Communicating and Learning Online: Netiquette

It is important to recognize that the online aspect of courses still constitutes a classroom setting, and certain behaviors are expected when you communicate with both your peers and your instructors. These guidelines for online behavior and interaction are known as **netiquette**.

Security

Remember that your password is the only thing protecting you from pranks or more serious harm.

* Don’t share your password with anyone.
* Change your password if you think someone else might know it.
* Always log out and close the browser when you are finished using the system.

Privacy

Remember to safeguard private or sensitive information.

* Be careful with personal information (both yours and other people’s).
* Do not send confidential patient information via e-mail.  (Review HIPAA training for detailed information on appropriate storage and communication of protected health information.)

General Communication Guidelines

When communicating with your**instructors**online, you should:

* Treat instructor with respect in all forms of online communication
* Always use your professors’ proper title: Dr. or Prof., or if in doubt use Mr. or Ms.
* Unless specifically invited, don’t refer to your instructor by first name.
* Use clear and concise language
* Remember that all college level communication should have correct spelling and grammar.
* Avoid slang terms such as “wassup?” and texting abbreviations such as “u” instead of “you”.
* Use standard fonts such as Arial or Times New Roman and use a size 12 or 14 font.
* Avoid using the caps lock feature, AS IT CAN BE INTERPRETTED AS YELLING.
* Limit and possibly avoid the use of emoticons like
* Be cautious when using humor or sarcasm as tone is sometimes lost in an email or discussion post and your message might be taken seriously or considered offensive.

When communicating with**fellow students**for formal class purposes**,** you should:

* Treat your colleagues with respect in all forms of online communication
* Use clear and concise language
* Remember that all college level communication should have correct spelling and grammar.
* Avoid slang terms such as “wassup?” and texting abbreviations such as “u” instead of “you”.
* Use standard fonts such as Arial or Times New Roman and use a size 12 or 14 font.
* Avoid using the caps lock feature, AS IT CAN BE INTERPRETTED AS YELLING.
* Limit and possibly avoid the use of emoticons like
* Be cautious when using humor or sarcasm as tone is sometimes lost in an email or discussion post and your message might be taken seriously or considered offensive.

E-mail Guidelines

When you send an e-mail to your **instructor, teaching assistant, or classmates,** you should:

* Use the Canvas “Inbox” tool for your course unless you have specific directions otherwise.
* Send to the minimum number of necessary recipients.  In other words, do not send e-mail to “all participants.”
* Use a descriptive subject line.
* Be concise and clear.
* Use standard file formats for attachments (e.g. PDF, DOCX, XLSX), or confirm that the recipient can open the format you intend to send.
* Sign your message with your name and return e-mail address.

When you **reply** to an e-mail, you should:

* Use the Canvas “Inbox” tool for your course unless you have specific directions otherwise.
* Reply to the minimum number of necessary recipients.  In other words, do you *really* want everyone to receive your response when you click “reply all”?
* Be judicious in forwarding information.  Be sure that the original message author intended for the information to be passed along before you click the “forward” button.  (See Privacy above.)
* Be concise and clear.
* Use standard file formats for attachments (e.g. PDF, DOCX, XLSX), or confirm that the recipient can open the format you intend to send.
* Sign your message with your name and return e-mail address.

Discussion Guidelines

When **posting** in the Canvas “**Discussions**” tool in e-learning, you should:

* Make posts that are on topic and within the scope of the course material.
* Review and edit your posts before submitting them in Canvas.  (It is recommended that you write drafts of posts in a word processing program and then copy and paste them into the “Discussions.”)
* Be as brief as possible while still making a thorough comment.
* Avoid plagiarism.  Use your own words to analyze and synthesize ideas.  Always give proper credit when referencing or quoting sources.
* Read the messages in a thread before replying.  Don’t make redundant posts.  Add to the conversation with a original ideas.
* Avoid short, generic replies such as, “I agree.” You should include why you agree and add to the previous point.
* Be open to differing points of view.
* Always be respectful of others’ opinions even when they differ from your own.  When you disagree with someone, you should express your differing opinion in a respectful, non-critical way.
* Do not make personal or insulting remarks.

Live Session Guidelines

When attending a **live session** in Canvas “**Conferences**” tool or via Adobe Connect, you should:

* Enter the room a little early to have time to set up your audio and/or video.
* Be prepared in advance based on the type of session.
* Use a headset with earphones and microphone to mitigate feedback in the session.
* Be prepared to adjust from video to audio-only or from multiple-speaker to single-speaker modes, if there are participants with lower bandwidth attending the session.
* Be prepared to monitor “chat” as well as the main content of the session.
* Be prepared to take turns and “share” the microphone.