

A Note on Plagiarism

All of the literary assignments in this course aim to develop your ability to interpret and analyze literature, to read literature closely and draw conclusions based on your reading that you then develop, change, rethink, or discard in the interaction with the other students and the teacher. You are not required, or encouraged, to use secondary sources (books, Internet sites, etc.) about the literature that we read before you write your literary keywords or essays.

However, if for some reason you want to use an idea, information, or phrasing from a secondary source (electronic or printed), **you need to give proper credit to this source** and acknowledge that the idea or phrasing is not your own in the same way that you are required to do when you write your context keywords. If you fail to do this, you are guilty of *plagiarism*: that is, intellectual theft and fraud.

As Joseph Gibaldi puts it, “Plagiarism is almost always seen as a shameful act, and plagiarists are usually regarded with pity and scorn. They are pitied because they have demonstrated their inability to develop and express their own thoughts. They are scorned because of their dishonesty and their willingness to deceive others for personal gain” (66). He continues, “The charge of plagiarism is a serious one for all writers. Students exposed as plagiarists suffer severe penalties, ranging from failure in the assignment or in the course to expulsion from school. They must also live with the distrust that follows an attempt to deceive others for personal gain” (67). If you are insecure about what is considered plagiarism, I recommend pp. 66-73 in the *MLA Handbook*. You are of course welcome to ask me, if you have any questions about how to use secondary sources. Students, who are suspected of cheating, will be reported to the Disciplinary Board where they, if they are found guilty, either are given a warning by the rector or are suspended from the university for up to six months. In the autumn of 2004, six students at the English department at Karlstad University were reported to the Disciplinary Board for plagiarism.

Gibaldi, Joseph. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 6th ed. New York: MLA, 2003.