

# A classroom environment



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## **Classroom Etiquettes**

A classroom environment is different from most social environments that a student may encounter in his academic life. “WHAT IS EXPECTED OF ME?” is a question most commonly asked by every student. Students who differ in personality, interests, learning styles, and levels of thinking can be seen in any class. In such a situation and for the smooth running of a class, certain rules, regulations, moral standards, and procedures are created and have to be strictly followed by students in classrooms. The guidelines that have to be followed by students to maintain acceptable classroom environment are known as “Classroom Etiquettes”.

Classroom rules can be made by the institution or by the instructor; however, it is always helpful to maintain appropriate classroom situations. As a student, this is expected of you irrespective of:

- Who you are
- Where you are from
- What your ability is
- What your motivational level is
- What your personality is

A student is expected to maintain and follow rules and regulations which are put forward for the best of all.

## **Top Classroom Etiquettes**

### **1. Arrive to Class on Time**

There are always going to be days when a previous professor keeps you late, or you wake up late, or it takes you too long to find a parking space, but the

point here is do not be habitually late to class. Whether you mean it or not, regularly arriving late to the class, signals a level of disrespect to the class and the teacher. If you have problems getting to class on time, find a way to solve them. And on those rare days when you do arrive late, remember to enter the room by excusing yourself softly and quietly and not make a big scene.

## **2. Turn Off Your Cell Phone**

Most beepers and cell phones can be set to vibrate rather than produce a sound, so they should be less of a problem. These devices should be turned off if they cannot be set to a silent mode. Some phones are pretty noisy even on vibrate. Of course, you should not answer your cell phone during class. If you are expecting a really important call (e. g., wife going into labor, call for an interview), then it might be a good idea to inform the instructor before class so it's less of a distraction if you leave the classroom to take the call. You should also sit near a door so you can make an unobtrusive exit.

## **3. Computers and recording equipment**

Few students ask permission to take their class notes on a laptop or to record the lectures. This depends on the circumstances and you should definitely ask the instructor in advance. Researchers have found that it has been impractical in most cases to use a computer to take meeting notes and it would not be allowed to record most meetings. Thus, learning to take good notes is an important skill to have even outside the classroom. More students seem to be using laptops for class. Unfortunately, if a wireless connection is available in classrooms, the students may surf websites or perform tasks other than taking class notes with their laptops. Again, such

activities are likely distracting to those around the student (e. g., those sitting behind who see something unrelated to the course on the computer screen) as well as the instructor.

#### **4. Be Attentive in Class**

If you are going to make the effort to arrive on time and be in class, you should also make the effort to stay actively engaged in class. Some professors report observing students reading the student newspaper or even reading a textbook for a different class; some report seeing students completing homework for their next class. Flaunting your boredom or disinterest in the class is rude — and very inappropriate. Finally, avoid falling asleep in class or staring out the window.

#### **5. Sitting in the Class**

Inappropriate ways of sitting is another poor etiquette shown by students. Some students stretch as if they are out of bed. Putting legs apart is very annoying. Laying with the head on the desk, as if somebody is reading a bedtime story. Yawning, is equal to saying to the instructor, please cut off I cannot stand your boring class.

#### **6. Do Not Bring Food or Drink to Class**

In many classroom buildings, food is not even allowed, so you're not only displaying poor etiquette, but actually breaking a rule. Make time outside of class to have a meal or a snack — not in class. Many professors do tolerate drinks, such as water, coffee, soda — but make certain of the professor's policy before bringing your drink to class.

### **7. Contribute to the Class Discussion When Appropriate**

Just about all professors appreciate a strong dialogue in the classroom, but not when the comments are unwanted or inappropriate. Do respond when the professor seeks input or asks for questions or discussion. Don't interrupt the professor or another student, and don't dominate the discussion — let other people have a chance to talk and contribute to the dialogue.

