Discussion Netiquette, Time Management,   
and Safety/Privacy Guidelines for Students

"Netiquette" is a term used to describe the guidelines for writing in an online environment. The guidelines below are general; your online instructors may provide other specific requirements for your online posts in their courses. Feel free to print out this page and reference it for all your online classes.

# Time Management

**1. Manage your time.**Make sure you allow enough time to formulate, proofread, and post your responses.

**2. Timely Responses.** Instructors usually require you to post by a specific date and time. It's also a good practice to post as early as you can to allow others to respond to your comments. This encourages true conversation.

# Format

**3. Descriptive Subject Headings.** If you are creating a new post, then make the subject of the post make sense. It will make it easier for you and others to find later and follow (ex., Symbolism in the Poem "The Raven"). If you are responding to a previous post by your classmate, put your classmate's name in the subject line (ex., Question for Jenny).

**4. Enhance Readability.**Use paragraphs, bullets, or numbering to make long responses easier to read.

**5. Spelling, Punctuation & Grammar.** Please spell check, grammar check, and proofread your work before you post it.

**6. Use academic writing.** Please write formally--as you would in a college-level essay. Please do not write in "text-speak" or in ALL CAPS. Write out words; for example, use "because" and "I don't know" rather than "b/c" or "IDK." Avoid slang and vulgar or offensive language

# Social

**7. No flaming!**Simply put, no personal attacks. Debates and discussions are good, but when you disagree, disagree with the ideas but not the person. Avoid personal insults and attacks on character..

**8. The "non-verbal" factor**. Sometimes postings can be misinterpreted because we don't have non-verbal cues such as tone of voice or facial expressions to tell us the sender's intent. Please give yourself, peers, and instructor the benefit of the doubt, and if something bothers or offends you, contact the person individually for clarification. If you think it's serious, intentional, or derogatory, inform your instructor.

**9. Respect and Common Courtesy.** Be open to others' ideas and opinions. Tolerance and respect are key to good discussions. Try to avoid sarcasm in a written forum as it is often misinterpreted.

**10. Use "I" Statements.** Begin your responses with an "I" statement. Express how you feel or think in your posts. For example: "I am confused when I read this paragraph" instead of: "This is confusing."

# Photos and Images

**11. No inappropriate images!**Your online course is a professional, academic environment. Avoid posting images that would not be appropriate on campus. For example, do not use images of yourself

* in swimwear or fully/partially undressed
* making provocative gestures or sexual poses
* drinking alcoholic beverages, especially in you are underage
* using illegal substances
* engaging in any sort of illegal or inappropriate activity

# Safety & Legal

**12. No offensive or threatening posts.**

**13. No spamming.** Self-promotion or commercial promotion in discussion forums is not allowed.

**14. Be aware of what you share**. Please use good judgment and discretion. Avoid publicly posting your student ID, passwords, phone number, address, private email address, and other personal information in a discussion board. If you're trying to connect with a group or another class member on a project, message them privately instead of in the forum.

**15. Do not use your courses as a social forum.** Avoid posting sexually explicit or provocative photographs of yourself or others, photos which depict illegal or unprofessional behaviors. Also avoid using the online educational environment as a social platform. And please be aware that others can access what you post. If you feel threatened, contact your instructor or campus police.

# A Note on Censorship

**16. Posts may be censored** for profanity, threatening, and/or inappropriate content by the course instructor or system administrator. Any content entered into or uploaded to the Canvas system is available for viewing and monitoring by your instructor and the system and college administrators. Instructors may also delete posts that are deemed inappropriate or violate the Student Code of Conduct at any time.