Etiquette: Computers, Professors, Facebook and More!
(Adapted from 101 Email Etiquette Tips, from 101emailetiquettetips.com)

Computer:

- On your school computer account, be sure that any document saved to your N Drive would be deemed appropriate by the university.

- Keep your files organized. Make a folder for each semester and within that, make a folder for each class. Be sure to name your files appropriately as well.

- Back up everything on your school account to your personal computer or external hard drive.

- Even on your personal computer, be sure to check the campus policies for appropriate computer usage. The university can and will remove your access to the campus Wi-Fi for anything deemed inappropriate by the university (illegally downloading music or movies, etc.)

- If you plan to use your computer, tablet or any other electronic device to take notes in class, be sure to ask your professor first. Some professors have policies against this.

Email:

- Be sure to check that your e-mail includes a greeting and a closing, this helps to make your e-mail not seem demanding or rude.

- Type in complete sentences; always be sure the message you are sending is clear and concise.

- Be sure to use spell check and check for grammatical errors.

- Always avoid using slang and check that you have used proper punctuation.

- Be sure the “To:” and “Subject:” lines are correct and that your subject reflects the purpose of the e-mail.

- Try not to use a patterned background; it makes your e-mails hard to read. Also, be sure to use an easy to read font.
Talking/Meeting with Professors:
(Adapted from How to Talk to Your Professor, from The College of Saint Rose Writing Center)

Let’s face it: talking to your professors can seem daunting. Not only do many of them have PhDs, but they also determine your final grade for the course. However, professors can be very helpful throughout your college experience. They can provide assistance in the areas of research, scholarships, internships, grad schools, and future careers.

Consider visiting your professor...

- When you need clarification on an assignment, policies, and/or schedules
- When you’re not getting the grades you know you’re capable of
- When you want feedback on a draft
- When you have questions about a specific grade you’ve received
- When you would like advice on the subject of your major

Tips for a Successful Visit:

1. Find out how your professor would like to be addressed.
Some professors prefer to be called by their first names, while others expect to be called “Doctor --.” However, not all professors have their PhDs. Take the guesswork out of the equation, and ask your professor what he/she would like to be called.

2. Visit your professor during his/her office hours.
Professors use their office hours to review student work, conduct research, and prepare lessons. Therefore, it is always a good idea to schedule an appointment. If you are unavailable during their office hours, contact your professor to see if he/she would be willing to meet with you at a time that is mutually convenient.

3. Be on time for your appointment.
It is generally a good idea to show up a few minutes early for your appointment. In the event that he/she is late (or misses the appointment altogether), wait a few minutes, and then leave the professor a brief note. If you are unable to keep the appointment, contact the professor in advance to see if it can be re-scheduled.

4. Bring a positive attitude.
Be aware of the emotions you bring to the appointment. Being defensive is a sure-fire way to undermine your professor’s willingness to help. Keep in mind that college professors aren’t “out to get you.” Tell yourself, “He can’t do my work, but he can point me in the right direction.” Or, “She can suggest study techniques so I can do better on tests.” Don’t forget that college professors have invested much time and energy into becoming an expert in their respective fields. Act respectfully towards them and, more often than not, they will be delighted to help you.
5. Have specific things to discuss with your professor

a.) Questions about course topics – Bring any research or other attempts you've made to understand the course content. This will save time in the meeting. Also, it will show your professor that you’ve made attempts and are serious about learning.

b.) Needing extra help – If you’ve studied hard yet but are still failing exams, schedule some time to talk to your professor. He/she may be able to address specific issues or provide useful insight as to how you may improve your grade.

c.) Appealing a grade – When questioning test materials, grades, etc. bring as much proof as possible to the meeting (e.g. notes, textbook, etc.). Without such evidence, your professor may not take your request seriously.

d.) Considering a major or career in your professor’s field – Prior to making this type of appointment, talk with your professor to make your intentions clear. Some professors may not be comfortable offering general academic or career guidance.

e.) Help with writing assignments – Have an idea of where you are in the writing process and what specific help you might need. For example, do you understand the assignment? Are you answering the question(s)? Is the paper structured logically? Does your paper have transitions and flow smoothly? How are your mechanics? Your professor will be able to give you guidance in all of these areas.

6. Be prepared.

It is always a good idea to bring your class notes, textbook(s) and any other relevant class materials to the appointment. This shows your professor that you respect his/her time and that you are sincere about getting help. It may be helpful to write down specific questions prior to the meeting. Likewise, it may be necessary for you to take notes during the appointment.

Be up-front with your professor. Remember: many professors entered into education because they enjoy developing relationships with their students. So lighten up, and be confident in yourself. Chances are you will be glad you asked for help.
Social Media
(Adapted from Essential Facebook Etiquette: 10 Dos and Don’ts, from Michael Poh)

• Keep in mind when Tweeting, on Facebook or message boards that you are in a global arena. As we all know, schools and employers are now doing screenings about your internet activities. Since generally everyone is on some form of social media, including your parents, teachers, coaches and potential employers. Online communications like social media, blogs and discussion boards are very intimate environments and we should be mindful on how we use them to share ourselves with the world.

• No matter what your major or academic standing, don’t show any statuses or pictures about doing something inappropriate or illegal. In no way, at all is this beneficial. Showing that you went out underage drinking or stole something for fun won’t impress anyone and just leaves you in a position to get into trouble. Be sure to message private matters instead of posting on someone’s wall. Not everyone wants the world to know or see that they did something embarrassing just a minute ago.

• Facebook is a great outlet for sharing pictures or videos about recent ideas, trips or activities, but remember to leave something to the imagination. Showing off pretty much all of your body or wearing extremely revealing clothes doesn’t always create the best image for yourself. The old saying “Dress to impress” comes into play here. There’s nothing wrong with a few beach pictures but remember, this is a direct reflection of yourself that you’re showing to the world.

• Don’t post/tag your friends in “unglam” pictures. Some people may take it lightly when they are tagged in photos that look as if they just woke up, but for others, taking and posting unflattering pictures may mean a lot more to them. Don’t post anything without getting permission from that person FIRST. Nobody wants that drunken picture from freshman year coming back to haunt them when they are looking for a career.

• Many students and athletes feel additional stress because of the agreements they sign about professional image and standards. Several organizations and teams don’t allow alcohol or substance use, or even being seen at a party. This could result in a suspension or loss of financial aid.
  o This same rule applies for PDA photos and statuses. We all know you love each other, but showing this with an autobiography of pictures and statuses isn’t always necessary. Showing restraint can be seen as a positive thing!

• Be mindful of what you post. You have a lot of social media friends and you don’t want to offend them or disrespect anything about them intentionally or unintentionally. It only looks bad on you.
• Call rather than post personal news, i.e. make sure that your family members and family friends know that Grandma Sue died before putting it on Facebook. Remember, everything is public.
• When discussions get out of control; don’t stoop to name-calling or profanities. You are better than that!
• Be sure to down edit, or remove any part of the post you are replying to that is no longer necessary to the ongoing conversation.
• Don’t make friend requests to strangers. This sounds obvious, but it is important. More and more personal information is being put on these social media sites (address, school, work, cell phone number, etc.), and anyone who doesn’t know you, doesn’t need that information.
• Lastly and most importantly, be sure that all of your privacy settings are adjusted so that the whole world doesn’t have access to everything, and think before you post anything. A rule of thumb: don’t post anything you wouldn’t want members of your family or someone you admire to see.