EMAIL ETIQUETTE

Email is a medium for informal or formal communication. Emails sent to professors, teaching assistants, university staff, current or prospective employers, businesses, etc. should be considered formal and should be styled accordingly.

Formal, professional emails should include:

1. A formal address. For example: “Dear Dr. Jones:” A colon (:) is more formal than a comma (,), however either is correct. The following are examples of INformal addresses that should be reserved for unprofessional contexts: “Hey Dr. Jones”, “Hi”, “Dear Jane”, etc.

2. A clear and concise text.
   a. If the recipient is unlikely to know you, you may want to introduce yourself, for example: “I am a student in your Tues/Thur basket weaving class” or “I am a junior exercise science major at Northern Arizona University”.
   b. State your question or comment. For example “I would clarification on the correct answer to question 36 on the exam regarding the slime producing technique of the slug”.
   c. Use correct punctuation and capitalization. Your email should adhere to proper English grammar and style.
   d. Include contact information. If you think the recipient of your email might prefer to call you (e.g., customer service – not usually the case with professors), include your phone number. If relevant, include your address.

3. A formal signature. You can’t actually sign an email, but you should always type your full name at the bottom. Examples of a formal closing include: “Sincerely, John Johnson” or “Thank you, Jill Jacobs”. Be sure to NOT include any informal, fancy-dancey signature line you have made for yourself such as “Bridget Jones, Bikini Modeler Extraordinaire, Check out my web page, How many blondes does it take to change a light bulb?”.

Example

A. Unprofessional email:

hi this is crystal i was wondering how i did on the exam can you tell me my grade i am worried because i don’t want to get a c in the course call me

B. Same email, more professional:

Dear Dr. Jones:

I am a student in your Bongo playing class. I would appreciate it if you could email me my score on the exam of Tuesday, March 4. I am concerned about my score. If you would prefer to call, my phone number is 593-1314.

Thank you,
Crystal Rock