

# Online Etiquette for Discussions and Emails

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Communicating as an online student is a bit different than in a face-to-face setting. Because you are usually missing body language cues and immediate feedback from others, it is very important to understand some common rules for good online etiquette, often called "netiquette."

## Common Netiquette Rules

- **DON'T SHOUT.** In an online environment, typing in all caps is often perceived as shouting.
- **Keep a respectful tone.** Make a point to be kind and respectful in your comments, even when you disagree with someone.
- **Use proper punctuation, spelling, and grammar.** Don't frustrate others by making them have to decipher a poorly written statement.
- **Be careful with humor and sarcasm.** What may seem like an obvious joke to you could come across as rude to someone else. As a general rule, it's usually best to avoid sarcasm altogether in an online course.
- **Don't post inappropriate material,** even in private. What gets posted online, generally stays online.
- **Be forgiving.** If you are offended by something someone says online, remember that you may have misunderstood their intentions. Try to give them the benefit of the doubt.

## Email Etiquette

- **Follow the same rules as above.**
- Include your **name** and **student ID number**.
- **Include course information** when talking about something that pertains to a specific course. This includes the subject and section number.
- **Be descriptive.** Make sure you use enough detail so your instructor knows exactly what you are asking or requesting.
- **Professional Email Address:** Create a respectable email address using your name.
- **Informative Subject Line:** Craft clear subject lines that convey your email's purpose.
- **Respectful Greeting:** Use appropriate titles and names in your greetings.
- **Formal Tone:** Maintain professionalism; avoid slang and emojis.
- **State Purpose Clearly:** Clearly explain your reason for emailing in the opening lines.
- **Be Patient and Courteous:** Allow time for responses, be polite in your requests, and follow

up kindly if needed.

- **Proofread Thoroughly:** Correct any errors before sending your message.
  - **Attachments:** Only include relevant attachments with explanations.
  - **Polite Closings:** Use professional sign-offs and include your full name.
  - **Professional Signature:** Set up a signature with your details for easy identification.
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