Plagiarism Prevention – Assignment Tips*
Messiah University Murray Library

Assignment
- Write clear, detailed assignments: unclear assignments are one reason for poor papers.
- Structure your research assignment so that intermediate parts (topic, early research, outline, draft, bibliography, final draft) are due at regular intervals.
- Change your paper topic(s) each time the course is offered.**
- Assign narrowly focused topics rather than broad general topics.**
- As part of the paper or as a separate assignment, have students reflect on the process of doing research and writing.
- Include an annotated bibliography as part of the assignment.**

Sources
- Require inclusion of one or more sources written within the past year. A requirement like this will quickly outdate most paper mill products.
- Require inclusion of one or more specific articles or books you name or provide. The articles could be available online (from the library's databases or the Web). Or, have students incorporate some information you provide (for example, a data set).
- Require a personal interview with an expert or authority. An interview creates both a current and a checkable source.
- Require students to hand in a copy of the first page from each source cited in their papers.**

Education and Awareness
- Show examples of a plagiarized work
- Demonstrate appropriate and inappropriate paraphrasing; possibly quiz students.
- Demonstrate properly formatted citations in your preferred style.
- Tell students in advance that you will randomly check sources in their bibliographies.**
- Before the first assignment is due, outline the penalties for handing in plagiarized work.** (In addition to including Messiah College's statement on academic honesty in your syllabus.)
- Discuss education options and resources with liaison librarian.

*Harris, Robert. "Anti-Plagiarism Strategies for Research Papers." *VirtualSalt*. 17 Nov 2004. 19 Feb 2007. <http://www.virtualsalt.com/antiplag.htm>. [Unless otherwise indicated, the above ideas come from this site.]
** "Preventing Plagiarism." *Faculty Guide to Cyber-plagiarism*. May 2005. University of Alberta Libraries. 19 Feb 2007 <http://www.library.ualberta.ca/guides/plagiarism/preventing/index.cfm>.