

Classroom Etiquette



History of Manners

Manners had a practical purpose in the beginning. Prehistoric people learned to behave in ways that made life easier and more pleasant for one another. Then early civilizations developed rules for proper social conduct. Formal **etiquette** originated in the French royal court during the 1600-1700's. The nobles who lived at court did not work, and so they developed elaborate social customs mostly out of boredom. The nobles drew up a list of proper social behavior and called it etiquette. This word came from an old French word meaning ticket. This code of behavior soon spread to other European courts and eventually was adopted by the upper classes throughout the Western world.

From the 1500's through the early 1900's, children learned etiquette at school. Children were advised on such points as:

- ▶ the proper way of kneeling before their teachers (whew, glad that's gone)
- ▶ the value of remaining silent until spoken to, and
- ▶ Using a dinner knife as a toothpick!

History of Manners (continued)

- ▶ Over the years, people were expected to follow an increasingly complicated set of rules. Many of the rules seem silly today. In Western countries in the 1800's, a young man could not speak to a young woman he knew until she had first acknowledged him. Little girls curtsied and little boys bowed when introduced to someone. Not many years ago, when a young man and a young woman went out on a date, she was expected to sit quietly in the car while he walked around it to open her door and help her out.
- ▶ Since the 1960's, manners have become much more relaxed. It is helpful to know some rules about how to behave in certain situations-if only because this makes life more comfortable for you and makes you more self-confident in social situations. For the unlearned, etiquette lessons in business and social situations can be purchased via the internet or bought in a book store. There is no longer an excuse to not have "the ticket". Etiquette today is based on treating everyone with the same degree of kindness and consideration, and it consists mostly of common sense and basic good manners.

Basic Manners

- ▶ Good manners signal that you have respect for others, and that you will rise to every occasion with grace. An unspoken code of conduct appropriate to the semi-professional level of interaction exists and should be commonplace in the classroom setting between teachers and students.




Disruptive talking

- ▶ Most instructors, myself included, don't mind if you **whisper** to your neighbor something like "Is this from section 2.2?". Or "Did she just make a factor of 2 mistake in that last step?"
- ▶ However, continued individual conversations between students, even about the topic being discussed in class, are disruptive and rude to the instructor and other students. In addition, the offenders are missing the information being presented while they are talking.
- ▶ **Side conversations while another student is asking a question (or listening to an answer) are extremely rude. Be quiet, listen, engage yourself in the discussion, even if think you already know the answer.**



Stay engaged in class

- ▶ **Do not sleep in class. If you feel ill, go to the nurse. Understand that I may follow up with the nurse or your parents if this becomes a problem.**
 - ▶ **Do not do homework from this class or other classes while you should be listening and taking notes.**
 - ▶ **If you have finished your work and you are bored, let me know and I will connect you with another student who could use some help.**
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Late Arrivals / Early Dismissals



- ▶ **Late Arrivals must be accompanied by a pass.**
- ▶ **If you are being dismissed during class, you must present a valid dismissal pass BEFORE class.**



If you Arrive Late or Return From an Absence

- ▶ If you arrive late to class or you are returning after an absence, please sit down quietly without making a production. Quietly, get out your notes, leave some blank space in your notebook (to fill in later from a classmate) and quietly try to ascertain what the class is doing.
- ▶ Your main goal in these instances is to re-engage in class without causing a disruption. These rules are applicable to all professional situations (e.g. medical appointments, company meetings, job interviews, etc.)
- ▶ If it makes you uncomfortable to patiently wait until after class to get assistance from the teacher, then make an appointment with the teacher PRIOR to class. The main thing to understand is that class time is not the appropriate time to make up missed time.

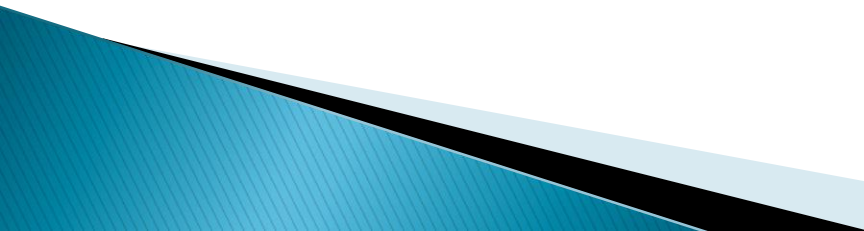
What to do after missing class

Do:

