



**FLOR CWRT 3317**  
**Writing the Global City: Florence**  
**Reading and Creating Travel Writing**

**CAPA FLORENCE PROGRAM**

**Course Description**

This creative writing course will guide students to find their own voice in responding to the city of Florence and their own experience of it. Since the nineteenth century - and even before - Florence and Tuscany have provided inspiration for a large number of Anglo-American writers: poets (Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Robert Lowell) novelists (E.M. Forster, Sarah Dunant) or travel writers/memoirists (John Ruskin; Mary McCarthy): after reading and discussing their work, we will add our voices to theirs.

Assignments, in the form of short stories, poetry and non-fiction, will focus on helping the student to find an individual voice and on developing ideas and honing them through drafting and revision. Emphasis will also be placed on the students' ability to evaluate and critique their own work and that of others. Walking tours of the city and its outskirts will be an important part of the course.

**Course Aims**

- to explore the relationship between the city of Florence and the genres of poetry, fiction and travel writing and identify the skills required to produce them
- to initiate, research and write short pieces of original writing
- to analyze critically their own and others' work
- to promote individual and collaborative creative writing skills
- to stimulate creativity in an academic environment, and become aware of the connections between creativity, structure and discipline

The class will meet once a week and each session will focus on specific issues related to Florence. Usually the class will be divided into a discussion period and a writing workshop in which we review each others' written work for the day. The principle behind the workshop is to offer constructive advice from which we all may benefit, not summary judgment on our peers. In this way we also become better critics of our own work. The idea is to read, study and discuss suitable samples of writing by distinguished authors and then see how well we have done ourselves as writers engaged in our own projects.

**Requirements and Prerequisites**

There are no prerequisites. Although inspirational content is the basis for the class, grammar, style and syntax will be taken into consideration as this is not a beginning writing course.

An active participation in class discussions is essential as expressing thoughts out loud is an important step towards writing them down. Students must be aware that reading their writing out loud is a fundamental activity in order to encourage the process of creativity and self-expression. Class discussions will be based on the sharing of similar emotions and ideas from assignments and in-class writings. Through inspirational exercises, the student will use the art of writing about Florence as a tool for literary expression and self-awareness. Freedom of thought within structure is essential for the creative process and for constructive productivity.

**Learning outcomes**

a.-Globalization: Students will be able to recognize, describe, and interpret examples of the impact of globalization in the urban environment from their examination of relevant written texts and through exploration and analysis of the urban environment of their host city.

b-Urban environments: Students will be able to explore and analyze the spaces they inhabit and reflect on differences and similarities between their home and host environments and be able to describe and interpret them through their writing.

c-Diversity: Students will be able to describe, interpret, and respect the differences within their student community and between their home country and the host country.

d-Social dynamics: Students will be able to understand concepts of, and implications of, the realities of power, privilege and inequality in urban environments as well as develop a greater appreciation of cultural differences and respond accordingly through their writing.

### Developmental Outcomes

By the end of the course, students should demonstrate independence & creativity, goal orientation, the ability to give and receive criticism, flexibility, and a greater appreciation of cultural differences. Students will be able to confidently compose texts in a variety of genres in both prose and verse.

### Class methodology

My classes do not take the form of rigid lectures but rather I try to minimize the “learning” distance between the teacher and student. Having said that, and whilst emphasizing my flexibility and availability both in and out of the classroom for any clarification or teaching support, I firmly believe that each student is responsible for his/her own learning and behavior and this should be evident in their attitude.

Readings, class discussions, student oral presentations, critical evaluations, field trips and Global Networked Learning (GNL) with another CAPA centre, in this case with Sidney.

### Globally Networked Learning (GNL)

See pages below.

### Field Component(s)

CAPA provides the unique opportunity to learn about the city through direct, guided experience. Participation in the field activities for this course is required. You will actively explore the Global City you are currently living in. Furthermore, you will have the chance to collect useful information that will be an invaluable resource for the essays/papers/projects assigned in this course.

The assigned field component(s) are:

- Museo 900
- San Miniato
- Medieval walk
- Medici walk
- Oblate Library
- Murate complex
- St. Ambrogio area
- S. Croce

Students are strongly encouraged to participate in co-curricular program activities. In the course of the semester, **the professor may require that students attend a specific co-curricular activity** which will later be discussed in class.

