Labouré College

NETIQUETTE GUIDE FOR eLEARNING COURSES

Whether yours is a traditional, hybrid, or online course, it is important to recognize that the eLearning community is, in fact, a classroom. Accordingly, certain behaviors are expected when you communicate with both your peers and your professors. The following guidelines for online behavior and interaction are known as netiquette.

GENERAL GUIDELINES: When communicating online, you should always:

- Treat the professor with respect (in all online communication).
- Use your professor's proper title: Dr. or Prof., or, if you are in doubt, Mr. or Ms.
- Avoid referring to your professor by first name, unless specifically invited to do so.
- Use clear and concise language.
- Have correct spelling and grammar for all college level communication.
- Avoid slang terms, such as "wassup?" and texting abbreviations, such as "u" instead of "you."
- Use standard fonts such as Times New Roman and use a size 12 or 14 pt. font.
- Avoid using the caps lock feature AS IT CAN BE INTERPRETTED AS YELLING.
- Limit and possibly avoid the use of emoticons like :) or \o/.
- 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.
- Post only personal photographs into eLearning and forum posts that are professionally-dressed head shots.
- Be careful with personal information (both yours and others).
- Avoid sending confidential patient information via email.

EMAIL NETIQUETTE: When you send an email to your professor or classmates, you should:

- Use a descriptive subject line.
- Write a greeting at the beginning of your first email.
- Keep your message brief and focused.
- Avoid attachments, unless you are sure your recipients can open them.
- Avoid sending email to large numbers of people unless you have a legitimate reason to do it.
- Proofread your emails.
- Be careful of your tone in emails. When communicating in person or phone, your facial expressions and voice convey so much information. That information is lost in an email. Choose your words thoughtfully. Sarcasm can (and will) backfire.
- Check your email at least once a day.
- Attempt to find the answer to your question in the course syllabus or handouts before emailing the professor or classmates.
- Sign your message with your name.
- Read all emails sent by your professor.
- Think before you send an email to more than one person. Does everyone really need to see your message?
- Be sure you really want everyone to receive your response when you click, "reply all."

- Be sure that the message author intended for the information to be passed along before you click the "forward" button.
- Be kind.

FORUM/DISCUSSION BOARD NETIQUETTE AND GUIDELINES: When posting on the Discussion Board in your eLearning class, you should:

- Participate. This is a shared learning environment. No lurking in the cyberspace background. It is not enough to login and read the discussion thread of others. For the maximum benefit to all, everyone must contribute.
- Check if anyone has asked a question or made comments already and received a reply, before posting your question or comments to a discussion board. Just as you wouldn't repeat a topic of discussion right after it happened in real life, don't do that in discussion boards either.
- Make posts that are on topic and within the scope of the course material. Don't post irrelevant links, comments, thoughts, or pictures.
- Take your posts seriously and review and edit your posts before sending.
- Be as brief as possible while still making a thorough comment.
- Be sure to read all messages in a thread before replying.
- Avoid repeating someone else's post without adding something of your own to it.
- Avoid short, generic replies such as, "I agree." You should include why you agree, or add to the previous point.
- Summarize all answers and post that summary to benefit your whole class, if you ask a question and many people respond.
- Quote just a few key lines from their post so that others won't have to go back and figure out to which post you're referring, if you refer to something your classmate said earlier in the discussion.
- Recognize and respect diversity.
- Check the most recent comments before you reply to an older comment, since the issue might have already been resolved or opinions may have changed.
- Run a spelling and grammar check before posting anything to the discussion board.
- Express your differing opinion in a respectful, non-critical way, when you disagree with someone.
- Always give proper credit when referencing or quoting another source.
- Refrain from being personal; do not take things personally.
- Avoid flaming! Criticism must be constructive, well-meaning, and well-articulated.
- Return to the conversation regularly.
- Refrain from *:-)* faces and *c u l8r*'s, even though social networking and text messaging has spawned a body of linguistic shortcuts that are not part of the academic dialogue.
- Always remember to say "Please" and "Thank you" when soliciting help from your classmates.
- Avoid writing anything that sounds angry or sarcastic, even as a joke, because without hearing your tone of voice, your peers might not realize you are joking.
- Be open-minded.
- Read your post out loud before hitting the send button. This will tell you a lot about whether your grammar and sentence structure are correct, your tone is appropriate, and your contribution clear or not.

Rule Of Thumb: If you would not do or say something in real life, do not do or say it online either.