

Online Communication: Issues of Netiquette and Confidentiality

Online classes provide an opportunity for open and insightful dialogue. As in any dialogue, these discussions demonstrate many facets of diversity, including diversity of values, opinions, and experiences. We view these differences as welcomed and needed attributes of a scholarly discussion. Acknowledgment of and respect for these differences is a sign of mature scholarly debate.

Following are guidelines governing on-line discussions:

1. Faculty members monitor discussions and intervene when requested or deemed necessary.

2. NEVER post to the course room content:

- o That is known to be illegal,
- o That is potentially harassing, threatening, or embarrassing,
- o That might be offensive and might be received as disrespectful in any way.
- o That is vulgar or sexually explicit

3. The tone of the exchange is one of respect for individual differences. If you disagree with an opinion expressed by a classmate or instructor, respond in a scholarly manner, arguing about the subject of discussion vs. the person who posted it.

4. Students are encouraged to not overuse exclamation marks!!!!, CAPITAL LETTERS, or other marks of emotional reaction that may be received as yelling, etc.

5. Online communication presents a significant level of ambiguity, as verbal content of communication is not well supported by its non-verbal (including contextual) components. If a student feels threatened or offended by a statement made by another student during online portion of a class, please address the issue immediately with the other student(s) to clarify their position and your reaction. If this does not work, contact your class instructor so actions can be taken if necessary.

6. During online discussion, follow the same rules concerning protection of confidential information as you would follow in face-to-face discussion. Confidential client information is not appropriate in forum postings. Further, mental health related issues pertaining to you or your family members must be used with caution, if at all.

7. Be aware that some agency-specific information, such as descriptions of programs that have been developed or specialized treatment approaches, may potentially be a subject of copyright law. Although it is not always possible to know whether information is protected, the minimum expectation is to always identify and credit the source of information.

8. If the expectations in professional communication or other expectations specific to unique nature of online scholarly activities are not met, the concerning issue will be addressed with involvement of Program Director (or Academic VP, if needed or determined by the PD as requiring higher level of intervention). A student or a faculty member may raise the issue.

9. Any off-list communication between student and faculty will be conducted through Moodle or and Adler issued email address. Students are asked not to use personal, work, or other school email addresses when corresponding.

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