### Mid-term exam, final exam and assignments

#### Assignments:

Students must write at least 1 piece for each class (approx. 1 page). Each piece must be typed, double-spaced on standard A4 paper. These assignments will be read aloud and discussed in class. Students will be asked to keep a journal throughout the term where to take notes about what they learn/observe in class, during field trips, and on their own. They will also be required to do “map exercises”. These exercises consists in a recurrent task (each week students mark the places they have seen/visited on their personal map of Florence; this task is indicated by the letter “r”) and, occasionally, in an additional task which will be provided by the professor in class (this task is indicated by the letter “a”).

**\*All weekly assignments are due via e-mail to the professor by 10 p.m. of the day before class.** Please send your files in **PDF format** and remember to title them with **your last name and the due date**.

#### Mid-term:

In class exam consisting in short questions with open answers on topics covered until that point.

**Final:**

Students are to hand in their 3 best revised pieces, along with 1 piece of writing done on their own (free topic; 1 page). Other media techniques can be used to expand or illustrate the writing (photography, design, drawing, collage, etc.).

Grade Breakdown and Assessment of Learning Outcome			
Learning Outcomes	Assessment task	Grade %	Due Date
a), b), c), d)	Class participation and attendance	15%	Weekly
a), b),c)	Assignments	25%	Weekly
all	GNL collaboration	20%	from week 2 to week 12
a), b), c),	Mid-term exam	15%	Week 6
all	Final Exam	25%	Week 13 (week 14 there is no class because of national holiday; make-up class on March 17th).

**Grading Scheme**

DESCRIPTOR	ALPHA	NUMERIC	GPA	REQUIREMENT/EXPECTATION
Outstanding (High Distinction)	A	93+	4.0	Maximum grade: In addition to description for grade "A-", the student shows detailed understanding of materials about which he or she can show independent analytical ability. This means the ability to question an issue from different perspectives and evaluate responses in an objective manner.
Excellent (Distinction)	A-	90 - 92	3.7	Student shows understanding of literature beyond the textbook/class hand-outs/class notes, and the work shows a high level of independent thought, presents informed and insightful discussion and demonstrates a well-developed capacity for evaluation.
Very good (High Credit)	B+	87 - 89	3.3	Shows evidence of a capacity to generalize from the taught content, or the material in literature, or from class lectures in an informed manner. Also, the work demonstrates a capacity to integrate personal reflection into the discussion and an appreciation of a range of different perspectives.
Good (Credit)	B	83 - 86	3.0	The work is well organised and contains coherent or logical argumentation and presentation.
Good (Credit)	B-	80 - 82	2.7	Student shows understanding of literature beyond the textbook and/or notes, and, there is evidence of additional reading.
Average (Good Pass)	C+	77-79	2.3	The work demonstrates a capacity to integrate research into the discussion and a critical appreciation of a range of theoretical perspectives. Also, the work demonstrates a clear understanding of the question and its theoretical implications and demonstrates evidence of additional reading.

Adequate (Pass)	C	73 - 76	2.0	Shows clear understanding and some insight into the material in the textbook and notes, but not beyond. A deficiency in understanding the material may be compensated by evidence of independent thought and effort related to the subject matter.
Below Average (Borderline Pass)	C-	70-72	1.7	Shows some understanding of the material in the textbook and notes. A deficiency in any of the above may be compensated by evidence of independent thought related to the subject matter.
Inadequate (Borderline Fail)	D+	67 - 69	1.3	Fails to show a clear understanding or much insight into the material in the textbook and notes
Poor (Fail)	D	60 - 66	0.7 - 1.0	Besides the above for D+, student has not shown interest or engagement in the class work or study.
Poor (Fail)	F	<60	0	Shows little or no understanding of any of the material
Incomplete	I			Please see CAPA policy in the Faculty Handbook.

## Writing the Global City: Florence and Sydney (Globally Networked Learning)

### Introduction

Globally Networked Learning of a creative writing in response to two Global Cities, Florence and Sydney.

