Emailing Professors

There are certain formalities to use when emailing a professor so that your message is respectful and professional.

SUBJECT LINE:

TO: Use the email provided on the syllabus
FROM: You MUST use your WSU email address
SUBJECT: Use the class title/section and something to indicate the email's purpose

MESSAGE ITSELF:

Dear Professor X (← Use their title if they have one, like Dr.)

State your name and which class you are in. Professors teach multiple classes and sometimes multiple sections, so including specific information is helpful.

Next, state your purpose for writing. If it is a particular assignment that you have a question about, be sure to reference the formal name of the assignment, project, reading, or paper. It's important to include context to avoid any confusion. Then ask your question or state your concern.

Finally, close the email politely and thank them for their time. Keep it short and to the point. Your professor is a great resource, but they are also busy, so use their time (and your own) effectively.

EXAMPLE EMAIL:

To: k.smith@wsu.edu
From: butch.cougar@wsu.edu
Subject: Communications 101, Section 3, question about paper 2

Dear Professor Smith,

My name is Butch Cougar, and I am a student in your Comm 101 class, section 3.

I have a question about paper 2 on sociological imagination. The prompt states that I must use two quotations in each paragraph. Do these have to be from two different sources, or can I use the same source twice in one paragraph if it's relevant?

Thank you for your time,
Butch T. Cougar
butch.cougar@wsu.edu