

## EMAIL ETIQUETTE: NETIQUETTE

### HOW TO WRITE E-MAILS TO PROFESSORS AND THE TEACHING TEAM

Based on

[http://amath.colorado.edu/sites/default/files/2014/08/1882210370/EMAIL\\_ETIQUETTE.pdf](http://amath.colorado.edu/sites/default/files/2014/08/1882210370/EMAIL_ETIQUETTE.pdf)

1. **Important:** Use your University of Arizona e-mail account. It's the one that ends with @email.arizona.edu or @arizona.edu. I do not open emails that I do not recognize unless they are from an email.arizona.edu address. Your NetID enables the teaching team to identify the sender as an UA student [NetID@email.arizona.edu](mailto:NetID@email.arizona.edu) instead of guessing who [Double.Entendre@mystery\\_site.com](mailto:Double.Entendre@mystery_site.com) might be. It also guarantees that your message will not go into a spam folder. My spam filter quarantines most addresses that do not end with .edu or .gov.

2. **Start with a new message.** Avoid replying to an old message from your instructor. This practice is critical if you are addressing a new issue in your message.

3. **Important:** Include a concise, explicit Subject Line. The Subject Line must include the course number and your section type (Lecture or Online). Start the subject line with the exact phrasing “ATMO170 Lecture” for lecture sections and “ATMO170 Online” for online sections. Examples: “ATMO170 Lecture: Request office appointment” or “ATMO170 Online: Question on Stefan-Boltzmann Law.” No subject line; no open; no read; no reply.

4. **Do not append your email to an old thread** if its subject has nothing to do with the subject of the old thread. Send a new email.

5. **Include a proper salutation.** Use the salutation “DrM” to address Professor Mullen, or “Hello DrM” if you like. Ditto the TA’s. “Dear DrM” is not appropriate. Do not use “Dear DrM” since you are not writing a letter.

6. **Have a clear and apparent purpose. Write a clear, concise message.** Clear, concise, precise are the keys to effective communication. Avoid wordiness; get to the point. I suggest using the following format.

A. State the issue at the start of the email. (Examples: I will be on travel with the basketball team. May I take the quiz on Monday? I would like to schedule an office appointment to discuss my term project during office hours. I was hoping you could provide more information on what topics would be appropriate for homework assignment #1.)

B. Include any questions that are relevant to your issue.

C. State why you need an answer if you desire one.

D. If you want a response, politely ask for one.

7. **Suggestion.** It is always good practice to express your gratitude.

8. **Sign with your full name.** In a course as large as ours, other students in the course might share your first name and last name. I recommend that you include a proper closing. For example, after “Regards,” or “Sincerely,” sign your full name.

**9. Unless instructed otherwise, never send attachments.** If you miss uploading an assignment to D2L dropbox on time, do not send it as an attachment to teaching team with a message of the ilk, "Here is my assignment." The teaching team never opens unsolicited attachments from students per my instructions. Besides, all assignments must be uploaded to the appropriate dropbox before the teaching team can enter a grade into the D2L gradebook.

**10. Proofread your message.** Never hit "Send" before proofreading your message. Every message; every time. Use proper paragraph structure and proper grammar. Make sure you use complete sentences and that you use punctuation correctly. Check for spelling or word choice mistakes. Auto correction is notorious for changing a word when your initial choice was correct. It is a particularly good idea to make sure you are not misspelling the instructor's name. In my case, the acronym salutation "DrM" is simple. Do not use texting abbreviations or emoticons. Use paragraph breaks to organize your message. **Make certain the message communicates what you want it to communicate in the manner that you want. Remember, you are what you write, which in this case is email.**

**11. Allow adequate time for a reply.** Although we strive to reply to emails within one weekday, replies to emails can take up to 3 weekdays, maybe longer, depending upon the urgency of the email. Do not expect a message sent at 2:00 am MST to be answered before sunrise that morning. The teaching team keeps normal sleeping hours. If your assignment is due at 11:59 pm MST, and at 10:47 pm MST that day you have a question pertaining to the assignment, do not expect a timely enough reply from the team to be of use. Do not assume that members of the teaching team check their student emails several times a day...because we don't. I survey student emails once or twice a weekday, and rarely before 8:00 am or after 8:00 pm. I generally do not read emails or reply to emails during any holiday or over the weekend (defined to be 5:00 pm Friday to 8:00 am the following Monday). Consider any email correspondence from the teaching team during the weekend to be bonus coverage. Professors typically receive minimum of 50 messages a day. I am no exception. Sometimes replies are delayed or emails get outright missed; sadly, I am not infallible. Not all student emails are created equal and require answers; inquiries asking about information that is contained in the syllabus or was already covered elsewhere are generally not acknowledged. If you need an answer, make sure to ask for one.

**12. Be polite and thank your instructor or TA for answering.** In general, when your instructor replies to your message, make sure to thank her/him. This is not only polite; it is professional and also serves as confirmation that you received her/his reply. Moreover, it is a good strategy, in general, to implement with all emails.

**13. Again, always sign your email with your full name as it appears in the UA records.**

#### **IMPORTANT TIPS**

- Before you send an email to your instructor, make sure to check the syllabus and prior materials to see if you can answer your own question. Again, the teaching team does not acknowledge emails where the information is in the syllabus, is already posted on D2L or contained in an earlier email to the entire class, or noted during classroom lectures.

- Do not use an email message to complain. If you have a concern, clearly state your concern, word it professionally, and make an appointment for follow up.
- When inquiring about the reasons for a grade on a specific assignment, consider making an appointment to meet with the appropriate member of the teaching team. Inform us about the reason for your appointment: "RE: ATMO170 Online: Schedule a time to discuss my term project grade"; this will give us time to prepare for the meeting to gather materials necessary to explain your grade. You should not expect detailed grade information given via email; it is impossible to anticipate every question that you may have. Moreover, federal privacy law (<https://www.registrar.arizona.edu/ferpa/ferpa-compliance>) limits what instructors can disclose about your grades over any communication media except your NetID@email.arizona.edu account. They strictly forbid any discussion of grades over the telephone or from addresses that are not @email.arizona.edu.
- Do not email your instructors to ask about their office hours. Office hours for the teaching team are posted in the syllabus.
- Do not write in CAPITALS. When you write your message in CAPITAL LETTERS, you come across as if YOU ARE SHOUTING. Be civil. Be respectful. Be professional.
- Inform the teaching team about any future absence if it qualifies as an extenuating circumstance. See syllabus for what qualifies. Include verification of an extenuating circumstance if requested by return email.
- Request an appointment to meet with your instructor or TA's outside of their office hours when their office hours truly conflict with the times of your other classes. There is a difference between a conflict with times of your other classes and being inconvenient to your lifestyle.
- Thank your instructor or TA for any appointment that he/she scheduled with you, especially if it outside of normal office hours.
- I warmly welcome specific questions about the course concepts that are not clear to you. There is no such thing as a "dumb question" when it comes to learning. We are all here to learn. Please send such questions over the list serve so the entire class can benefit my response. Rest assured if you have a question, it's a virtual certainty that other students have the same question too.