

## Some profs: Informal, oddball e-mail blurs lines of etiquette

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STAFF WRITER

According to a New York Times article, it might not only be e-mail that leads students to be informal with their professors.

"I don't know if students have become more informal, demanding, inappropriate with the advent of e-mail," said Neil Levens, a USC psychology professor. "I suspect that if e-mail did not exist those students would still find ways to be inappropriate."

Levens agrees with the article's sentiment that American culture might be to blame.

"E-mail feeds into the whole 'consumerism' culture. We want and often get our consumer goods right now, so students may assume that it is appropriate and even their right to have 'access' to their professor right now," Levens said. "(students) don't understand that we are people who teach other classes, conduct research, participate in committees, and have families."

E-mail might be helping students to be informal with their professors, but for some, that is the goal.

"My goal in using e-mail with students is to have them be more informal," said Kent Sidel, a journalism professor. "My intro mass comm classes can reach 200 students. In-class student participation and questions are limited by the size of the class, so e-mail becomes a way in which I can get to know and relate to student issues and concerns."

However, most professors have rules for their students when it comes to e-mail.

"My guiding rule in replying to all students is,

would I be comfortable seeing what I just wrote in tomorrow morning's Metro section of The State newspaper?" Sidel said.

Chemical engineering professor Edward Gatzke has a few rules for all students ranging from etiquette to suggestions for the business world.

"Always assume anyone and everyone will see your e-mail or IM message or posting. E-mail can be forwarded and IM logs get copied," he said.

He also suggests that students wait until tomorrow to send angry e-mails. "You generally cannot get e-mail back once you hit send," he said.

To avoid confusion and uncomfortable situations, Gatzke suggests students get a "business account" to use for e-mailing professors or looking for work.

"Super-sexy-mamma@yahoo.com" may not be appropriate for class communication or when looking for a job," Gatzke said.

When it comes to contacting professors directly, students should "avoid forwarding racy e-mail to your professors. This puts them in an awkward position," Gatzke said.

English Professor Thomas Rice agrees. Rice said he could think of one instance where a student took e-mail too far.

"Some student sent me an inane link to some ultra-conservative, right-wing political Web site," Rice said. "I used this as an opportunity to discuss with the student the importance of developing some analytical insight, or just the ability to think for oneself."

Despite the risks, e-mail

can be a big help to students outside of the classroom.

"I did have one student in the past who was having some serious issues outside of class involving domestic violence," Levens said. "She was afraid to use her phone, but she was able to communicate with me through e-mail. I got her in touch with people to help her. I don't know what the final outcome was, but I would like to believe that she received the help she needed."

E-mail might cause headaches for some professors, but most students don't think about it too much.

"I think it's great that I can e-mail professors because due to my schedule I can't make any of my professors' office hours, so it's really convenient," said first-year international studies student Mike Perlmutter.

However, most students also try to maintain some kind of formality when speaking with their professors.

"I try to be formal with them because it seems kind of rude (to be informal) when asking them for help," Perlmutter said.

Gatzke suggests students remember that things are not thrown away on the Internet.

"Your 'web presence' can be used against you. Employers sometimes 'Google' your name looking to see what tracks you have left," Gatzke said.

Gatzke said he is not bothered by informality, but believes "it is good practice for students to act professionally."

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### LAW • CONTINUED FROM 5

W. Wilkins in response to Barghaan's comment.

The final case, Clemente v. Roth, involved an improper but consensual sexual relationship between a plastic surgeon and a patient. Joseph Clemente, on behalf of his deceased wife Paige, contended that Dr. Charles Cardany was medically negligent and that the National Health Institution was at fault for credentialing Dr. Cardany as a contract physician.

After taking questions from the audience, Judge

Shedd said students did USC proud by attending.

"I just wanted to say you did yourself proud and the USC Law School proud today," Shedd said. "I've been to many oral arguments at other schools and only a dozen students show up." Approximately 300 people

were in attendance. Judge Karen J. Williams said that she was happy to be back at her alma mater.

"I have a great love for the USC School of Law," Williams said.

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### KILBOURNE • CONTINUED FROM 2

Jerry," she said. Kilbourne presented several slides with ads from magazines targeting corporations in the advertising industries magazine.

An ad sponsored by Family Circle magazine read, "To alcoholic beverage marketing executives: Women make up 48 percent of your market. You need to reach our 16 million to earn your market share."

Kilbourne said the audience shouldn't trust advertising-reliant news sources.

"You can't get accurate information from a media which is dependent on the goodwill of advertisers," she said.

Kilbourne encouraged the audience to look at the ads that target them daily.

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