

Expectations in University Classrooms

*An overview of academic **atmosphere** and **expectations** at our university and to **share** with you **guidelines** for a **healthy academic learning experience**.*

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DISCLAIMER

- # There exists a **certain etiquette or set of customary rules** of courtesy that apply to classroom situations, particularly on the college level. One can view these rules as forming a **code of conduct appropriate to the semi-professional level of interaction** that should be commonplace in the university setting **between teachers and students**.
 - # A classroom is a formal setting, but **formality** does not mean **rigid**, or "**stiff**." **Both instructors and students in a classroom have rights and responsibilities**, both should respect the other and treat them with common human reverence, both should do all they can do to help the educational process achieve its **maximum effectiveness** and to help the **classroom truly become an environment for learning by all present**.
 - # **DISCLAIMER:** *The contents of this presentation represents the presenter's opinions and preferences, and it is **NOT an alternative** to recommendations/expectations in the official *Student Handbook* and/or *courses' syllabi* – please see:*
 - # **FIT's Student Handbook:** <https://policy.fit.edu/student-handbook>
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Classroom Atmosphere & Etiquette

- # In American Universities, the burden of the educational effort is on the shoulders of the student -- the instructor conveys some information and answers some questions, but it is the student's responsibility to become an "active" learner. University will provide a lot of Helps, but won't force you to do them! (More about "Active" Learner & "Helps" later)
- # Need to do much more "outside" work (i.e., "homework") for a class. The traditional norm is that for every "hour" (i.e., standard 50 minute period) spent in the classroom, a student should plan on spending at least 2 hours outside the classroom learning the subject matter of the course through additional reading or class assignments. (It is a FULL-TIME Job!)

SUGGESTIONS FOR HEALTHY ACADEMIC LEARNING EXPERIENCE:

Some Adjustment in Expectations are needed for the new Learning Environment

Attendance

- # **Attendance is required.** Actual physical presence (with any resulting verbal interaction between instructor and student) can be as **necessary to understanding the course's subject matter** as completing homework assignments.
 - # No “Consumerism” attitude : *"I paid my money -- I have the right to skip class if I want"*
 - # No “Optional Attendance ” = *"entertain me” attitude of many TV watchers.*
 - # **There are many legitimate reasons for missing a class -- illness, family crisis, transportation problems. However, skipping class to study for a midterm in another class or to complete an assignment is a sign of poor time management and poor planning and would not be considered legitimate excuses by most instructors.**
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Promptness

- # **"Better late than never"** should **not** be the operative proverb that justifies coming to class late and entering the classroom after the instructor has begun the class lecture. Although at some social gatherings, it may be permitted to be "socially late," most rules of behavior applicable to professional situations (e.g., medical appointments, job interviews, etc.) consider tardiness as *unacceptable behavior*.
 - # Students who arrive late should consult professor about any announcements made at the beginning of class. Normally, **quizzes missed by late arrival cannot be "made up."**
 - # Please **do not start putting books away**, closing up notebooks, and zipping up book-bags **5 minutes before the official end of class**. This can be disruptive and distracting to both the instructor and classmates.
 - # All attention during class should be focused on the instruction/lecture. **iPads & smartphones should not be used. Cell-phones should be turned to silent.**
 - # **NO TEXT MESSAGING.**
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Classroom Environment

- # The classroom is a place **for the conveyance of knowledge.**
- # **Distractions can easily hinder the difficult process of conveying this knowledge.** Thus, for example, students **should avoid talking to each other during the lecture.**
- # Students should refrain from other activity which can be distracting *either to the instructor or to other students*. In particular, **classrooms are not cafeterias**. Thus, the classroom is not a place to eat breakfast or lunch while the instructor is lecturing.
- # **Depending on course rules set by the instructor, disruption in the classroom may include:**
 - side conversations, ringing cell phones or using a cell phone to talk or send text messages
 - monopolizing class discussion and refusing to defer to instructor, or listen to others
 - entering late/leaving early, moving about the classroom
 - filming, photographing, or taping the class
 - yelling, arguing, swearing, bullying, or other intimidating behavior
 - reading, sleeping, eating, drinking, or not paying attention
 - shuffling through papers, cleaning out a backpack or purse during lecture
 - showing up to class under the influence of alcohol/drugs

