Template: Emailing my Professor

(Adapted from <https://medium.com/@lportwoodstacer/how-to-email-your-professor-without-being-annoying-af-cf64ae0e4087>)

General rules:

Professors want to hear from their students and assist them in getting answers to their questions, explain a topic from class, or in finding a suitable space to conduct research. So do reach out. But when reaching out, remember that a certain formality, in particular in the first communication, is expected. Learning this will help you not just in getting the professor’s attention, but also in developing the professional communication skills you will need in your career post-graduation. Communication, including email communication, is depending upon intended audience

1. Avoid language that is too informal.
2. Avoid writing as if it’s a text or social media post.
3. Edit and proof-read for misspellings, typos.
4. Make sure you use the professor’s correct name, spelled correctly.
5. Use your UCSD email or other appropriate email, such as for example [version of name]@gmail.com.

**1: Headline:** Inquiry re. BISP 199 Opportunity Studying [proposed research focus] /Final Exam BILD 4.

*(Be specific so the headline indicates the topic. Avoid informal greetings such as “hey” and avoid leaving out a topic)*

**2: Salutation and Honorific**: Dear Professor/Hello Dr. [Last Name] .

*(Using “Dear” as a greeting is generally a good choice but “hello” can also work. You should also address your professor with the appropriate title. If the professor indicates they prefer to be addressed differently, that is fine, but starting out more formal is always the safer choice)*

**3: Introduce Yourself and Connect to Professor:** I’m in your [class name]/ During your department seminar yesterday, we discussed [topic]*.*

*(Here, you make it clear how where you know the professor. If you have not met, you may state that you read their research, attended a lecture by them, or similar).*

**4: Topic/Inquiry:** My email today regards my interest in an Individual Research Project under BISP 199 in your lab. The focus of my proposed research would be […]/I’m writing today because the concept of […] is confusing to me. I have examined the reading […] and watched […] but it is still unclear. / As I was preparing for the […] assignment, I noted that […]. I looked in the syllabus and could not find the answer to […]

*(Here, you elaborate on the topic and the “why” of you communication to the professor. Indicate that you have done your homework such as knowing the basics of your research topic and why it relates to the research in the lab of the professor or that you have examined syllabus and course material.)*

**5: Requested Action:** I’ll be looking much forward to your answer as to whether this is a research project I could potentially pursue in your lab/If you could let me know whether the assignment should be […] or […], I would much appreciate it/The form is attached and I would much appreciate it if you would submit it by…

*(Here, you let the professor know if there is a specific action you would like them to complete. Be polite and remember professors are busy people, so try to make the request well in advance of when it has to be completed)*

**6: Sign-off:** Sincerely/Best regards, Thank you/, [Your name].

*(Make sure to include both a sign-off and your name.)*