**Email Guidelines for Students**

1. **Be courteous.** This takes many forms, including using a polite and friendly tone. Think about school email as a practice for how you will use email in a professional situation. Start an email message by appropriately and politely addressing the person that you are writing to. Beginning an email to a professor with "Hey" doesn't make you look good. Use proper titles for people, and don't jump to conclusions about marital status. For example, use "Professor" for a female instructor, not "Mrs.," and don't use people's first names unless you ask them if it is acceptable to do so.  Don't use only a last name with no title, either.
2. **Before emailing a professor with a question, review the syllabus, outline, or assignment instructions.** Your professors appreciate students who don't waste their time or come across as lazy or lacking in basic critical thinking skills.  If you are wondering what format you should use for assignments, if instructors accept late work (and if there are penalties), an instructor's office and office hours, the percentage of a grade an exam is worth, and so on, that is the type of information that is included in a syllabus. Read the written instructions for an assignment more than once. The answer to a question you have may be there--you may have read it but forgotten it. I once had a student email me at midnight with a question about the essay that was due the next day--his question was "How long does the essay have to be?" My reply the next morning was "Read the instructions--they are online on the class outline if you lost the hard copy. The answer is in the very first sentence." Professors get a lot of email from students, and you create a very poor image when you ask questions you easily could have found the answers to yourself. This student thought he was merely asking a simple question, but what he was really communicating was that he hadn't thought seriously about an important assignment given two weeks before and hadn't bothered to re-read the instructions that were handed out and discussed in class.
3. **Clearly identify the subject of your email in the subject line.**Professors get a great deal of email, and they have to prioritize which emails to read and respond to first. If you are asking a question about an assignment, make that clear. You should also identify which class you are in. Put your class and the CRN in the subject line before or after the subject itself.
4. **Make sure that your message is clear**. Be very specific. You know what you are working on or thinking about when you write your email, but the person who reads it is someplace else. Questions like "How long does the assignment have to be?" are essentially meaningless to an instructor teaching several classes, each with any number of upcoming assignments on the course outline.
5. **Make sure that your email clearly identifies who you are.** After your message, give your full name, as you would if you were writing a letter to someone.
6. **Use an email address appropriate to the situation.**  At BC, you should stay with your official BC email address--this way, there is no danger that your professors will mistakenly delete what they think may be spam. If you do use another email account, your own name or a clear variation is always a good idea, but, at the very least, avoid anything sexual, flirty, disgusting, etc.  Do you really want your professors thinking of you as "RedHotCutie@...," "StudlyGuy@...," or "I\_so\_sexy@..."? (These are real examples of email addresses used by students communicating with professors.)
7. **Use diction, grammar, punctuation, and spelling appropriate to a formal situation.** In this era of texting and Facebook abbreviations, it is easy to forget that an email to professors should be treated as serious correspondence. However, everything that you put into writing makes an impression. Strive to make a good one. This means using complete sentences, correct spelling, and clear, organized structure. (If you have more than one question, for instance, it is a good idea to number them.) Try not to ramble.  Avoid slang. Most professors don't like being addressed as "dude," for example. Avoid standard texting abbreviations, like  "u" for "you" and "4" for "for," and drop the "wtf"s and "omg"s altogether.
8. **Don't send an email when you're mad.** Sometimes an email response may make you angry.  This can happen when the other person wasn't being rude at all, but, since you cannot hear a tone of voice, you may jump to a conclusion. It is very easy to project the wrong tone into someone else's words, especially if we are feeling insecure or sensitive or if we are tired or in a bad mood.  Don't commit anything into writing that you might regret later. Don't write anything that you wouldn't be willing to say to someone's face. Remember the first rule of composing email--be courteous.
9. **Check Snopes.com or another fact-checking site before forwarding “warning” emails**. People are busy, and people who rely on email as part of their professional lives get an inordinate amount of email and do not want to have their inboxes clogged any more than they already are. When people forward you warning emails about viruses and other dangers, go to the [Virus Hoaxes and Realities](http://www.snopes.com/computer/virus/virus.asp) at [Snopes.com](http://www.snopes.com/) or a similar site and determine if someone has inadvertently forwarded a hoax.  There is a very good chance that this is what you have gotten.
10. **Re-read and edit every email before you send it.** Always re-read and edit your emails before sending them. Try to catch misspellings and bad grammar and eliminate wordiness. Also, try to imagine what your tone may seem to the other person--you might catch and prevent a potential misunderstanding. Make sure that any questions you have asked are clear.