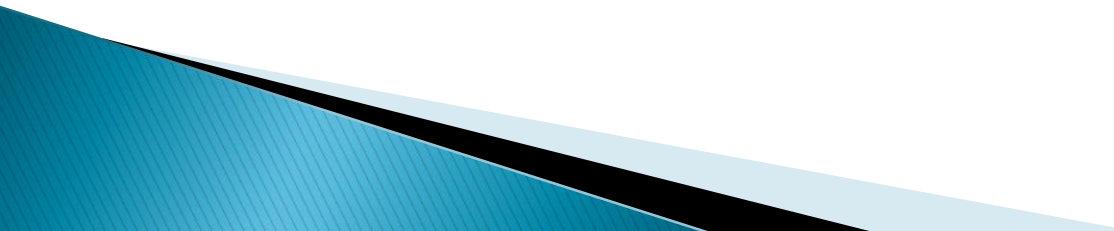
- ▶ **Quietly communicate with a neighbor to see what you may have missed or what handouts were distributed.**
- ▶ **Take initiative to use any self-service resources your teacher provides. For example handouts may be in a specified location. Homework may be placed in homework folder, etc.**
- ▶ **Make note of any issues you were unable to resolve on your own. Ask the teacher **AFTER CLASS**. If your teacher is heading to another class, you may need to set up an appointment during a free period or after school.**
- ▶ **Understand that **UNEXCUSED** tardies and absences have academic consequences.**

What you should NOT do after missing class

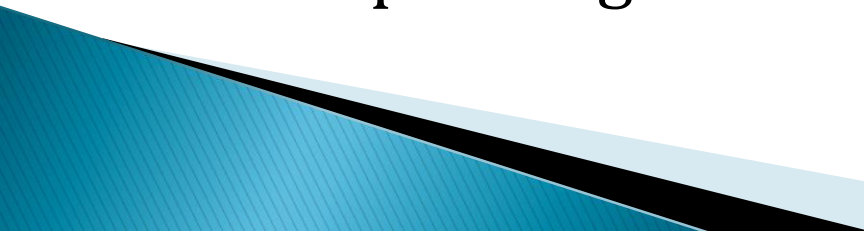
Do not:

- ▶ **Expect the teacher to stop to receive your homework or find you any handouts that you have missed.**
 - ▶ **Expect the teacher to repeat announcements or material that you missed**
 - ▶ **Expect the teacher to remind you about assignments you missed, homework you owe, etc.**
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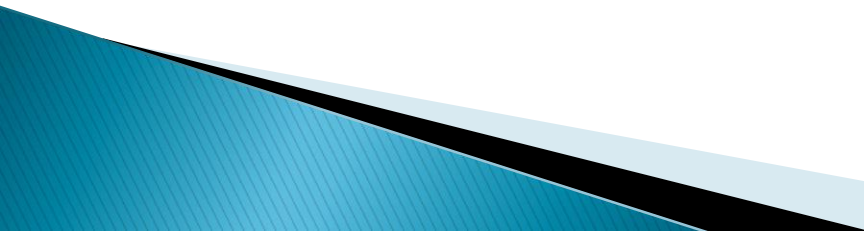
Use of Class Time

- ▶ Do not ask questions of the teacher in the moments before class as she is trying to get ready for class. Try to keep in mind that the professor needs to start class on time, so that all students can be served. It may not “look” like class has started, but your teacher has administrative duties to take care of before starting the discussion.
 - ▶ Do not ask questions pertaining to your personal situation (your grades, missing homework), during class time, as this is an inappropriate time and place. Ask these questions during office hours.
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Participation/Discussion

- ▶ Be patient and courteous to other students when they ask a question or make a statement, even when the subject may be obvious to you.
 - ▶ While class participation is encouraged, take care not to dominate classroom discussion.
 - ▶ Do not volunteer answers to a question posed to another student unless you have been invited. Other students may require more time to think about questions before responding.
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Food/Drink

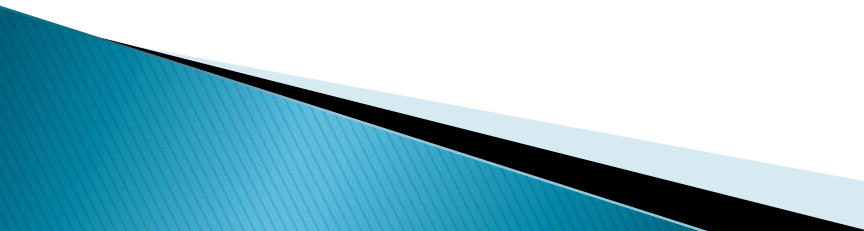
- ▶ **Classrooms are not cafeterias. Food and non-water beverages should not be consumed in the classroom.**
 - ▶ You should not expect to leave the room to eat or drink.
 - ▶ There are certain conditions under which students need to eat/drink during class for medical reasons. Simply have the nurse or your parents contact me directly.
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More Thoughts About Food

