of the university.

Other consequences are not so clear cut, but can be far more damaging, especially if you wish to pursue a career in academia, teaching, or in any other profession in which a reputation for integrity is of crucial importance. People have had to quit their careers in disgrace as a result of plagiarized academic papers coming to light, sometimes many years after they were written. And the negative effects on the plagiarized writers, who have been denied due credit for their ideas, ought not to be overlooked.

### **Declaration to be appended to all academic papers**

Please append to every written work written for a British Culture course a signed copy of the following declaration (included in the obligatory [departmental cover sheet](#)):

'I hereby declare that the present work was written by myself alone, that all sources or academic references used are acknowledged in the text, that all citations are indicated as such, and that this work has not been submitted as coursework at this university or elsewhere.'

Date

Signature

## **II. Online Tutorial**

The points made here are explained at greater length, and complemented by others, in an online tutorial which can be reached via the following link:

<http://www.uni-bamberg.de/ub/einfuehrungen-kurse/online-tutorials/tutorial-zitieren-und-plagiate-vermeiden-universitaetsbibliothek-kopie-1/> (access: 11 January, 2012)