### Learning Outcomes

This project relates in particular to the learning outcomes of:

- Students will be able to recognize, describe, and interpret examples of the impact of globalization in the urban environment from their examination of relevant written texts and through their exploration and analysis of the urban environment of their host city.
- Students will be able to reflect on the differences and similarities within their student community and between their home and host environments and be able to describe and interpret these through their writing.
- N/A
- Students will be able to demonstrate independence & creativity, goal orientation, the ability to give and receive criticism, and flexibility through the development of their writing.
- Students will be able to confidently compose texts in a variety of genres in both prose and verse.

### Globally Networked Learning Methodology

Readings, class discussions, student oral presentations, critical evaluations, field trips and Global Networked Learning (GNL) with two collaborating CAPA centers, in this case with Sydney and Florence. Globally Networked Learning (GNL) connects connecting students to a global network of learners to gain transnational perspectives on specific topics. This collaborative creative project will be conducted mostly online between the students at the particular centers, who will then report back on their experiences and deliver their work to their home classes. To maintain quality control and appropriate amounts of supervision and feedback, the number of students allowed into this course will be capped at 12.

### Assessment and Grading

Task	Weighting	SLOs Assessed
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GNL Collaboration and Class Presentation	20%	a, b, d, e
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- Icebreaker - introduced week 1 (Sydney) and 2 (Florence), independent collaborative project completed online and presented during weeks 3 (Sydney) and 4 (Florence).

Students from each CAPA Centre involved in the GNL Project will be paired with students from their counterpart centre (or possibly be broken into groups of four, 2+2, so that no-one is left out if someone is sick/quits the course). How students are paired may be at random, or perhaps via some other simple creative means that allows them to reveal their affinities to each other through their choices without having to have a great deal of prior experience with writing, for example, choose your favorite color in the color spectrum: Red, Orange, Yellow, Green, Blue, Indigo, Violet.

Once in pairs or small groups, the students will write a one page collaborative short story. This simple icebreaker will take place on an online platform of the students choosing. It may be Canvas Collaborations, it may be email, Facebook, etc, they can choose. The main point is that it give them a chance to explore their own interests and themes while tuning in to each other's. They can begin to create something playfully together without the pressure of it being an assessment task. They can commence the process of finding out about each other and also the process of coordinating with each other across time zones and media platforms.

Upon completing the task, the final text must be loaded into Canvas in their GNL Groups for their student record and each student will read their final collaboration to their home class and say a few words about how their collaborative relationship is shaping up. They will also receive feedback and advice on their work and their collaboration. If they are extremely unhappy with their partnering, they can ask other students for volunteers to swap with. However, if they swap, they will have to redo this exercise with their new partners.

- Collaborative GNL task (independent collaborative project worked on online Sydney: weeks 3-10, presented in class in week 11; Florence: weeks 4-11, presented in class week 12)

Still working in the same pairs or small groups from the icebreaker exercise, each student will then go through the following process.

(Please note, you must check in with your home class teacher at each step along the way so that they know that you are on track and assist you if you are not.)

#### **Research:**

Find piece of literature (ideally poetry, but otherwise in the form that you want to write) that describes a particular place in your city. For example, William Wordsworth, *Composed upon Westminster Bridge, or Kenneth Slessor, William Street*. References and resources will be provided to assist you find an appropriate poem. Go visit the place in the city which inspired the poem. Has it changed?

#### **Analyze:**

Based on your reading of the poem, your reading about the poem and your visit to the place being described or that inspired it, analyze what transaction has occurred between the writer and the place and what the writer is doing as a result of this. See if you can describe a series of steps that may have occurred in the writer's creative process. Keep in mind, this is not a literary analysis but a creative modeling exercise, there is no right or wrong. The purpose of the analysis is to feed your next step.

#### **Create:**

Write your own poem (or other piece of creative writing) inspired by the same place, that follows the steps in the journey you have identified as having taken place in the poem you analyzed.

(NB - You don't have to slavishly copy the original poem, but it has always been understood that it is ok when learning to write to explore models of masters, just as painters would make copies of Titian and Michelangelo, etc, on the way to forming their own style. Keep in mind that your choice of writer and the themes that they explore and what you understand to be their pathways already reflects your individually. And this creative research and following your intuition is actually moving you towards finding your own style and voice, which may nonetheless be within a particular tradition of writing. In other words, exploring the fact that you are drawn to Allen Ginsberg's *A Supermarket in California* or Matthew Arnold's *Dover Beach* is already exercising the development of your voice.)

