



***Welcome,
International Students!***

Fall 2020

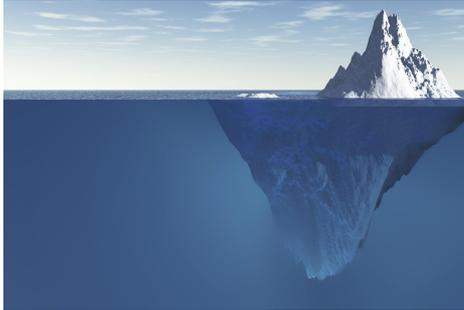
***US Culture
In and Out of the
Classroom***

U.S. Culture “Out” of the Classroom

What is Culture?

Observable

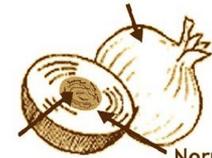
- Behaviors
- Appearance
- Habits
- Language
- Customs



Non-Observable

- Learning styles
- Concept of time
- Thought process
- Norms
- Values

Visual Cultural Differences



Language
Housing
Food
Clothes

Key Beliefs

Not so visible but has an effect on determining behaviour at a more superficial level

Norms and Values

greetings
bow, shake hands



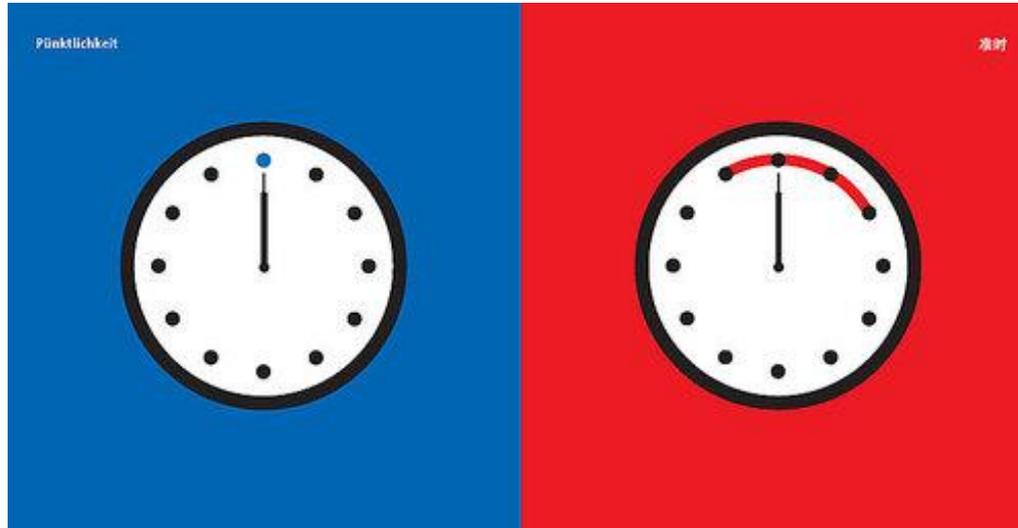
Intercultural Competence

a set of cognitive, affective and behavioral skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of contexts.

– Jannet M. Bennett, Ph.D.

U.S. Culture

Cultural Differences - Time



Cultural Differences - Time

Monochronic

- Time is a commodity – “don’t waste time,” “time is money”
- Be **prompt**, don’t be late
- Start on time and end on time
- Time is scheduled and organized **for one thing at a time**
- Time divided into blocks using a **calendar** or **clock**
- Appointments and **scheduled** events are taken seriously
- Cultural emphasis on **efficiency**

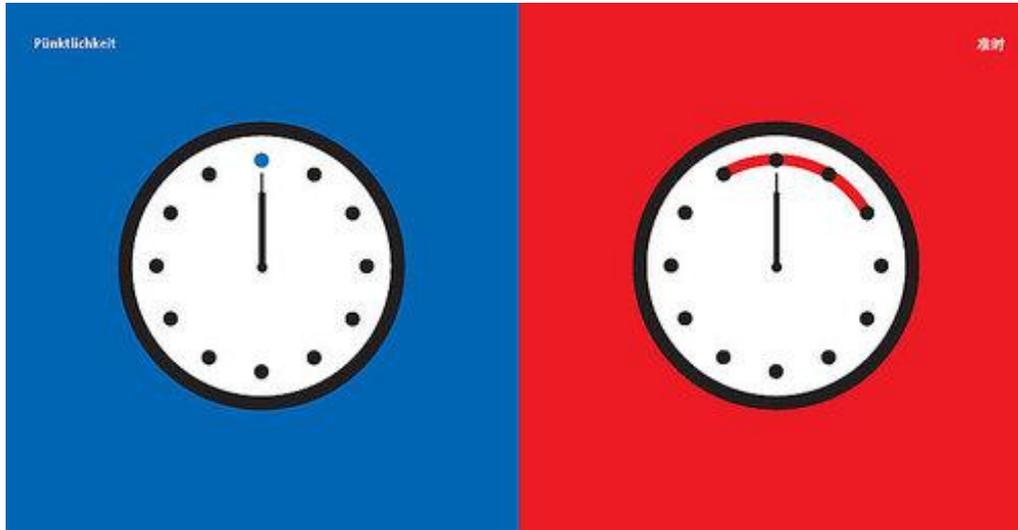
Polychronic

- Time is **flexible, fluid**
- Time varies with the season or because of religious festivals.
- Easier to **change** or **adapt** when plans change
- Go **until it is finished**, not until the time finished
- Time commitments based on value of **relationship**
- Many Polychronic cultures value relationships and an unexpected visit will change the schedule.

