COMMUNICATING WITH INSTRUCTORS

Communication Strategies with Instructors

1. Know what your goal is in concrete, specific terms. Examples; a grade change, requesting help on paper, etc.

2. Be as specific as possible and have examples in mind. Example; In your last lecture, I had trouble following the main idea when you talked about nuclear physics.

3. Bring relevant materials along (book, notes, test) to show you've done your homework.

4. Foresee--and prepare for--the probable response. Put yourself in the instructor's shoes.

5. Use "I" messages rather than labeling or making accusations. Example; "I'm having trouble following the lectures. Do you have any suggestions?" Rather than "You talk too fast." This connotes a productive, problem-solving approach.

6. Demonstrate an attitude of wanting to learn.

Role-Play Scenarios - Student Scripts

1. You are taking an introductory counseling skills course and have received excellent feedback from the instructor. You are considering a psychology major and possibly going on to graduate school. You would like more information about career options in psychology, graduate programs available at the University, and whether the instructor would write you a letter of recommendation.

2. You would like to know what you did wrong on the last chemistry quiz, on which you got a "D". You have been to see the T.A. during office hours but they weren't there. You went to a chemistry department tutor and there was such a long line you never got in. You are now at the professor's office hour and would like to go over your test. You would also like to give them feedback about the difficulty of getting help.

3. You are taking Intro to Contemporary American Literature and the first test is next week. You have no idea what you should be underlining or taking notes on from the novels you are reading. The professor has given you no information about the format of the test or what to study. Lectures appear to digress infinitely with no main point or organization. You have made an appointment to discuss these concerns. You have taken the prerequisite, Intro to Literature course.

4. You are a political science major who really likes your Current Issues professor. You would like to talk with them about current issues happening in the U.S and through foreign policy. In addition, you would like to get to know and be known by a faculty member in the department. You are also curious about what Political Science majors do after they graduate.