#### **Document:**

Write up your results, including the original text, your analysis of it, and your new text. Optionally, you could also post online images or video of the place of inspiration and read the original and your new poems in the place of inspiration or nearby if possible.

#### **Teach:**

Share your documentation with your GNL collaborator(s) via online media. Explain to each other the journey you took to get to this place.

**Discuss:**

Compare and contrast how your cities, their writers and works, and your works, are different and the same.

**Extend yourself:**

As a further creative challenge, informed by research and online learning, extend the boundaries of what you would normally read and think and be drawn to by writing a second poem inspired by place, the research and creative journey of your GNL counterpart(s). Work hard on it, but don't be worried about the perfectness of the match or the result. This is an exercise in a writing class, be brave, allow yourself the freedom to experiment without fear of 'failure'.

**Deliver:**

Upload to Canvas all of your material: your original source text, your analysis of it, and your creative first text, along with any videos and images, plus your second collaboratively inspired and/or written text.

**Report:**

In class, report back to your wider home group: reading your work and discussing the learning and creative journey you and your partner undertook and read the results. Offer and receive feedback freely. With different students connecting to different centers, this should be richly interesting and ideally provoke further discussion and contemplation.

**Revise:**

Writing is rewriting. Take onboard feedback from the class and the teacher and your online partner(s) and polish your work for final submission in Canvas.

**Be examined:**

You will be examined by your teacher on the activeness of your engagement with the whole process of this task as well as the verbal and written analysis and final works of creative writing.

**Materials**

Please see online for examples of work from previous GNL iterations of this project as a guide.

**Weekly Schedule****FLORENCE-SYDNEY GNL COLLABORATION**

Week starting Monday	Florence Semester	Sydney Semester	Activity Description
	Week 1		
	Week 2	Week 1	<p><u>In class:</u> Teacher:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) to introduce the idea of the GNL collaboration as part of a broader introduction to the Writing the Global City Course.</li> <li>2) Teacher to explain the Icebreaker for the GNL Writing collaboration.</li> </ol> <p><u>Online:</u> Students:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) to familiarize themselves with the GNL Canvas Writing site,</li> <li>2) to introduce themselves online to their overseas colleagues, and</li> <li>3) to begin Icebreaker tasks with their overseas colleagues.</li> </ol>
	Week 3	Week 2	<p><u>Online:</u> Students must continue to work on their Icebreaker Collaborations, outside class time as an independent project.</p>



	Week 4	Week 3	<p><u>In class:</u> Students to read and report on their icebreaker collaborations. Students reflect on the progress of their collaborations thus far. Report to their teachers any serious issues in with that might mean that they need to change groups. After which, Teacher to explain the Main GNL Writing collaboration.</p> <p><u>Online:</u> After instruction, students to begin their main GNL Collaborations, working on these outside class time as an independent project.</p>
	Week 5	Week 4	<p><u>Online:</u> Students to continue to work on their main GNL Collaborations, outside class time as an independent project.</p>
	Week 6	Week 5	<p><u>Online:</u> Students to continue to work on their main GNL Collaborations, outside class time as an independent project.</p>
	Week 7	Week 6	<p>FLORENCE: BREAK WEEK SYDNEY:</p> <p><u>Online:</u> Students to continue to work on their main GNL Collaborations, outside class time as an independent project.</p>
	Week 8	Week 7	<p>SYDNEY: BREAK WEEK FLORENCE:</p> <p><u>Online:</u> Students to continue to work on their main GNL Collaborations, outside class time as an independent project.</p>
	Week 9	Week 8	<p><u>In class:</u> Students to report on progress with main GNL, ask for assistance if necessary.</p> <p><u>Online:</u> Students to continue to work on their main GNL Collaborations, outside class time as an independent project.</p>
	Week 10	Week 9	<p><u>In class:</u> Students to report on progress with main GNL, ask for assistance if necessary.</p> <p><u>Online:</u> Students to continue to work on their main GNL Collaborations, outside class time as an independent project.</p>
	Week 11	Week 10	<p><u>In class:</u> Students to report on progress with main GNL, ask for assistance if necessary.</p> <p><u>Online:</u> Students to continue to work on their main GNL Collaborations, outside class time as an independent project.</p>
	Week 12	Week 11	<p><u>In class:</u> Presentation of final works of the main GNL collaborations in class.</p> <p><u>Online:</u> After taking on board feedback from the class, including possible redrafting, final GNL presentations and creative works must be submitted online for formal assessment by the end of this week.</p>

