

# Course Communication Guidelines

ENGL 400 I Fall 2011

## EMAIL GUIDELINES

Though you are all probably aware of these general email guidelines, it is always good professional practice to review the standards of a particular professional community or culture. To ensure your understanding of these principles, e-mails that do not follow these guidelines will be returned unanswered.

- give e-mails a concise and direct subject heading. I should know right away what the email is about and what its purpose is (for example, “Rivers Project Two Revision” or “Question about Job Application Letter”)
- keep subject headings consistent on extended exchanges (maintain the conversation thread)
- include an appropriate (as defined by the nature of your relationship with the receiver) greeting and conclusion in the email (“My name is Zach!”)
- describe any attachments and how they should be used
- use formal but casual language (complete sentences, capitalization and punctuation, correct spelling—especially individual and company names)
- watch pronoun usage. Make sure objects referred to by pronouns are clear (avoid saying something like “That thing we talked about in class the other day”)
- be respectful and cooperative

In line with the principles and practices of the course, these guidelines and their enforcement are not designed to be punitive; they are designed to introduce (and induce) good professional habits.

## FILE ATTACHMENT GUIDELINES

It is always a good idea to consistently label files (.doc, .pdf, .xls, .jpg) so that both you and recipients can quickly identify them (e.g., “rivers\_job\_application\_letter”). I recommend using underscores and all lower case letters for file names (spaces and capital letters can sometimes make downloading file attachments difficult in some email servers). It is likewise good internal/personal practice to save each and every draft as a new file, so as to keep track of changes made (e.g., “resume\_draft\_one,” “resume\_draft\_two”). Likewise, consider creating folders for each document or project in order to keep track of drafts, support documents, and any correspondence. Organization is a key component of organizational rhetoric and writing. Good information architecture is often the difference between success and failure. Additionally, and as required above, do not simply send files with little or no explanation. Always describe the nature of the attachment, why it is being sent, and what the recipient is supposed to do with it.

## WORDPRESS BLOG POSTING GUIDELINES

You will do a lot of the writing for this class in your individual blog space on the course website. One common way we think of a weblog or blog is as a journal. However, unlike a journal that you might keep at home (as well as most if not all of the writing you have done in school before), your blog space is *public*. Your fellow class members will be invited to read your blog. Team members will respond to your posts with comments and replies. Team members will also review your work logs to mark and assess your contributions to team projects. And, of course, since it's on the Internet, other Web readers may encounter your writing and take a look at what you have to say.

### Good Blogging Practices

- Titles for blog posts should reflect the context of what you have written, not merely restate the title of the assignment or reading. Interesting and informative titles draw more responses from others. It is likewise important to be consistent: follow the same formula for similar blog posts (e.g., “Rivers: Week Seven Work Log,” “Rivers: Week Eight Work Log”).
- Blogs should demonstrate the principles of writing for the web as they are covered in this course.
- Bloggers link. Use hyperlinks when referring to other posts on the internet and the course site, and follow good attribution practices. Hyperlinks mean converting text to a link, not merely cutting and pasting in an URL: WordPress makes this rather easy.
- All users of the course website will not necessarily know what you mean if you just mention “the reading assignment for today.” At minimum, you should mention the name of the text and the title of the chapter or section you are referencing.
- Good bloggers, like good professional communicators, always keep in mind that they are writing for a public audience.