OFFICE POLICIES

Dr. Kisting

I am always glad to meet with students in my office, but too many students come ill-prepared for productive discussion. Before scheduling an office meeting, please read these policies so you know what to expect, and what I expect from you.

Scheduled appointments receive priority. You’re welcome to visit my office hours unannounced, but priority must be given to students who have an appointment. To avoid waiting or being turned away, schedule an appointment in advance.

Give serious consideration to the assignment before seeking my help. It is deeply discourteous to ask for help without first giving serious thought to the assignment. I can’t help you unless you give me something substantial to work with. Before you visit my office, contemplate and write down several ideas that might be worth pursuing.

Bring a typed draft—the more complete the better. The more work you do prior to our meeting, the more productive we will be. When you visit, bring a typed draft of your assignment so I can see how your ideas are taking shape and give you specific feedback.

Expect questions and suggestions, not answers. I won’t do the work for you by telling you what to write. That is your responsibility. But I will offer thoughtful questions and suggestions to help you develop your ideas and address serious deficiencies.

Come prepared to take notes. Imagine that you had to explain a complex recipe, but none of your listeners took notes. Wouldn’t you feel frustrated knowing that they won’t remember all of the ingredients later? That’s how I feel when I give valuable feedback to a student who doesn’t write down my suggestions. If you really want my help, bring a notepad and take notes.

Plan to revise, not merely "approve" your draft. There is always room to improve, even if you think you’ve already formulated excellent ideas. Never bring me a draft to ask if it is "good enough" to pass or earn a high grade. I will not assess an assignment until the final draft is submitted. In the meantime, use my feedback to continue revising. Even if I compliment the strength of your draft, I expect to see evidence of real revision in your final draft.

I am not a printing or proofreading service. Do not send me your draft and ask me to "get back to you" with my comments. Discussions of drafts belong in office hours. Bring a typed draft to read over together. I’ll offer suggestions while you take notes. I will not "mark up" your draft with corrections. If you struggle with the basic mechanics of writing, visit the Writing Center.

No last-minute meetings. I will not discuss your draft less than 48 hours before the deadline. If you’re serious about seeking my assistance to improve your work, meet with me at least two days before the due date, preferably sooner. This ensures adequate time for thoughtful revision. It also discourages putting off work until the last minute.

I do not negotiate Course Policies. Some students ask me to make exceptions to the Course Policies, but I only do so in truly rare and extraordinary cases, and only for students who have demonstrated consistent, diligent effort throughout the semester. If you have questions about policies, read the Frequently Asked Questions below to see if your question has been answered. If you find no answer, schedule an office meeting, but do not expect me to adjust or excuse you from the policies or assigned work without a truly compelling reason.
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
Dr. Kisting

I missed today's quiz, peer review, or in-class activity. How can I make it up? You can't. Stop missing.

I'm not prepared for class today. What should I do? Ask yourself if you're willing to devote adequate effort to this course. If you are unsure, give serious thought to withdrawing. If you are not fully committed to this course, it will negatively affect the course experience for everyone. Don't be that person.

I just exceeded the maximum number of absences. What should I do? You can withdraw from the course, or I can withdraw you. You knew the limit and were warned to use your allotted absences wisely.

Why can't I just make up the classes I've missed? Discussion is indispensable to this course. There is no way to “recreate” discussions that you miss. The allotted absences should be plenty if you use them wisely.

What can I possibly do to help my classmates revise and improve their writing? You know the difference between a clear, persuasive argument and one that leaves you confused or unconvinced. If you read carefully, ask sincere questions, and give honest feedback, you will be very helpful.

What if the peer reviews aren't giving me enough help? Make an appointment to meet with me in my office.

I can't make it to office hours to discuss my writing. What can I do? Ask if I'm available at another time, visit the Writing Center, or ask a peer to read and comment on your paper. I strongly recommend doing all of these.

I'm really busy. Can't you just write out your comments and get back to me? No. I'm really busy too. Make an appointment to discuss your essay in my office, which is the most productive way for you to get feedback.

I'm not satisfied with my grade. Can I rewrite for a higher grade or earn extra credit? Your opportunities to revise and improve your grade occur before the due date, not after. Apply your "extra" effort to the regularly scheduled assignments, and meet with me to discuss how you can improve on subsequent assignments.

One of my other professors read my draft and said it was good. You gave me a "C". What gives? Your other professor does not set the expectations in this course and cannot assess what grade your essay should receive. Your essay may indeed be "good," yet still deserve a "C". If you are confused about my expectations or my grading standards, schedule a meeting with me—preferably before the assignment is due.

I'm working really hard, but I'm still not satisfied with my grade. What can I do? Hard work is a basic expectation of this, or any, college course. To truly excel, you must apply that hard work in productive ways: (1) start each assignment early, (2) ask questions if any part of the assignment seems unclear, (3) participate in all peer review sessions, (4) visit the Writing Center multiple times, (5) discuss your draft with me at least once, (6) revise through several drafts, and (7) consult the "Writing Effective Essays" guide.

I did everything you suggested. Why didn't I get an "A" or "B"? Effort cannot guarantee a high grade. Writing is a sophisticated art. It comes quickly to some and slowly to others. Although it matters immensely to your success, your effort level does not dictate your grade. Your grade is based on what you actually fulfill the specific expectations for writing, research, and interpretation in this course.

So you're saying that my effort doesn't really matter? On the contrary: your effort matters immensely. But it is not sufficient to simply work hard. You must be proactive about seeking my guidance to ensure your hard work is actually fulfilling the specific expectations for writing, research, and interpretation in this course.

I forgot to cite some of my sources or didn't understand how to cite them. What happens now? You will be failed for plagiarism as described in the Course Policies. It was, and is, your responsibility to get informed in order to protect yourself from "accidental" cases. If you had any doubt or confusion regarding citation practices, you should have asked. Now it is too late. You've put yourself in a very serious situation.

I think the Course Policies are too strict. I'm not willing to abide by them. What should I do? Withdraw from this class and find another class with policies more to your liking. By remaining in this course, you are agreeing to abide by all course policies.

Why are your policies so strict? To prevent any confusion and to prepare you realistically for the professional world. I make my expectations clear so that you will not inadvertently jeopardize your grade by mistaking or underestimating what I am asking of you.

Why should I stay in a course with such high expectations? Life is full of people who expect too little from you. Only those who demand a lot will truly force you to learn and grow. If you measure your success only in narrow terms of a GPA, you should seek out an “easier” course. If you want to learn something and “own” that knowledge, throw yourself into this course, prepare to be challenged, visit my office, and get ready to grow. If your commitment is genuine, you will come out much better for the experience—probably with a respectable GPA, too.