

# Academic Etiquette

- **Know your instructors' names and how to pronounce them.** If you're not sure, ask. Also, know if they are a "Mr." or "Dr." or a "Mrs." or "Ms." When in doubt, you can never go wrong with "Sir" or "Ma'am." But if you don't know your instructors' names after the first class, find out!
- **If your instructor is late for class, wait.** Wait until he or she comes or someone official from the department comes to tell you the class has been cancelled. Your instructor may be meeting with a student or taking care of a personal emergency, so just wait. You would have been in class during that time anyway.
- **Attend your classes.** There is no faster ticket to an academic disaster than buying into that way of thinking. Each instructor has his or her own attendance policy, and all instructors tend to know who comes to class regularly and who does not, whether or not they actually take attendance.
- **Turn off your cell phone before you enter your classroom.** There may be rare instances in which you need to leave your cell phone or beeper on, but you should discuss those instances with your professor before classes start. This should be reserved for extreme circumstances. Please note: Any phone conversation that begins with "Hey, what's up?" is NOT an emergency.
- **Stay awake and focused.** Most instructors are very effective presenters, but some are not. Just because an instructor is boring does not give you a reason to sleep, read the newspaper, do other homework, or chat, however quietly, with your classmates. To prevent yourself from slacking off, try this: sit up front and center and force yourself to maintain eye contact with your instructors. It helps, too, to keep a pencil in your hand. Taking notes is a great way to stay awake.



- **Do not start packing up your backpack and putting your jacket on until your instructor dismisses class.** Some instructors do run over their time and some may let you out early. But let THEM dismiss YOU. If you absolutely must leave class before being dismissed, gather your things quietly, nod to your instructor on your way out, and say, "Excuse me." If you know ahead of time that you'll have to leave class early, notify your instructor before class and sit near the door so your exit won't be as disruptive.
- **Get to class on time.** Some instructors may dismiss you from class late, which may make you a bit late for your next class, but usually not if you run. If you do get to a class late, nod to your instructor, say "Excuse me," and slip into the first available seat and get your things out as quietly as possible. Do not make a production.
- **When listening to a lecture, don't ask, "Will this be on the test?"** All information presented is valuable, some more so for test purposes than others. Your job as a student is to compile your notes and consolidate them with your other resources (textbook, handouts, etc.) to determine what's likely to appear on a test. Your instructors will give you all kinds of clues as to what will be on the test. Any information they write on the board, for example, will likely show up in one way or another on the test. You don't want to seem as if you care more about grades than actually learning. That insults your professor and the other students who have a genuine interest in the subject.
- **After an absence, never ask an instructor, "Did I miss anything?"** Of course you did! You missed an entire lecture or an entire film or an entire class discussion or activity or a combination.
- **If you have a concern about a grade, make an appointment to discuss the issue with your professor.** Do not rush up after class. Instead, schedule an appointment, go home and review your test or assignment, and "prepare" your case. Enter your meeting with your professor with the attitude that you want to learn from your mistakes, not just get a better grade.

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