Classroom Atmosphere



1. **Ask questions (preparedness!?)** : Even if you think your English is not perfect, speak up and ask questions and add your idea to the class discussion
2. **Be active in Classrooms:** Participate in class through active listening, taking notes, asking questions, taking part in discussions, engaging your mind in the topic matter, and respecting other people's viewpoints.
3. **Quick Review before Classes:** Study outside of class by reviewing course notes after each class session and studying in small groups with classmates.
4. **Know Your Adviser/Faculty:** the name, office location and hours, telephone number, and email address (and your faculty members).
5. **It's Your Responsibility:** Notify your faculty ahead of Time when you anticipate a class absence. **YOU** are responsible for material missed during absences, and it is the student's responsibility to complete and submit assigned work on time.
6. **Use your fit e-mail account:** Check your University email account every day and visit the University website for current information and general questions.

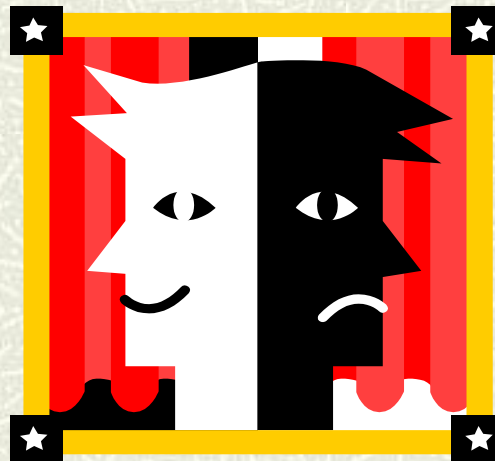
Dream Big but Work Hard

Someday you may go to the moon, become president, or write the next great novel. But tonight, you have a homework assignment.



Commit to your classes and to your future!!

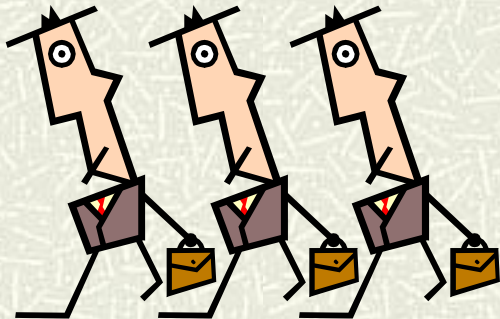
- **Make a sensible schedule:** With your academic advisor, work out your class schedule so that you will have time to attend all classes as well as time to do all the required work for each class. Be cautious and take fewer classes in your first year until you learn how to handle college. (Use Time Management!)



You have a full-time JOB already!

REMEMBER WHY ARE YOU HERE!

- ❖ Use the “rule of thumb” by *studying 2-3 hrs outside of class per one hour in class*. This means your academic work is equivalent to a full-time job. Before considering outside employment, remember you already have a full-time job.
- ❖ Remember the Positive Benefit of early Successes – They will be followed by continued success.
- ❖ Join Honor and/or Professional Student Organizations



FIVE Sources of Help for You

1. **Professor who teaches the course:** **Go to him/her first. Participate in study sessions or extra class sections offered throughout the semester.**
2. **Your academic advisor:** **Report your progress to your advisor at least once a month. Lunch meeting?**
3. **Academic Support Center:** **one-on-one tutoring, weekly study groups and self-help materials**
4. **University Experience Class and its Instructor(s).**
5. **Seek help from other academic and supporting sources**
 - **Study Groups**
 - **Beware of the Academic Honesty Policy:** In the U.S., it is not permissible to copy the work of another individual – whether that individual is an expert or a classmate. The minimum penalty is an “F” grade for the course and a permanent mark on your academic record.
 - **Library & CAPS & Health Center & Gym:** Learn to use the library resources, the Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS), Health Center, and Clemente Center.



Questions / Comments ?



Ask for Help



Discussion Questions

Questions are excerpt from: Ford, Carol K. and Ann M. Silverman. (1981) American Cultural Encounters. San Francisco: The Alemany Press

When The Teacher Arrives

You are sitting in the classroom talking with classmates when the teacher enters the room. What is the best thing to do?

