

.....Professionalism Marks - How They Work, How to Earn and Lose Them

I was dissatisfied with the traditional “participation” mark because I don’t think it reflects all the behaviours that go into successfully participating - truly contributing - to a class. I also think that what we try to teach in university is not just the course content, but the skills and perspectives that will allow students to succeed and thrive in other courses, graduate school, and eventually employment. If you are university-educated, that should show in the maturity with which you approach your work and your world. Although this is not a definitive list, use this as a guideline to how to earn and lose marks in this very important area of class citizenship.

Earn:

- Attend all classes. If you aren’t there, how can you contribute?
- Arrive for all classes on time and ready to work (with writing implements, notebooks, etc.) - this way we can start promptly and make the best use of our time together
- Listen - to the instructor and others. This way we don’t have to spend time answering questions that have already been answered.
- Ask thoughtful questions. Some people say there are no bad questions. I think a bad question is one which has just been answered, but you missed it because you were talking to someone else at the time.
- Ask questions that convey the idea that you are interested in the material, not “a mark” or “is this on the exam?” Everything is “on the exam” unless explicitly stated otherwise
- Ask questions about assignments well in advance, so that everyone can benefit from clarification and advance preparation
- Read the syllabus carefully before formulating questions - don’t waste everyone’s time on something that is readily available in written format and provided to you so that we don’t have to spend class time covering it
- Bring up points for discussion that will engage and involve other members in the class
- Treat others, especially others whose opinions differ from yours, with thoughtful respect
- Let the instructor know if library materials, web materials, or other course tools are malfunctioning, not on reserve, missing, etc.

Lose:

- Fail to attend class without letting the instructor know in advance of your illness
- Arrive late. Think about it - this distracts everyone who is trying to concentrate on the class content
- Talk while someone else is talking - the instructor or another classmate
- Fail to pull your weight on group assignments
- Fail to respond to emails asking you for information that is needed by the instructor or the whole class (i.e. we’re trying to schedule a review session - please let us know when you are available. Or, the instructor needs to confirm that he or she has not received an assignment from you - let the instructor know)
- Treat others with disrespect, which includes ignoring them when they are talking or asking a question
- Hoard library or other materials needed by other students

These are just some of the things that you can do to earn or lose points. Email the instructor if you can think of other ways that students can help (or hinder) the class.