### **8. Talking in Class**

There are two aspects to this. First, conversations need to stop when the instructor is ready to begin class. This certainly doesn't mean that there has to be dead silence the second the instructor enters the room. Most instructors take a few moments to arrange books and notes, check or prepare computer or other equipment, or have brief conversations with teaching assistants or students. Even so, when the instructor makes it clear that class is starting, other conversations should be quickly finished. Second, there may be times when one needs to ask a question of a person sitting nearby. Brief, and quiet, comments along the lines of "What was that point?" or "Was that argument correct?" are certainly understandable. You should not, however, carry on conversations in class. This is true even if they happen to be related to the topic. Even if such conversations are relatively quiet and do not seem to disturb anyone nearby, they can be distracting to the instructor, not to mention rude.

### **9. Dress code**

There are particular problems in classes related to the dress. This is not always about the fashion, but about the local culture. No dress that may disrespect the culture and values of the nation should be worn by a student.

The dress should not signal any disrespect to the instructor. No micro/minis or revealing clothes for the females and no boxer shorts or shorts above the knees and half selves' tea-shirts revealing their arm pits are allowed in the classrooms. ADU has a clear dress code that students must follow. Therefore, any style of dress that violates the University's dress code policy should be avoided.

### **10. Addressing the Professor Properly**

Many faculties are insulted when students do not address them properly.

Many full-time university faculty members have a doctorate degree and have earned the right to be addressed as " Dr." Smith rather than " Mr." or " Ms." Smith, but " Mr." or " Ms." should mainly be used for those without a PhD or other doctorate. This will mostly apply to TAs or new faculty who may not have finished their degree. " Doctor" will be correct for anyone with a doctorate. " Professor" is correct for anyone with a doctorate on the faculty. That will include all ranks of professor (assistant, associate, full, and visiting). The choice between " Doctor" and " Professor" is mainly a matter of personal choice. Your best clue will likely be how the person lists his or her name on the syllabus or during an initial introduction. Also, many TAs will invite you to refer to them by their first names. (Professors might as well.) That's fine, but until you are invited to do so be a bit more formal. Better to be invited to be less formal than to be corrected for being overly familiar.

### **11. Stay for the Entire Class**

There may be times when you need to leave class early, but do not make a habit of doing so. If you do need to leave class early, the best solution is to alert the professor ahead of time and then discretely leave the classroom so

as not to disturb the other students. If you do need to leave early pick a seat close to the door to make a quick and quiet exit.

### **12. Avoid Signaling, Sending Signs That Class Time is up**

Students must not attempt to signal that class is over by shutting their books loudly, unzipping and zipping their bags and otherwise making noises that class time is complete. Some students actually get up and walk out of class. Of course, some professors make a habit of going over class time, but most of them know how to tell time — and most of them have a watch or other ways to tell time. It is presumptuous and rude for the student to tell the professor that class is over. If your professor does seem to have a problem with ending class on time, chat with him or her outside of class — especially if it is making you late for your next class.

### **13. Contact the Professor When You Have to Miss Class**

When you have to miss class for legitimate reasons or when you miss class because of illness, try to contact the professor and inform him/her of your absence. You may even be able to obtain copies of lecture notes or schedule a meeting during office hours to discuss what you missed. Do not, however, ask the professor in class to go over material you missed (for whatever reasons). And when alerting the professor about having to miss a class, do not begin the conversation with the awful question, “are we doing anything important in the next class because I have to miss it?” (If the professor was not planning to do anything, the class would probably be canceled, right?)

Proper classroom etiquette should be common sense for most students.

Being courteous will predispose the professor to like/respect you — and set an example for other less-informed students.

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## **References**

1. Classroom Etiquettes. ([http://www. uiowa. edu/~030116/classetiq. htm](http://www.uiowa.edu/~030116/classetiq.htm))
2. Hansen, R. S. (2009). MyCollegeSuccessStory. com: 10 Tips for Proper Classroom Etiquette. [http://www. mycollegesuccessstory. com/academic-success-tools/classroom-etiquette. html](http://www.mycollegesuccessstory.com/academic-success-tools/classroom-etiquette.html)