Making the most of Professors’ Office Hours

Why

- Clarify course content
- Get study ideas
- Ask questions about the syllabus

When & How

- Visit early in the semester, not a week before the first exam.
- Ask specific questions – the meeting will be productive and you’ll learn more!
- Schedule a follow-up meeting if needed.

Preparation

- Signal your interest in an office visit. Email or talk to professor before or after class to check availability.
- If your schedule conflicts with office hours, contact the professor and ask for an appointment, offering a range of days and times you are available.
- Prepare questions beforehand. Even if you feel generally lost in the class, your professor will be better able to help if you offer specifics.
  
  EX: “I understand two parts of this problem or idea, but don’t know how to connect them.” This question not only shows that you attend class and read the material, but gives the professor direction.
- Bring whatever materials are appropriate: book, laptop, notes.

During the Appointment

- Take notes.
- Ask for clarification.
- Ask about supplemental readings that may help.
- Be honest. Say so if you aren’t following or need more examples.
- Sum up your take-away or action plan at the end of meeting.

Etiquette

- Be respectful. Arrive on time and introduce yourself.
- Address the professor by his or her last name with the appropriate title (Professor, Dr.).
- If you want to discuss an exam or paper grade you disagree with, don’t be mad! Discuss questions you missed on the test or what was lacking in your paper. Ask: “How can I improve my next test or paper grade?”
- Be aware that other students may be waiting.
- Thank the professor at the end of the meeting.

For further reading

Click Here!

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