OFFICE HOURS

in 3 EASY STEPS

WHY GO TO OFFICE HOURS?
- It demonstrates commitment & effort
- It can help you learn how to succeed in the course & learn the course material
- It helps you get to know the professor
- It helps the professor get to know you
- It demonstrates your interest in the academic discipline or department

Usually, professors list their office hours on the course syllabi. Put the times and locations in your calendar, and attend office hours as a part of your weekly routine.

STEP #1: Arrive & introduce yourself.

STEP #2: Bring three questions to discuss with the professor.
Examples include:

Course content: identify specific concepts that you struggle to understand

Course assignments:
- Problem sets: try a few problems before office hours and bring your questions
- Planning for long-term assignments (e.g. term papers):
  o Float a topic idea
  o Share your research plan

Feedback: get more detailed feedback on your performance in the course (papers, labs, exams, class participation) so that you can improve or be more strategic in the future

Bigger picture: ask for advice related to your overall interest in the discipline
- Planning a major
- Finding summer research or work opportunities
- Ask about a professor’s current research. You might try looking it up online beforehand.
STEP #3: Thank them for their time & leave.

What if you have class or another academic schedule conflict during the professor’s office hours?

You might ask your professor about scheduling a meeting with them at a time other than office hours. If you email your professor, use formal language in your message (“Dear Professor ___, …”)

More questions about office hours?

Try asking:
- Your professors & instructors
- SAMs (Student Academic Mentors) or peer department clinic leaders
- Dean’s staff, including your class dean or an academic dean

This info sheet was developed collaboratively by professors, SAMs, and dean’s staff.

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