

Hello, Professor: Professional Communication in College

Tips and Advice from Academic Writing at Marymount Manhattan College

Effective communication with your professors is essential to college success. It is also vital preparation for entering the workforce, where this same skillset will serve your career. When writing to a professor, follow these quick, universal tips to ensure professionalism:

Dear Professor,

- 1) Always use a form of address, even for a short email.
 - You should always assume that your professor holds a doctorate, and therefore should be addressed as “Professor” or “Doctor” (“Dear Professor Smith,”/“Good afternoon Dr. Smith,”).
 - *Never* email a female professor with the address “Ms.,” “Mrs.,” or “Miss.” If you would not call your male professor “Mr.,” you should not call your female professor “Ms.”
 - Remember, your professors studied for many years, becoming experts in their fields, and have earned their honorifics.

Sincerely,

- 2) Always end with a signature (you can create your own digital signature to insert at the end of each email, too):
 - “Sincerely, Alex”
 - “All the best, Dylan”
 - “Thank you for your consideration, Jean.”

Importance Level:

- 3) Only email your professors if absolutely necessary; respect their time. If you have a question and the answer cannot be found on the syllabus, in your class notes, or through a friend in the class, then you may send an email.

Please and Thank You

- 4) Craft your email with care and take your time—never dash off something quickly to a professor. Pay careful attention to word choice and sentence structure. Be concise and clear. Edit for grammatical errors. Most importantly, consider the tone of your request: could your email come off as demanding or inconsiderate? Play around with words, phrases, and sentences to achieve the right tone. This is of especial significance when you are asking your professor for a favor, such as looking at a draft, or writing you a letter of recommendation.

Please See Attached

- 5) Never send unsolicited work. Ask your professor first if it would be all right to send by email.
- 6) If you send work late—after the due date and after your professor has asked you to send it—do not expect a reply.
- 7) Do not expect answers to your email inquiries outside of business hours, like evenings, nights, and weekends.
- 8) If you have concerns you’d like to share with your professor, doing so in person, in a timely manner (as your concerns arise), is always best.

Check out this humorous and irreverent [Medium](#) article on college email etiquette:

How to email your professor without being annoying AF



MarymountManhattan

File Message Insert Options Format Text Review

Calibri (Body) 11


To... Professor D. Smith

Send Cc... Bcc...

Subject: **Out Sick**

Hi, I just want to make sure I am excused for my absences this week.

-Ryan



File Message Insert Options Format Text Review

Calibri (Body) 11

To... Professor D. Smith

Send Cc... Bcc...


Subject: **Missing Class Tomorrow, 4/16**

Dear Professor Smith,

I am emailing you tell you that I have spent most of this evening sick and will not be able to attend class tomorrow morning. I have attached to this email my homework for tomorrow—a VERY rough draft of my essay for you to see and would love to get some feedback on ways to improve what I perceive to be a not very good thesis. I will also bring a hard copy to class next Monday. Thank you and I will see you then.

Thank you,

Alex



File Message Insert Options Format Text Review

Calibri (Body) 11


To... Professor D. Smith

Send Cc... Bcc...

Subject: **Recommendation?**

I hope all is well! I'm applying to graduate school at Dunthmore College and was wondering if you would like to write a recomendation for me? I would need it within the next few days if so. I know it's a last minute request but with everything going on with my family recently it's been a little hectic. You can fax 308-43-5674 or email the recommendation to admissions@dunthmore.edu. Again, I'm really sorry for the short notice and if your not able to thats fine! Thanks so much for your time!

Sincerely,
Skylar



File Message Insert Options Format Text Review

Calibri (Body) 11

To... Professor D. Smith

Send Cc... Bcc...

Subject: **Question regarding WRIT 102 Annotations**

Dear Professor Smith,

I'm Dylan M. I'm in your M/W class @ 2:30pm.

I've been looking through the library's catalog and found some of the books I'm interested in available to read online. The books are too many pages to print out (200 pages or so), but I'm hoping to potentially use some of their information for my paper. I know you would like to see sources annotated. So, I was wondering that since I am reading them online that maybe a typed up page or so of notes would be acceptable as annotations?

Thank you for your response,
Dylan

