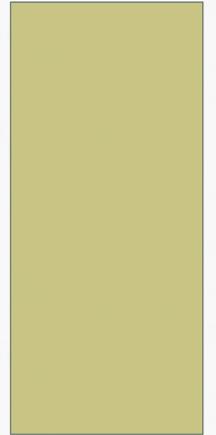


HIDDEN RULES FOR OFFICE HOURS

WILLIAM & MARY NEURODIVERSITY INITIATIVE



WHAT ARE OFFICE HOURS?

- An opportunity to discuss with your instructor any special needs or challenges you face. If possible, talk to your instructor before the semester starts or at the beginning of the semester.
- They are for clarifying information and answering questions from class.
- An opportunity to discuss or get feedback about assignments and tests.
- A way to get to know your professor.

WHAT ARE OFFICE HOURS?

- To share any information about extenuating personal circumstances that may be effecting your learning and class performance.
- They are an opportunity to discuss academic and/or career goals.
- They are a time to discuss potential research or internship opportunities.
- Faculty WANT you to use office hours for these purposes!

THE NUTS AND BOLTS OF OFFICE HOURS

- Each instructor's office hours are listed on his or her syllabus and also may be listed on the departmental website.
- Some instructor's office hours are by appointment only.
- Office hours are usually only a few hours a week so plan accordingly.
- If you arrive for office hours without an appointment, anticipate that you may have to wait or come back another day.

EMAIL ETIQUETTE

- If a professor requires an appointment, arrange the day and time through email.
- Instructor email addresses are on the department website or the syllabus.
- Address the email to Professor X or Dr. X.
- Remember that this is a professional communication, so do not address your female professors by Mrs. X or your male professors by Mr. X.

EMAIL ETIQUETTE

- In the first sentence, identify yourself with your name and the class that you are enrolled in
- Write your request in full sentences with correct grammar and spelling.
- Respond promptly (within one day) to any emails from your instructor.
- Keep your emails to the point – perhaps 3-4 sentences.

PREPARATION FOR OFFICE HOURS

- Prepare yourself by going over the issues you wish to discuss in your mind.
- If necessary or helpful, make notes and gather supporting materials (e.g., articles, previous test).
- Look up the office location and familiarize yourself with how to get there.
- Allow enough time to get to the office, if you have made a specific appointment.

THE MEETING

- Knock on the door before entering unless the office is behind a receptionist. If this is the case, announce yourself to that person.
- Once in the office, introduce yourself with your name and the class you are taking from that instructor
- If your instructor stands up or is standing, step forward and offer to shake hands.
- Ask where you should sit.
- The instructor will typically leave the door open. Usually this will not interfere with confidentiality.

THE MEETING CONTINUED

- Your instructor will ask about the purpose of the meeting.
- This is the time for you to present the issues that you came to discuss in a clear, concise manner.
- Listen to your instructor's response and take notes if appropriate.
- Ask questions for clarification.
- Remember that your instructor's intention is to help you improve your work.

RECEIVING FEEDBACK

- If you meet with your instructor to get feedback about a grade, try to remain non-defensive and respectful.
- If you are contesting a grade, understand that you and your instructor may not come to an agreement to your satisfaction.
- Rather than argue, explore how you might improve results for the next paper or test.
- Try to walk away with something concrete to use for the next assignment or test.

CONCLUDING THE MEETING

- Remember to thank your instructor for his or her time.
- Later, reflect on the meeting and ask yourself if you've gotten the information and/or feedback that you needed.
- Remember that office hours are an important resource!