While some teachers may be more lenient, there are good reasons why I do not allow food/drink:

- ▶ I do not want to clean up your garbage/spills
- ▶ It is impolite to eat in front of others when they have no food.
- ▶ Some of your classmates may have serious food allergies or reactions to smells/odors.
- ▶ You are not paying attention to class while you are eating.
- ▶ In reality, the classroom surfaces are rarely cleaned. It is not a clean place to eat. Introducing food compounds this. None of us like to sit down to a sticky desk.
- ▶ We do not want to encourage rodents to share our facilities.

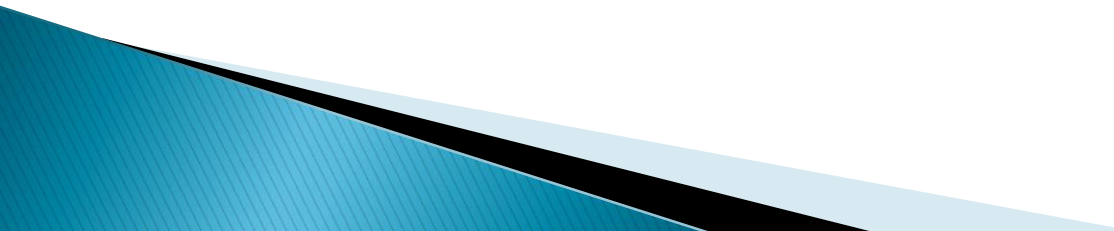
Bathroom visits

- ▶ Use the bathroom and get a drink of water prior to the beginning of class. Plan your bathroom visits during your free periods and your lunch. Your teachers have to!
 - ▶ Your teacher will limit bathroom visits. It is a privilege, not a right.
 - ▶ If you squander this privilege, it will be revoked.
 - ▶ If are allowed to leave, do so quietly. When you return to class, behave as if you were arriving late.
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Electronic Devices

- ▶ No electronic devices of any kind (laptops, MP3 players, pagers, CELL PHONES, hand-held games ... etc). They should be turned off and stored OUT OF SIGHT or they will be confiscated.
- ▶ Calculators are sometimes required or allowed. However, if you are using them to play games, they will be confiscated like any other electronic devices.

Respect the Facilities

- ▶ Students are expected to help maintain the appearance of the classroom. After class students should discard all trash.
 - ▶ Do not write on school property such as desks, book, etc.
 - ▶ Do not waste classroom resources (chalk, paper, etc.) It is not easy to get these supplies and teachers often pay using their own money.
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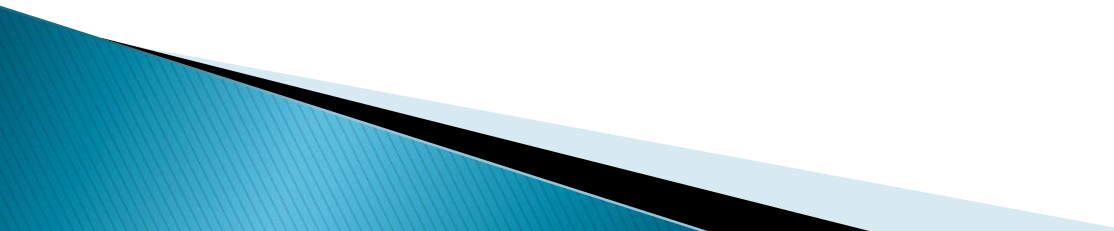
Beginning / End of Class

- ▶ If you are engaged in social chatting at the beginning of class, watch for cues from the teacher that she is ready to start class. React to these cues by wrapping up your conversations.
- ▶ Please do not start putting books away, closing up notebooks, and zipping up bookbags until class is completely over. The instructor has the right to finish his or her thought at the end of the class period and conclude the class in an orderly manner without people standing up and walking out. Important instructions are often given during this time.

