

## On Emails: Some Tips

Take a look at the following sample student emails to a professor. In each of these examples, the student wants to notify the professor that he or she needs to visit the professor but is unable to come during the professor's office hours.

Which of the following would you say best accomplishes its purpose? Which displays the correct tone and word choice for its audience?

### Example #1:

*Date: March 5, 2011*

*To: Professor Shmo*

*From: - - -*

*Subject: help!*

*Hi professor, I have no idea how to write this paper I need to speak to you but I don't know when you're free and I have to work. what should I do????*

### Example #2:

*Date: January 29, 2012*

*To: Professor Shmo*

*From: - - -*

*Subject: Office Hours (ENG 112)*

*Professor Shmo,*

*I would like to speak with you to discuss my ideas for the upcoming essay. I see your office hours, according to the syllabus, are M and W 3-5:00, but I have to work during that time. Is it possible to make an appointment for a different day?*

*Thanks,*

*[a student who is on the right track]*

### Example #3:

*Date: November 2, 2011*

*To: Professor Shmo*

*From: - - -*

*Subject: Office Hours (ENG 112)*

*Professor Shmo,*

*I would like to speak with you to discuss my ideas for the upcoming essay. I'm having trouble narrowing my thesis, and I still feel confused about how I'm using Plato's idea of the cave in the second half of the paper.*

*I see your office hours, according to the syllabus, are M and W 3-5:00, but I have to work during that time. Would it be possible to make an appointment for a different day? I'm available on Tuesday mornings until 12:00 and again on Thursdays from 1-4:00.*

*Thanks,*

*[a student who is also on the right track, and is getting more done with her emails]*

**Some Do's and Don'ts:**

- ***Don't* use your personal email address.** Use your southernct.edu address for all school emails, and check your account regularly.
  
- *Don't* be overly formal. You can be polite and respectful while retaining a human voice in your emails.
  
- *Don't* email about information that is **readily** available to you on the materials you've already been given: due dates listed on the syllabus, contact information on the syllabus, etc.
  
- *Do* find ways you can make your emails efficient with those to whom you're writing. If listing, for example, the dates and times you are available to meet cuts out an extra email or two wondering what date and time you could possibly meet, that's good. If mentioning the specific questions you have for an instructor helps you be more productive at that meeting, that's even better.
  
- *Do* feel free to email your professors when you have a genuine question or concern. It's time to get comfortable with this form of communication.
  
- *Do* experiment with tone and style as you're getting started in college. An email to a professor or another person does not have to be a work of art!