Department/College

Course Name
Online Communication Guidelines

Look for **green text** used as a placeholder, to indicate information needed, text you should change, or notes. *Be sure to delete these notes before finalizing your syllabus and change the text color to black.*

In addition to traditional face-to-face meetings, this course relies on online tools for course communication.

Through online discussion forums, chat, and blogs, you will have the opportunity to:

- Interact with others in the class
- Develop and share ideas
- Pose questions
- Get and give feedback
- Share experiences

In order for the communication to be effective, interesting, and useful, it is important to do more than just post your ideas. You should also read the postings of your peers and respond when you have suggestions or input.

Communication with The Instructor

It is important to remember that while the Internet is available 24 hours a day, your instructor and other students are not. *Include a statement indicating expectations for instructor responsiveness.* ***Example:*** You can expect that your instructor will respond to e-mail message to you within *X-days* during the week and may not be available to respond on weekends. **Call or visit office hours if an urgent issue surfaces.**

Maintain Professional Conduct Both in the Classroom and Online

The classroom is a professional environment where academic debate and learning take place. Your instructor will make every effort to make this environment safe for you to share your opinions, ideas, and beliefs. In return, you are expected to respect the opinions, ideas, and beliefs of other students—both in the face-to-face classroom and online communication.

Students have the right and privilege to learn in the class, free from harassment and disruption. The course follows the standards set in the

Code of Students Rights and Responsibilities (**STU-0119**) and students are subject to disciplinary action for violation of that code.

Important Guidelines to Remember

As you participate in online discussion forums and chat, it is important to remember some basic things about online communication. Consider some traditional communication that you may have experienced:

- If you send a personal letter to someone it is private communication between you and the recipient — unless the recipient shares the letter with others
- If you put a notice on a bulletin board in the student union, it becomes publicly visible by anyone who visits the bulletin board
- When you chat with a group of friends at the coffee shop, students sitting nearby can hear your conversation

The same concepts translate into the online environment:

- E-mail is private communication between the sender and receiver(s) – but can easily be made public by the receiver(s) if they share the message with others
- Discussion forums and blogs are public spaces
- Chat is public and may involve multiple "talkers" and "listeners" as well as "eavesdroppers"

Verbals & Non-verbals

It is important to remember that you will not have the non-verbal cues that you get in the traditional face-to-face classroom and neither will your instructor.

Your instructor cannot see the confused, frustrated, or unhappy expressions on your face if you encounter problems. **You MUST communicate with your instructor so that he/she can help.**

To make the experience go smoothly, remember that you're responsible for:

- Initiating more contact
- Being direct, persistent, and vocal when you don't understand something
- Communicating often and early

Emoticons

Emoticons are graphical expressions created by combining specific

letters or symbols such :-) to create a smiley face. Use of emoticons is considered a friendly and informal style of communicating feelings in plain text messages. Be careful not to rely too much on emoticons or symbols in your communication as they may not easily understood by others or may distract from your intended message.

> **Important Note:** Post general course questions in discussion forum "FAQs" so that everyone can benefit from the answer OR send a private e-mail message to your instructor. Note: Include a general FAQs discussion area for these types of messages.