- a. Stand up.
- b. Remain seated but look up at the teacher to pay attention.
- c. Remain seated and keep your eyes down, out of respect.



What if I'm Late for Class?

You are late for class and the teacher is already talking when you arrive. What do you do?

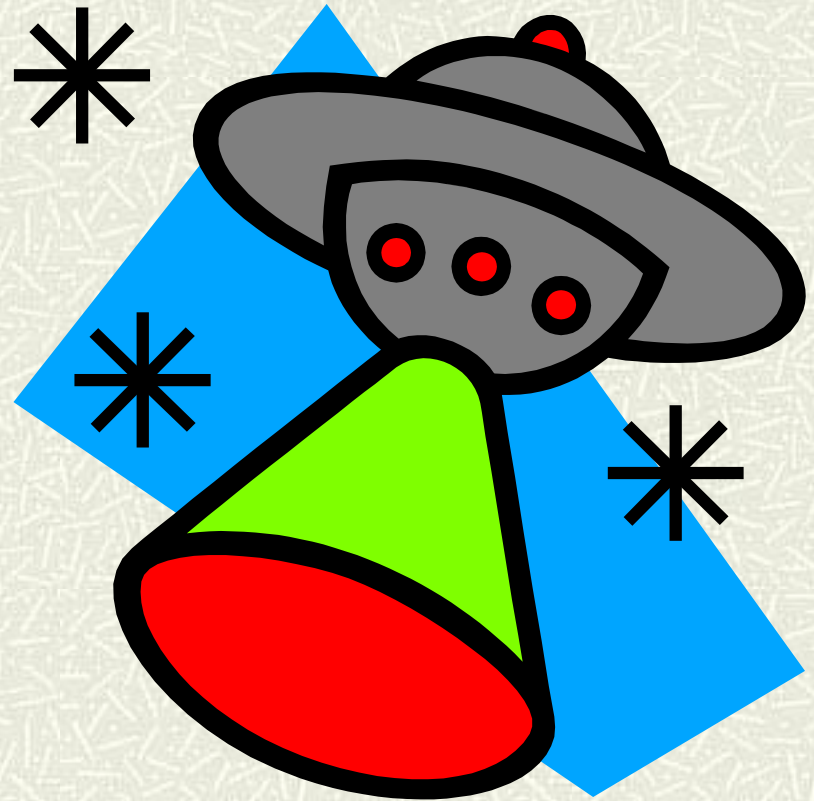
- a. Knock and wait until the teacher lets you in.
- b. Enter the room, apologize to the teacher, then take your seat.
- c. Don't go to class.
- d. Enter as quietly as possible and take a seat near the door.



What if the Teacher is Late?

The teacher is late for 10 minutes. What should you do?

- Stay in class until the end of the period.
- Leave because ten minutes is long enough to wait for anyone.
- Decide to wait or leave depending on what degrees or rank the teacher has.
- Wait or leave depending on how well you like the teacher.



What is the Best Seat in Class?

It's best to sit in the front of the class because your professor will become *familiar with your face* and it will be *easier for you to pay attention*.



Attend class and arrive on time (or early, if you can).

What is the Most Important Handout?

Syllabus. It is a “contract” between you and the professor for the course and it contains the *Rules of the Game*. Read them carefully and follow the outlined expectations. Check and double check due dates and procedures for completing assignments.

