Dr. Doris Kearns Goodwin is a Pulitzer Prize-winning popular historian, journalist, and political commentator. She taught government at Harvard University for 10 years after spending two years as an aide to President Lyndon Johnson. She has authored six books.

In January 2002, *The Weekly Standard* published an article accusing Goodwin of plagiarism in her 1987 book, *The Fitzgeralds and the Kennedys*. The article alleged Goodwin used material without sufficient attribution from three books by other authors, though the majority of the material was from Lynne McTaggart's 1983 book, *Kathleen Kennedy: Her Life and Times*. Here are some examples from the article:

**Example 1**

McTaggart ~ “Hardly a day passed without a photograph in the papers of little Teddy, taking a snapshot with his Brownie held upside down, or the five Kennedy children lined up on a train or bus” (p. 25).

Goodwin ~ “Hardly a day passed without a newspaper photograph of little Teddy taking a snapshot with his camera held upside down, or the five Kennedy children lined up on a train or bus” (p. 523).

**Example 2**

McTaggart ~ “Mrs. Gibson gave a tea in her honor to introduce her to some of the other girls --hardly a routine practice for new recruits” (p. 130).

Goodwin ~ “Mrs. Harvey Gibson gave a tea in her honor to introduce her to some of the other girls --hardly a routine practice for new recruits” (p. 666).

In response to the allegations, Goodwin published an article in Time.com where she admitted that although she had repeatedly cited McTaggart's work in footnotes, she had failed to put in quotation marks exact phrases or sentences. She explained that the research and writing of her book occurred over 10 years and that the 900-page book had over 3,500 footnotes. She used primary sources, such as private letters, diaries, and personal interviews, along with approximately 300 published books. She took notes longhand and her notes, including quotes, from primary and secondary sources were alongside her general notes on the ideas and storyline of the book. In the process of checking the accuracy of attributions near the end of the writing process, she explained that she did not fully recheck some of the books, relying instead on her own longhand notes, which “combined direct quotes and paraphrased sentences.” She ended by describing her transition to writing on a computer and using the software’s footnote feature to avoid such problems in the future.

In a letter published in the New York Times on October 25, 2003, 14 historians wrote in defense of Goodwin who was named in an earlier article about some of America’s most notorious crooks. The historians wrote, “…Cheating is a deliberate intent to deceive or defraud. Plagiarism is a deliberate act to purloin the words of another and to represent them as one’s own. Ms. Goodwin did not intentionally pass off someone else’s words as her own. Her sources in her 1987 book, *The Fitzgeralds and the Kennedys*, were elaborately credited and footnoted. Her errors resulted from inadvertence, not intent. She did not, does not, cheat or plagiarize….”

**Sources:**
Questions for Discussion:
1. What is plagiarism?
2. When paraphrasing text from another published source, how must you indicate this in your text?
3. When using text verbatim from another published source, how must you indicate this in your text?
4. Why is it important to cite original sources?
5. Do you think that Goodwin committed plagiarism according to UNH’s misconduct policy? Why?
6. Suppose you were Goodwin’s research assistant and you came across these passages strikingly similar to those of another writer. What would you do?
7. Suppose she thanks you for bringing the matter to her attention, but when you read the published book you find that many of the passages remain. What would you do?
8. Do you agree with the historians claims? Why?
9. How can you prevent making mistakes similar to those Goodwin made?