

COMMUNICATING WITH INSTRUCTORS

Students at Fresno State have a variety of resources to help them succeed in college...but one of the most obvious ones is often overlooked: professors or instructors. While their titles may sound intimidating, professors or instructors are there to help you learn.



Tip #1: Schedule an Appointment

- It's helpful to schedule an **appointment** with your professor to meet during their office hours. Many instructors use that time to grade assignments and prepare for class.

Tip #2: Professors Want to Help

- Adopt the attitude that your professors want to help you. Your instructors can't solve your problems for you, but they can help you figure out what to do!

Tip #3: Be On Time

- Act **respectfully and courteously** by coming to class on time, leaving only when the class is over and avoiding distracting or rude behaviors. If you need to leave or arrive late, let your instructor know beforehand.

Tip #4: What Do I Not Understand?

- Before approaching the professor for help, ask yourself, "**What is it that I don't understand?**" (Never go into the professor's office hours with the book and say, "I don't understand this.")

Tip #5: Explain What You Understand

- When going to the professor for help **explain all that you understand up to an exact point**. By doing this, you are showing that you have really tried to understand the material prior to seeking help.

Tip #6: Address Your Professor by His/Her Title

- Pay attention to small details that can have an impact on your interaction. Address your professor by their appropriate title (ex: "Hi, Dr. Samuels" versus "Hey, James!") and facilitate your communication through the recommended channels/time (see your syllabus for your professor's preferred way of contact).

Scenarios for Approaching your Professor for Help

- Hello, thank you for taking the time to stop by my office hours today. How may I help you? (Follow TIPS 4, 5 and 6)

Scenario 1



- You have fallen behind in class and would like to speak to the professor about submitting a late assignment. (Follow TIPS 1, 2, and 6)

Scenario 2



- You did not do so well on the 1st exam and feel that the study guide did not help you prepare properly. (Follow Tips 1, 2, 4 and 5)

Scenario 3



Practice

What situation do you want to approach your instructor with?

Based on the tips provided, how will you approach your instructor?
