



College Behavior: Expected & (Not Expected)

Remember that college professors are going to have a wide variety of backgrounds and experiences and will not be all the same. Professors don't expect all students to be the same, so don't expect them to be. In college, one of the benefits will be meeting and working with a diverse group of students, faculty and staff. Adapting to each situation will be part of your learning and growth. You will encounter some instructors who are lively, entertaining lecturers. But unfortunately, some of the most knowledgeable people are not excellent speakers. Try to accept your professors as they are, good and bad, and don't let your feelings about him or her keep you from doing well in class. Instead, focus your attention on the material in a way that is meaningful to you and strive to do the best job possible.

Human nature being what it is, a professor's reaction to student's behavior may influence the grade given. Just as your opinion of a professor may influence your attitude toward a course, the professor's opinion of you may help shape their evaluation of your performance. It is important as you prepare for your career that you develop the professionalism needed for success. The following skills are important job skills, as well as in school. If you intend to find a job you want and then get raises and promotions, these behaviors are usually minimum expectations. The WOU faculty is concerned about your professionalism since, when you enter the job market, you are representing the University as well as yourself. Evaluate your professionalism when you look at the following behaviors that are expected and (not expected):

Attendance/Promptness

- ☺ Don't miss class. Good students are rarely absent. They call or email their professor in advance if they must miss class. They get notes from other students or sometimes the professor, and make up the work. They arrive on time (or early) and are prepared for class or tests. They are there for the entire class and notify the professor if they must leave early.
- ☹ (Professors notice multiple absences, even when they are not taking role. The effect is worse if you haven't notified the professor or wait until after the class is over. If you miss a class, refrain from asking, "Did I miss anything important?" This could be instructors' number one pet peeve question. **Of course, you missed something important.** Frequent tardiness, early leaving behavior, eating, sleeping, etc. are noticed. It is distracting and disrespectful to the professor and other students.)

Participation

- ☺ Students show interest in the subject matter. If class discussion is encouraged, they try to participate but not dominate. They exhibit attentive learning behavior. They concentrate on the classroom activities during class time.
- ☹ (Poor students are frequently not paying attention, not participating and generally putting very little effort into the class. College professors see themselves as adults teaching adults, not babysitters. Leave the high school behaviors behind such as private conversations, studying other material, sleeping, etc.)

Assignments/Course Work

- ☺ Students turn in professional looking work. It is neatly presented and logically organized. Instructions for the assignments are followed to the last detail. Work often goes above the minimum. If assignments are not understood, they are clarified well in advance. Sources are cited. Spelling and grammar DO count.
- ☹ (Poor students turn in late assignments. They are often sloppy, disorganized, have poor spelling and sentence structure. They wait until just before the assignment is due to say "I didn't understand".)

Behavior/Professional Conduct

- ☺ The professional student respects classmates and their opinions. They try to understand viewpoints that are different from their own. They try to maintain a positive mood and energy level. They are neatly groomed, even when casual.
- ☹ (Poor students can be narrow minded and react negatively to different opinions. They can make fun of others or become angry. Personal energy is really low. Their rudeness can be inattention or total detachment. Their appearance is way beyond casual; it's sloppy.)

Respecting the Professor

- ☺ The professional student respects their professor and acts accordingly. Professional students do this whether they like the subject matter, the way it is presented, or the professor personally. They don't call professors by their first name unless they are invited to do so. Some instructors are very informal, but others may be offended by an informal address. "Professor" should be acceptable if you are unsure. Some professors don't mind talking to students about matters not related to school; others resent or dislike personal conversations. Try to visit the professor during their office hours to seek any help you need related to course work or to advise them of personal situations affecting your attendance or work. If you can't make their office hours, try to set up a different time rather than just dropping in. You may interrupt them when they are busy with something else and not get the reception you'd like.
- ☹ (Poor students may have unrealistic ideas about professors and college life. They expect people and situations to fit their image with very little adapting necessary on their part. They also don't allow for personal differences or someone just having a bad day. This closed viewpoint can be very damaging to their college career and often to their future.)

Success in college certainly is about learning subject content but it is also about learning to adapt to many people and many challenges. It is about learning to play the game. It is about maximizing your strengths and working with or around your weaknesses. You may question why you have to have a particular course or why you have to take it from "this professor". But students who fail to apply themselves in courses they deem unimportant are missing one of the main values and purposes of a liberal arts education. People often don't stick with one career their whole life and the broad-based education prepares them for many directions. The importance of some courses simply may not become apparent until sometime later.