What is Plagiarism?

Plagiarism is theft. Plagiarism is cheating. It is using other people’s ideas and presenting them as your own.

Some examples of plagiarism:

- Getting someone else to do your homeworks or write your papers for you.
- Copying someone else’s homework or paper.
- Using a paper turned in by someone else in a previous term.
- Copying parts of an encyclopedia or other source book directly into your paper.
  NOTE: copying from online sources is just as illegal as copying from print ones.
- Copying some text, but changing a word here or there.
- Taking credit for someone else’s ideas, even if you put it in your own words.
- Failing to cite a source for an idea.
- Using large parts of text from someone else’s work (even if you put quotes around it, and give the citation). This is the notion of “Fair Use”. fair use is generally less than 5 lines of text. Avoid long quotes, in general.

Why should you avoid plagiarism?

- It’s dishonest.
- You don’t learn anything. (You’re paying tuition to be here to learn, right?)
- We will catch you (trust me, we will.)
- Punishments are severe (failure, expulsion, even criminal prosecution).
- The amount of time you put into trying to cover up plagiarism or other cheating could be better spent actually doing the work.
- It is very easy to avoid.

How do you avoid plagiarism?

- Give yourself enough time to work on projects, so that you don’t have to cheat. Plan ahead.
- Make sure you have a complete list of the works you refer to (i.e., your references or bibliography section). This includes online sources.
- For every idea (or fact, or opinion, or argument) that is not your own, you MUST provide a citation to the work you took it from.
- If in doubt, consult with me or your TA.