## Readings

The following readings are mandatory and can be downloaded from the **Modules** section in CANVAS:

- Benjamin W, *The work of art in the age of mechanical reproduction*
- Boccaccio G, from *The Decameron*
- Bishop E, *Questions of Travel*
- Brodsky J, from *A part of speech*
- Browning EB, from *Casa Guidi windows*

- Butor M, *Travel and writing*
- Dante, from *Paradise*
- Dunant S, from *The birth of Venus*
- Ferlinghetti L, *Canti toscani*
- Forster EM, from *Room with a view*
- Inturrisi L, *The Last Supper, Seen Six Ways, The Cloisters of Florence*
- James H, from *The portrait of a lady*
- Leavitt D, from *Florence a delicate case*
- Lewis RWB, *The city of Florence*
- Lowell R, *Florence*
- McCarthy M, from *The Stones of Florence*
- McMullen R, *Botticelli's Primavera*
- Ruskin J, from *Mornings in Florence*
- Tisdale S, *The first time I saw Florence*
- Twain M, from *The innocents abroad*

Further material, handouts and notes may be distributed to the students during the course of the semester.

### Suggested readings

- Boccaccio G, *The Decameron*
- Chaney E (ed), *A Traveller's Companion to Florence*
- De Botton A, *The Art of Travel*,
- Forster EM, *A Room with a View*
- Kerper B (ed), *Tuscany and Umbria, the Collected Traveller*
- Leavitt D, *Florence, a Delicate Case*
- Leccese Powers A (ed.), *Italy in Mind, an Anthology*
- Leccese Powers A (ed.), *Tuscany in Mind, an Anthology*
- Lewis RWB, *The City of Florence*
- Machiavelli N, *History of the Florentines*
- McCarthy M, *The Stones of Florence*
- Ruskin J, *Mornings in Florence*
- Solnit R, *Wanderlust: A History of Walking*
- Spender M, *Within Tuscany*
- Stern J, *The Lonely Planet guide to my apartment*
- Tobias J, *The Dark Heart of Italy*

### Weekly Course Schedule

\*See GNL schedule above (not duplicated here)

#### Week 1

In class: Introduction to the course. "A brief history of Florence, observation of its map, first impressions." In-class writing exercise.

Assignment: Write one page about a surprising phenomenon you observed since arriving in Florence (non-fiction).

Map exercise (r + a).

Readings: McCarthy (ch 1), Tisdale.

#### Week 2

In class: "The gaze of the foreign." Presentation of students' work and discussion.

Out of class: Visit to Museo 900.

Assignment: Respond to an artwork in the museum (poetry). Map exercise (r).

Readings: Browning (from *Casa Guidi Windows*), James, Brodsky, Lowell, Ferlinghetti.

#### Week 3

In class: Discussion of readings and presentation of students' work.

Out of class: San Miniato, on-site writing.

Assignment: Respond to a tomb (theater monologue). Map exercise (r).



## Week 4

In class: "Reading marathon, a presentation of students' works and discussion."

Assignment: Training the eye. Choose a place that you particularly like, then go there 3 times at different hours and write about it in the form of diary entries (non-fiction). Map exercise (r).

Readings: Dante, Boccaccio, Lewis (Arnolfo).

## Week 5

In class: "The streets of Florence and their hidden stories. Following Dante and Boccaccio." Presentation of students' work and discussion.

Out of class: Medieval walk.

Assignment: Write a short story set in Florence at the time of Dante (fiction).

## Week 6

In class: Midterm exam+ individual critique.

Readings (due after the break): Leavitt, McCarthy (ch.2), McMullen, Inturrisi, Benjamin, Lewis (Medici), Dunant.

## Week 7

Spring break

## Week 8

In class: "History of a family: the Medici and their presence nowadays." Presentation of students' work (Dante stories).

Out of class: Medici walk.

Assignment: Write a story about your favorite painting-sculpture in Florence (fiction). Map exercise (r+a).

