

## **Guidelines for College Etiquette**

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You've finally made it! Those four, fun-filled, comfortable years of high school are over and you are off to college. You've gotten all the essentials for your dorm room, you've bought your stock of books and supplies, and you're ready to face the first day of classes. There is only one piece of the puzzle missing, and that is a crash course in college etiquette.

Professors will be greeting you with certain behavioral expectations, and you will have expectations of them as well. The problem is that these expectations usually don't coincide, and the clash of differences can have a profound impact on your success in any given class.

Therefore, before you make some classic first-year blunders, take some time to review the major "do's" and "don'ts" concerning college etiquette.

### **Respect**

The student/teacher relationship on the college level is very different from the familiarity you may have experienced with your high school teachers. Building a level of respect between a college professor and student is largely the responsibility of the student. The following suggestions are crucial early on if you want to be more successful in a course:

- **DON'T** act too "comfortable" with a professor unless it is that person's style to invite you to do so. Many will be immediately caught off guard and form a long-lasting impression of you if you break the comfort zone too early.
- **DO** communicate in a respectful and polite manner, even if you feel the professor doesn't.
- **DON'T** interrupt a professor to make unnecessary observations or to correct.
- **DO** see a professor in private about questions concerning class, grades, or other personal problems. In class, confrontations will always backfire on you in some way.
- **DON'T** talk to other students during lecture. This is distracting to everyone, and you're not in high school anymore; therefore, discipline should not be an issue in the college classroom.
- **DO** raise your hand if you wish to speak, and be sure to listen attentively to others.

- **DON'T** tell a professor how to teach his/ her class. You may not like anything about the professor or the course, but that's sometimes the way it is. Grin and bear it.
- **DO** adjust yourself to the style and requirements of the professor. If you don't want to have to retake the class, just do what is required and save your comments for course evaluation time.

### Attendance

- **DON'T** blow off classes, especially if there is an attendance policy (this will be stated on your course syllabus and discussed early in the semester).
- **DO** attend class regularly. If you know you will be absent beforehand, let the professor know as soon as possible (in writing is best). If you are very ill (and a cold doesn't count), call before class and let your professor know. Attendance in class is like any other appointment; if you can't keep the appointment, have the courtesy to call.
- **DON'T** come late to class. This is just plain rude and disruptive to everyone else. Some professors lock the classroom door after lecture begins- and some may ask you to leave if you show up late.
- **DO** arrive early, review previous class notes, and get a feel for the upcoming lecture
- **DON'T** sleep in class!! This is totally unacceptable for any reason.
- **DO** come to class prepared and ready to participate.

If you have been absent . . .

- **DON'T** ever ask a professor, "Did I miss anything in class?" Another question to avoid asking is, "Did we do anything important in class?" Such questions will usually get you an answer you don't want. These types of questions imply that each class meeting is not important.
- **DO** be responsible for yourself and ask a reliable classmate to bring you up to date on class notes and information.

### Performance

- **DON'T** tell a professor, "I studied so hard for that test . . ." This is exactly what is expected of you – to study hard! Studying effectively is the key.

- **DO** show the professor how you studied and ask for suggestions for improvement. Also, begin studying several days to a week before a test; cramming never works well.
- **DON'T** tell a professor, "I have to make an A in this course" or "I've never made grades this low in anyone else's class."
- **DO** work to your greatest potential and accept the grades you have earned with maturity, grace, and dignity.
- **DON'T** annoy a professor by continually asking if your papers or exams have been graded. Like you, professors are busy people and will grade your papers in due time.
- **DO** wait patiently for papers to be returned and keep track of all of your grades in a course. Remember, it takes a lot less time to write a five page paper than it does to read and grade 40 five page papers.
- **And finally, DON'T give excuses.** Either you were there, or you weren't. Either you did it, or you didn't. Either you studied, or you didn't. Many students put more effort into making up the excuse than it would have taken to be responsible in the first place.

Keep the items in these lists in mind. The bottom line is – be mature, responsible, proactive, and conscientious. If you approach your college career in this manner, you will be considerably more successful and life will be much easier for you.