Email Etiquette for Students

As adapted by Dr. Ginther for his classes in the School of Social Work, MSUM

Elements of Email Etiquette

- REMEMBER...
- Basics
- Tone
- Attachments
- Good topics for email
- Bad topics for email

As adapted by Dr. Ginther for his classes in the School of Social Work, MSUM

REMEMBER...

Your email reflects your:

- professional self
- professional competency
- professional interaction style

Your email becomes:

- part of the institutional record/archive
- your professional legacy

As adapted by Dr. Ginther for his classes in the School of Social Work, MSUM
The Basics

ALWAYS:

- Include your full name, class, & class time
  (e.g., Jane Doe, BSN, 101 12:00-1:15 p.m., Jr. 3rd Academic Advisor)
- Include your email's purpose
  (e.g., "Subject: BIO100 4/14/17 App."
- A polite yet formal salutation
  (e.g., "Dr.", "Prof.", "Professor Smith", etc.)
- Use technical, professional voice
- Edit for errors!
  (e.g., correct punctuation, grammar or otherwise)
- NEVER SEND ONE-LINERS!

The Basics

ALWAYS:

- Think twice about your email content—once sent, it is gone
- Avoid abbreviations/contractions (e.g., LOL, I can’t believe it)
- Use a professional font, not decorative
- Use emotions sparingly if at all
- Use complete sentences (even if you are submitting a graded assignment)
- Keep the email brief (see screen length at end)
- Respond to emails within the same time as a phone call

Tone

- Remember: emails always elicit an emotional response
- Use email as a work relationship-building tool
- Establish a welcoming, respectful tone (especially when sending emails)
- Write in a positive tone (i.e., use "we"
- Use civility and politeness
- Showcase your best manners
- Remain mindful of power differentials when communicating with supervisors, professors, etc.
Attachments

- Remember: Dr. Ginther does not accept any assignment as an attachment
  - They must be submitted in paper format and stapled by staff at the front desk and submission policy
- However, when sending attachments generally, always include in the filename, its format, and the program's version
  - Attach: "Paper/Physical or" This file is a Microsoft Word 2007.
- Consider sending files in rich text format (rtf) or portable document format (pdf) to ensure compatibility

Good Topics for Email

- Thank you statements
- Brief questions
- Questions with simple answers
- Meeting requests / meeting arrangements
- Special requests
- Status change information
- "For your information" messages

Bad Topics for Email

- Assignments when prohibited by class policy
  - Unless in Dr. Ginther's class
- Requests for "overrides" or other special action
  - Better done in person when possible to ensure important
- Requests for submission extensions
- Topics that will require continuous conversation
  - For example: "We're working on assignments, grade etc.
- Heated topics/matters that risk misunderstanding
  - Better to discuss these face-to-face during office hours
For More Information

• Purdue Writing Lab
  – Heavilon 226
  – (765) 494-3723
• Online Writing Lab
  – http://owl.english.purdue.edu

The End

As adapted by Dr. Gritcher for his classes in the School of Social Work, MSU