

Email Netiquette – How to Communicate Effectively with College Professors

“It only takes 4 seconds to make an impression.

Be remembered for your style of communication not your username.”

College students need to make a good impression to their professors in the classroom, when completing homework assignments, in presenting class projects, and performing on exams. Impressions are also being formed by professors when receiving an e-mail message from a student in their class. College students must remember this is not your high school friend from home you are sending a message to; it is the person who will be recording a final grade at the end of the semester. Excellent grammar and sentence structure, appropriate word choice, and sensible organization of one’s e-mail must be taken into consideration each and every time prior to hitting the send button.

Suggestions for sending a professional e-mail that will be read and responded to:

Appropriate Username

- Creativity can and should be appreciated but what if one of your professors took attendance by reciting usernames and you had to raise your hand in front of other students in the class. Would you not acknowledge your presence in class and take the absence or could you say with pride “here”.
- Would you feel comfortable saying your username out loud in front of your mother, father, grandmother, etc. without being embarrassed or having a sense of shamefulness?
- Don’t be remembered for your username - be remembered for the message you sent.
- Example - initials jlw@ or something unique but tasteful like ucfgrad20010@



Subject Line - First and Last Name plus Course Name

- Identify yourself as a student in your professor’s class as oppose to a list serve response, fellow professors, or a UCF announcement. Example - Jake Allison - SLS 1501
- Professors who teach 4 classes, serve on committees, and who conduct research receive an average of 60 emails each day.

Greetings/Acknowledgements - Start the E-mail with a Sense of Respect

- Review course syllabus to determine prefix for professor’s name. If their name is given on the syllabus as Dan Jones and you unable to determine what prefix to use, to be safe, use Dr. Jones.
- No matter how easy going you might perceive your professor to be, never start a message with “Hey teach! What’s up?”
- A more appropriate start to an e-mail message could be something as simple but meaningful as “Hope your day is going well. Great class on Monday.”

The Message Itself – Be Specific and Present it in an Organized Manner

- Get to the point, the purpose of your e-mail. Attempt to avoid long stories and presenting of scenarios or situations you find need paragraphs to explain. Sometimes it is better to talk to your professor in person then via e-mail.
- Example “I need to clarify an aspect of the assignment due next week. Would you prefer the paper double spaced or single spaced?”
- If you must turn in a homework assignment via an actual e-mail message, present material in an organized manner using spacing and breaks if necessary. You want your homework to be organized and presented in a visually pleasing way for easy of reading.

Concluding the Message - End with Appreciation

- Examples “Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing from you soon.” or “I appreciate you taking the time to consider my request.”
- Avoid using the latest trends in signing off – LOL, TTFN, Peace, etc. Just thank you will work every time.
- Finally, rewrite both first and last name, the course name and schedule such as, Jake Allison, SLS 1501, Monday & Wednesday 11:00 am – 12:15 pm.

Final Two Suggestions: Read the Message Out Loud & Hit Spell Check before Sending