



What Up, Doc? Top Tips for Communicating with Your Professors

Among your campus resources, the most overlooked opportunity is talking with your professor outside of attending class. Getting to know your professors and using them as a resource will help with difficult parts of the semester and potentially grow into a rapport with someone who could become a mentor, reference, and guide to your career possibilities.

Many students feel intimidated or unsure how to best approach their professor, so here are a few tips that can help with the conversation:

- ❖ **Take advantage of office hours early and often.** Professors are required to hold office hours for students to drop in with questions or concerns for the class. These are usually listed outside the professor's office or posted in the syllabus. Office hours are a great time for asking questions about lecture and assignments, discussing tests, or simply introducing yourself. You may want to schedule a time to meet in case other students are meeting if you stop by unannounced.
- ❖ **Know how to address your professor.** Does your professor go by Dr., Mr., Ms., Professor, or their first name? Make sure that you address them properly, and if your professor never clarified, it's perfectly fine to ask.
- ❖ **Determine what to talk with your professor about before meeting.** Something as simple as writing down the questions you have beforehand can help determine the areas that you're struggling with. You also don't want to leave your meeting with your professor and realize you forgot to ask an important question!
- ❖ **Speak up!** Your professor may not know something is wrong in class unless you share it. Be sure to bring up any problems or concerns that you have ASAP instead of waiting until the last week of the semester. If you bring up your concerns right before Finals, it may be too late for anything to be done.
- ❖ **Think about how you communicate.** There's a difference between the way you talk with a close friend compared to talking with a professor. When you e-mail a professor, be mindful of your grammar, spelling, punctuation, and tone of your e-mail. The same applies to in-person interactions. Be respectful and professional.
- ❖ **Reframe your questions.** When you ask questions, show your work ethic.

Instead of this...



Try this...

"Can I get any extra credit?"

"How can I do well for the next homework/ quiz/ assignment?"

"What's on next week's test?"

"I've studied chapters 5-8 and the lecture notes; are there other areas I need to focus for the next test?"

