Fire Service Training, LLC
Netiquette Guidelines for Online/Blended Courses

Many students do not have familiarity with interactions in an online learning environment. To help guide these interactions, a special set of rules called netiquette has emerged for communications in an online environment. The following is a list of basic netiquette rules to follow for discussion boards, online chats, or e-mail communications:

- Before posting on discussion boards, read prior messages to get an idea of what is being discussed and the flow of ideas.

- Always title messages with an appropriate subject line. Do not start new discussions with the same heading as a previous unrelated topic. If you are changing subjects, create a new subject line.

- Always check spelling before posting in discussions or sending e-mails. Your message may be the first impression others have of you, make it a good impression. Appropriate spelling and grammar is a valuable tool for that impression.

- Do not use ALL CAPS. This gives the impression of shouting. Capitalize only to highlight important points or for headings.

- Keep messages short and to the point.

- Know what you are talking about. Make sure any postings contain correct information and contribute to the discussion.

- Cite all quotes and information; respect copyrights and other intellectual property rights.

- When you present a controversial viewpoint, state that it is your viewpoint. If it is someone else's viewpoint, state that as well.

- Treat others in a respectful and polite manner; do not post or e-mail things you would not say face-to-face.

- Stay calm and do not get offended too easily. Remember that emotion and inflection are very difficult to convey and interpret in an online environment. If you feel the need to submit an angry post or message, take a break. Come back to the message a few hours later, and try to see the message from a different viewpoint.

- When quoting the postings of others, edit out any portions not appropriate to your reply.

- Do not send "Thank you," "Me too," or similar posts to discussion boards. Ensure your postings provide thoughtful insight to the discussion. If you feel the need to thank someone for their information, a private message is appropriate and more appreciated by the recipient.
- Discussion boards, discussion forums, and course-related e-mails are professional interactions. Avoid the use of slang and unnecessary jargon when communicating in these formats, and avoid the use of "texting" abbreviations (i.e. "u" instead of "you".)

References

Netiquette Guidelines
http://www.cgspitt.org/medialibrary/File/Tips_For_Success/TipsforSuccess_Netiquette.pdf

Netiquette Guide for Online Courses

http://teach.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/NetiquetteGuideforOnlineCourses.pdf