

HOW TO TALK TO YOUR PROFESSOR

ESTABLISH YOUR PRESENCE IN CLASS EARLY

- Get to class early and sit near the front.
- Ask questions.
- Answer questions or make comments about the lecture or reading.
- Have a positive attitude in class.
- Show interest and involvement.
- Greet your professor outside of class.
- If you do not understand something, make an appointment with your professor.
- Make it a point to interact with your professor before the first test or assignment.
- *Professors enjoy teaching and working with students who want to learn.*

ESTABLISH YOUR CREDIBILITY AS A CONSCIENTIOUS STUDENT IN CLASS

- Be familiar with your syllabus:
 - Test dates and due dates for assignments
 - Attendance and tardy policies
 - Make-up tests and late assignments policies
 - Inclement weather policies
- Because notebooks can be lost or stolen, make extra copies of papers and handouts and keep them in a separate place.
- Attend all labs, study sessions or Supplemental Instruction programs associated with a class. Your grades should show marked improvement!
- Turn in your assignments in a timely manner.
- Ask several people in your class for their phone numbers.
- If you missed an assignment, ask **TWO** different people in class about what you need to do to catch up. Try to avoid asking the professor a question that could easily be answered by fellow students.
- *Professors are extremely busy people. Use their time and your time wisely and productively.*

MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITH YOUR PROFESSOR

- Do not begin a personal conversation with your professor when class is ready to start (and certainly not in the middle of class).
- The end of class may be the best time to ask to see the professor. However, ask if it is a convenient time to talk. Professors have back-to-back classes, too.
- Choose a time to talk or make an appointment when neither you nor your professor is in a rush.
- If you are upset, wait until you have calmed down to speak with your professor or make an appointment.
- Only call your professor to make an appointment. Never telephone a professor to discuss a grade. That kind of conversation should be in person.

- Never phone a professor at home unless it is a true emergency.

CONFERENCING WITH YOUR PROFESSOR

- Be prepared! Bring your syllabus, text, test papers and assignments with you.
- Be on time and knock on the office door before you enter.
- If the professor is speaking to someone on the phone or to another person, don't stand just outside door. Make your presence known and then move several feet away. Respect the privacy of others.
- Never barge into a professor's office outside of office hours, without first asking if meeting at that time is convenient.
- Use some of these phrases:
 - "Thank you for seeing me, Dr. Jones."
 - "I wanted to have a conference with you because I don't understand a concept you went over in class. I need your help to figure it out."
 - "I am concerned about my last test grade. In order to improve, I'd like to go over my answers with you."
 - "I interpreted this test question in the following way...."
 - "Please show me how you arrive at the correct answer."
 - "Do you have any old tests or workbooks that I could review?"
 - "What would be the best method to study successfully for your class?"
 - "What can you suggest I do to learn more and improve my grades in your class?"
- Close the conference positively.
 - "Thank you for your help, Dr. Jones. I'll see you in class."
- *Be courteous and respectful at all times.*

IF YOU FEEL YOU HAVE BEEN TREATED UNFAIRLY

- Calmly and clearly state your concerns to your professor and ask for him/her to reconsider.
- If that fails, put your concerns in writing and give it to the professor. (Be sure your argument is clear, well supported, and well written.)
- Seek advice from another professor or your academic advisor.
- Ask the secretary for a copy of the department's grievance procedures. (All departments have mediation policies and grievance procedures.)
- Build your credibility. Your manner should be calm, rational and respectful to everyone you come in contact with during this time.