## Week 9

In class: "Transformations." Presentation of students' work and discussion.

Out of class: Visit to the Oblate Library and Le Murate complex.

9.30 am - Out of class: "The five senses (not only sight). Smelling, tasting and touching the city." Sant'Ambrogio market, on-site writing.

Assignment: The senses and the city (poetry). Map exercise (r).

## Week 10

In class: "Giving voices." Presentation of students' work and discussion. In-class writing exercise.

Assignment: Revision of in-class writing exercise. Map exercise (r).

Readings: Inturrisi (cloisters), Ruskin, Forster, Lewis (S. Croce).

## Week 11

In class: "Spiritual Florence." Presentation of students' work and discussion.

Out of class: Visit to Santa Croce, on-site writing.

Assignment: Write a letter to your older self about your experience in Florence this semester (memoir).

Readings: Bishop, Twain, Butor.

## Week 12

In class: "My Florence." Final review. Presentation of students' work and discussion.

## Week 13

Final Exam+ individual critique.

## Week 14

No class, national holiday.

## Attendance, Participation & Student Responsibilities

Refer to the *Academic Handbook* for a complete outline of all academic policies. This page contains a summary only.

## Attendance

CAPA has a mandatory attendance policy. Students are also expected to participate actively and critically in class discussions, and the participation portion of the class will be graded accordingly. Students must read assignments BEFORE the class, and come in on time. Attendance is mandatory and is taken at the beginning of every class. Unauthorized absence from class will result in a reduction of the final grade and ultimately in a F for the course.

### Unexcused absences

The instructor for the course may lower the student's participation grade based on the number of absences. For custom programs, some will follow our absence policy (like when CAPA sponsors visa) and some will not; see academic director for details.

### Excused absences

Any student seeking to be excused from class on the ground of a verifiable illness (i.e. doctor's note) or a family emergency, must email the DAA ([greverdito@capa.org](mailto:greverdito@capa.org)) in advance of their class. The CAPA staff will then email the relevant Faculty member. Note that calling the CAPA Center (055-2466439) is acceptable only if you do not temporarily have access to the internet. An e-mail is still required as quickly as you can get access to the internet again. If a doctor's note is written to excuse a student from class, the student cannot use that time for personal travel. Please note: excused absences will NOT be granted to accommodate visiting friends or family. Students absent due to extenuating circumstances that have been approved by the Director of Academic Affairs in advance of the missed class, including family emergency or verifiable health-related incapacity, remain responsible for meeting all class requirements. Faculty shall offer such students reasonable assistance in making up missed work (e.g. share handouts).

### Class Participation

Participation is a vital part of your grade: students are expected to participate orally in seminars and in online forums and discussions in a critical and evaluative manner; to interact with the faculty and fellow students with respect and tolerance; and to actively engage in discussion. Derogatory or inflammatory comments about the cultures, perspectives or attitudes of others in the class will not be tolerated.

### Academic Integrity

The faculty expects from you, the student, a high level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic course depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student, it is imperative that a student demonstrates a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work and class behavior. Plagiarism and cheating will result in dismissal from the program. See the Handbook of CAPA Academic Policies for more information and resources on plagiarism.

### Use of electronic equipment in class

All devices such as laptops, I-pods, I-pads, netbooks, notebooks and tablets, smartphones, cell phones, etc. are **NOT** allowed unless you have express permission from the faculty or you have been instructed to do so. If you require an accommodation to use any type of electronic equipment, inform the Director of Academic Affairs or the Resident Director at the beginning of Term.

### Late Submission

Late submission of papers due, projects, journal entries, pieces of homework and portfolios is only permitted with prior approval. A request must be made to the relevant Faculty member no later than two days prior to the due date. Late submission without prior approval will result in a full alpha grade penalty. In either case, work cannot be submitted after feedback has been provided to the rest of the class on the relevant assessment or one week after the due date whichever comes first, after which point a grade of F will be given for the assessment.

### Behavior during Examinations

During examinations, you must do your own work. Unless specifically instructed by the lecturer or instructor, talking during an exam is not permitted, nor may you compare papers, copy from others, or collaborate in any way. Any failure to abide by examination rules will result in failure of the exam, and may lead to failure of the course and disciplinary action.