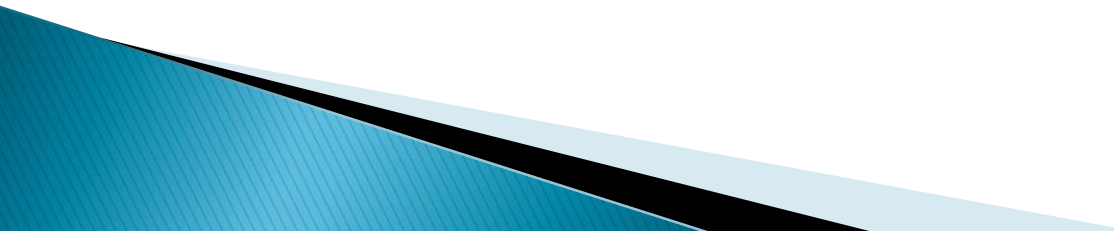
Presenting yourself

- ▶ **Be polite in your speech and manners - no profanity or lewd language.** Use professional language.
- ▶ Do not whine or complain, as this reflects poorly on you.

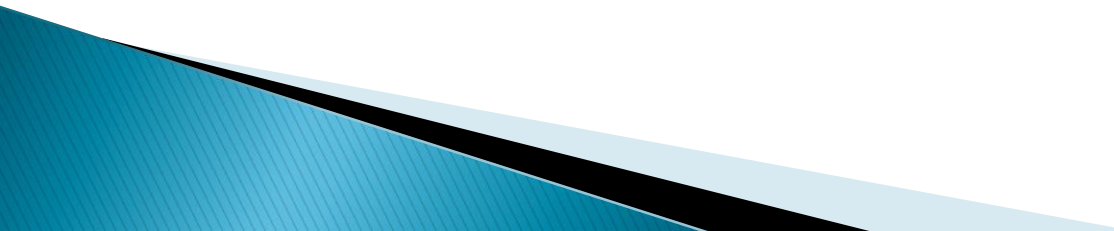
Come to class prepared

- ▶ You are required to bring certain materials to class. Every student should come prepared with their subject notebook, paper, and a pencil. Some classes require textbooks and calculators.
 - ▶ Do not expect your teacher to supply you with these materials. The school does not supply us with extra school supplies. We buy these with our own money and we take responsibility for bringing what we need to class.
 - ▶ Bring your homework on the day when it is due. Do not make excuses.
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Avoid Frustration

- ▶ Spend time understanding the course syllabus and requirements from the start to cut down on later misunderstanding.
 - ▶ Meet with the teacher as problems arise to avert problems.
 - ▶ Angrily confronting the teacher creates an unacceptable environment for all involved
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What you teacher doesn't want to hear

- ▶ "I missed class. Did we do anything important?"
 - ▶ After chatting with your friend for five minutes: "Could you repeat that?"
 - ▶ Your only questions about an upcoming assignment: "How long does the paper have to be?"
 - ▶ In the middle of a fascinating discussion on a new concept: "Will this be on the test?"
 - ▶ At the end of the semester after missing numerous assignments: "Is there extra credit in this class?"
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Sources:

Slide show
created by
Ms. Dixon
Math
Department
Belmont HS

- ▶ Virginia Tech <http://courses.cs.vt.edu/~cs3604/support/Policies/Classroom.Etiquette.html>
- ▶ Massachusetts Institute of Technology <http://web.mit.edu/21h.418/www/cindyku/classroomet.htm>
- ▶ The Citadel <http://faculty.citadel.edu/mabrouk/etiquette.htm>
- ▶ Northwestern University http://www.kellogg.northwestern.edu/stu_aff/policies/etiquette.htm
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- ▶ SUNY University at Buffalo <http://wings.buffalo.edu/academic/department/AandL/aas/faculty/lulat/teaching/edu4/4disruptpolicy.htm>
- ▶ Santa Clara University <http://math.scu.edu/~dsmolars/class.html>
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- ▶ James Madison University http://www.jmu.edu/facdev/fellows_manage_etiquette.shtml
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- ▶ Rutgers University <http://geology.rutgers.edu/~vadim/EQVOL/Policy.pdf#search='classroom%20etiquette'>
- ▶ Gainesville State College <http://www.gc.peachnet.edu/>
- ▶ College of Charleston http://www.cofc.edu/~cofcgeog/_notes/HumSyllabus/Etiquette.html
- ▶ Stockton College of NJ [http://caxton.stockton.edu/theLITTProgram/stories/storyReader\\$14](http://caxton.stockton.edu/theLITTProgram/stories/storyReader$14)
- ▶ Palm Beach Community College <http://www.pbcc.edu/x3717.xml>
- ▶ Paul D. Camp Community College http://www.pc.cc.va.us/SSS/classroom_etiquette.htm
- ▶ Bellevue Community College <http://scidiv.bcc.ctc.edu/LS/Teaching/ClassEtiquette.html>

There are thousands of sites regarding “classroom etiquette”.
This is just a small sampling of the sites visited