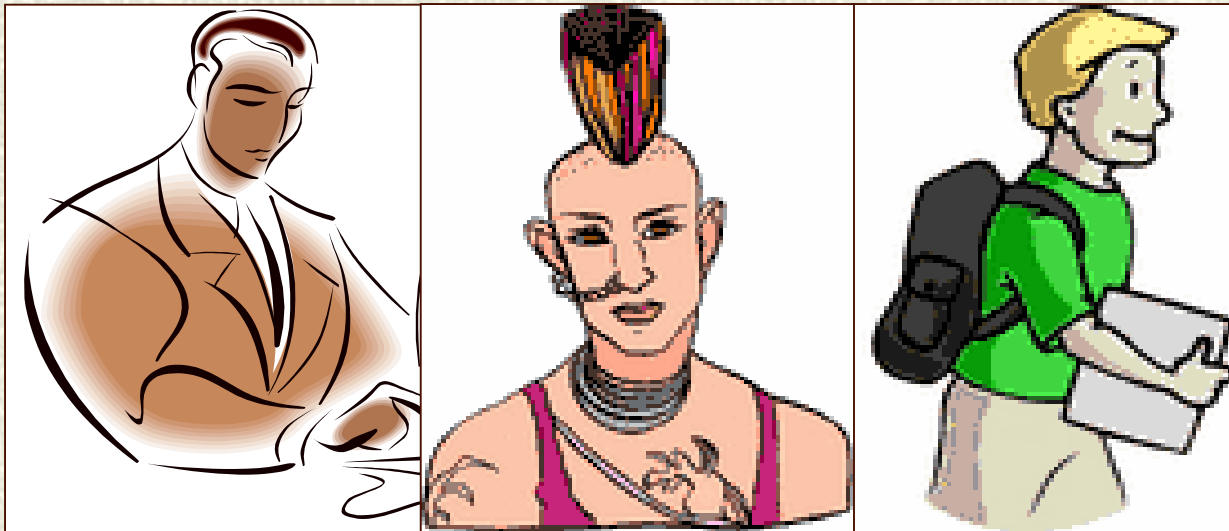
Purchase the textbooks and other required materials for each class at the beginning of the semester.



Read it carefully and Watch for the professor's rules!

How Should I Dress for Class?

#Is there any dress code for college students in the U.S.? At Florida Tech?



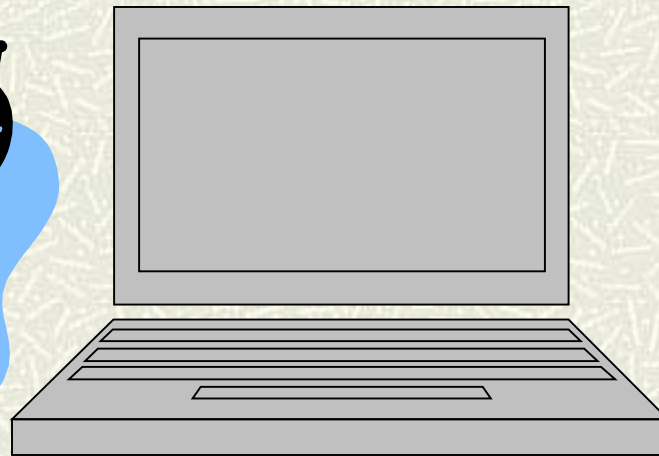
Personal Technology in the Classroom

“Hang it up”

- Exam + Cell Phone = F-
- **Turn it off before classes & appointments**

Laptops → E-mail can wait

Calculators → Simple is better



How to Ask for Something?

The teacher gave out papers to the class and you didn't get one. You say:

- a. "Give me a paper DAMNIT!"
- b. "I didn't get a paper."
- c. "You didn't give me a paper."
- d. "May I please have a paper?"



How to Interrupt?

The teacher is talking to the class. You didn't understand part of her lecture. What do you do?

- a. Look at your neighbor's notes.**
- b. Whisper softly to your neighbor for help.**
- c. Raise your hand and ask the teacher to repeat or explain what she said.**
- d. Wait until the end of class and then ask the teacher to explain her point.**



Getting the Teacher's Attention

The teacher gave an in-class assignment. He agreed to talk with individual students if anyone needed help. You are in a hurry to begin your assignment but you want to talk to the teacher before you start. He is already talking to another student. What do you do?

- a. Sit quietly until the teacher notices you.
- b. Walk over to him, excuse yourself, and state your question.
- c. As soon as you see that the teacher has finished talking with the other student, raise your hand and try to make eye contact with the teacher.
- d. Walk over to the teacher and stand near him, frequently clearing your throat until gaining his attention.



How to Help a Friend?

Your friend is having trouble in his class. The teacher asks to see him after class. Your friend doesn't speak English very well. You:

- a. Go with your friend to see the teacher and speak for him.
- b. Stay with your friend for “moral support,” but let him speak for himself.
- c. Wait for your friend outside the classroom.
- d. Advise your friend as best you can, but allow him to see the professor solo.

