COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY WITH YOUR INSTRUCTOR
Introduction

Email activity

Ways to effectively communicate with your instructor

Examples of poor communication and ways to correct them

Scenario

Discussion of the scenario and Q&A
In Microsoft Word, write a draft of an email to one of your professors.

In the email, note that you missed class and ask a question, or two, about the class you missed.
To: Janie Jones
From: John Gonzales
Subject: Question Concerning ENGL 1301.4001 on August 29th

Dear Dr. Jones,

I hope you are well!

Unfortunately, I missed class on Tuesday, August 29th due to my sick child. As you suggested on the syllabus, I will follow-up with a friend from class concerning class notes. But, are there any assignments I can still turn-in? Your class is important to me and I do not wish to fall behind.

I truly appreciate any help you can provide.

Thank you for your time,

John
A FEW MYTHS ABOUT PROFESSORS

- My instructor only cares about me during class time.
- My professor doesn’t read or respond to email.
- I don’t really matter to my professor.
- My professor is available to me 24/7.
- My professor waits for me to stop by during office hours.
- My instructor doesn’t know my name.
- My professor can read body language and facial expressions.
- All my instructor does it teach class and go home.
WHAT PROFESSORS THINK ABOUT STUDENTS:

- You’re in college to get an education
- You’re interested in whatever it is they teach (showing up is only part of it!)
- You’re self-motivated
- You know how to study and manage your time
- You can do more with course material than simply memorize it
- You catch on easily to class rules and respect the rights of others.
All faculty members are also required to perform service activities in addition to their teaching (and grading) time.

- Committee work
- Presentations
- Tutoring
- Professional development activities

Teaching is important to faculty, but it’s not all they do!
“Having good relationships with college faculty members, especially those who teach in your major, can open many doors. They may have connections for jobs after graduation and they can write letters of recommendation for jobs or [scholarships]...they can stimulate your curiosity beyond the classroom and help you establish lifelong connections to your institution.”

- From: College Rules! How to Study, Survive, and Succeed in College by Sherrie Nist-Olejnik and Jodi Patrick Holschuh, PhDs.
While faculty love meeting with students, they often will not contact you for a meeting; it’s up to you to initiate a meeting with a professor.

Meeting types (and times)
- Before or after class
- During office hours
- Online virtually in a chat
- Via email
RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

- Be specific when asking for a meeting with a professor.
- Provide your name, section number, and questions.
- Offer several alternatives for meeting
- Avoid generalities
- Be polite
- Know your assignment
- Have questions in mind beforehand
TIPS FOR POSITIVE VERBAL COMMUNICATION

- **Showing respect**
  - How can individuals show respect for one another in verbal communication?
    - Use the instructor’s name
    - Look the instructor in the eye
    - Use positive language
    - Make an appointment to work with an instructor during office hours

- **Providing Clarity**
  - Ask direct questions
  - Explain your understanding of the issue
  - Show how you have positively contributed to the issue

- **Planning Next Steps**
  - Reinforce the next two steps you will take concerning the issue
  - Schedule another appointment to meet with the instructor
I don’t understand Chapter 7. What do you want us to do?

Did I miss anything important last class?

Dr. Hughes, I’m confused about the issue of writing thesis statements. What advice might you have for ways to strengthen it?

Dr. Myers, in addition to reviewing the chapter, what is your advice for ways that I can catch up on information I missed last class?
Not so great

- Why did I get a C- on this paper?
- I don’t understand my grade on this.
- What did I do wrong?
- I deserve better than a C- on this.

Great!

- I noticed my grade on Essay 1 does not reflect my expectations. I’ve reviewed your comments, and have some questions for how I may improve on my next assignment.
ACTIVITY – ONE-ON-ONE CONFERENCE WITH INSTRUCTOR (SCENARIOS)

- You just found out that your best friend was in an accident and you need to miss class. You need to let your instructor know. What do you do?

- You contracted the flu right before a major assignment was due. You understand the instructor does not accept late work, but you were very ill and could not get out of bed for two days. You missed the assignment and want to request an extension. What do you do?

- You are concerned about your progress in the course. You’ve missed a major exam and received a C- on one of your writing assignments. You are considering dropping the course. What do you do?