Deadlines!

In a monochronic culture (i.e. the U.S.), not completing a project or task can be a very serious offense.

Cultural Differences - Time



Cultural Differences - Time



Here we find two friends who are making plans to socialize over the weekend. One is a U.S. student, the other is an international student. It is taking a lot of planning for them to set a date. Then, something happens when they are to meet. See if you think they have the same understanding of the function of time.

Cultural Differences - Time



Josh: Okay, Arti, so let's figure out a good time to meet. I'm eager to try the new coffee place in Soho. What works for you?

Arti: Well, I'm going to the movies with my roommate Friday and have plans most of the day on Saturday. Otherwise, I'm free. When do you want to meet?

Josh: *(pulls out their phone)* Let's see, Friday night is no good. Saturday morning I'm planning to work out at Coles, so I have to stay on schedule for that. And then my Mom wants to meet for lunch, but Saturday afternoon looks good – oh wait, no, I have to go watch my brother's baseball game. Hold on here, hold on.

In the meantime, Arti is starting to look a bit – amused? Impatient?

Arti: Maybe we should schedule the coffee for one month from now!

Josh: No, no, I'm sure we can do it this weekend. Let's see, here, why don't we meet Sunday? I get out of church at 11:00 a.m., so I can meet you at 11:30 in Soho. How's that?

Arti: Fine with me, see you on Sunday!

Cultural Differences - Time



It is Sunday and Josh is in the coffee shop at 11:25. He looks around.

Josh: Man, it's almost 11:30. I wonder where Arti is. I hope she gets here soon.

He waits some more, looking impatient. Finally, it is 11:30.

Josh: Okay, now it's 11:30. I'm sure she's on the way, but let me call her, just in case. (He pulls out his cell phone and calls, getting her machine.) Oh – answering machine – Arti, it's Josh. It's 11:30. I hope you're here soon. I'm waiting. Okay, bye.

Time passes and now it's 11:35.

Josh: I can't believe this. She's going to stand me up. How could Arti do that? She's my friend and she knows how busy I am. I'll give her two more minutes.

Josh.: Well, it's 11:40. I'm supposed to go to a study group this afternoon, plus I have a tennis class. I hope Arti is okay, but I can't wait any longer. *(Josh gets up and leaves.)*

A minute later Arti walks in and sits down.

Arti: Wow, I can't believe I'm here first! Won't Josh be surprised when he gets here. I guess I'll go ahead and order a cappuccino while I wait.

Cultural Differences - Time



Discussion Questions (Please type your answers in the chat box):

What U.S. Cultural value is being examined here?

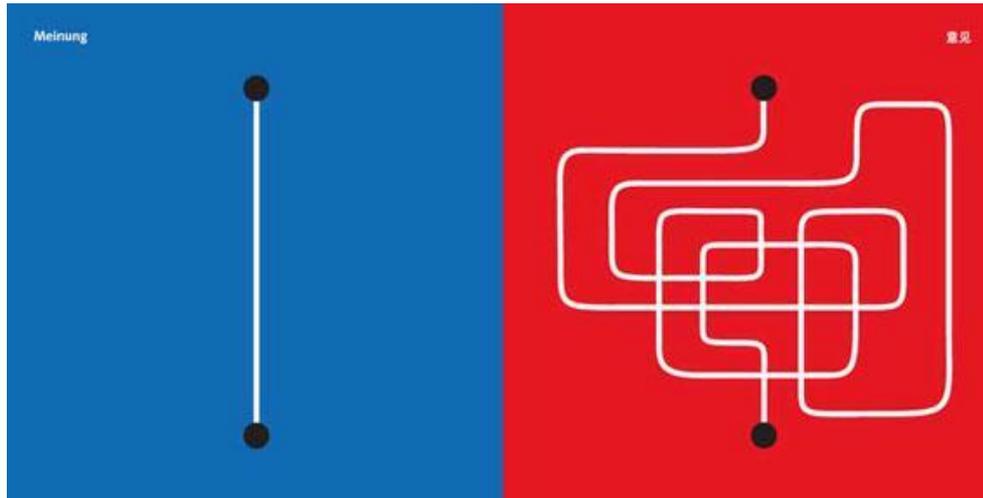
What does being “on time” mean at home vs being on time in the US?

Is the U.S. student’s behavior typical?

Remember:

- Make sure to ask clarifying questions if you are unsure. It’s best that both parties understand what is happening and what is expected of them.
- For virtual learning it’s also important to remember that there are multiple time zones within the continental US (Eastern, Central, Mountain, Pacific). If you are doing a group assignment, you and your classmates would need to coordinate between your country’s time zone and their time zone in the US.

Cultural Differences - Communication



Cultural Differences - Communication

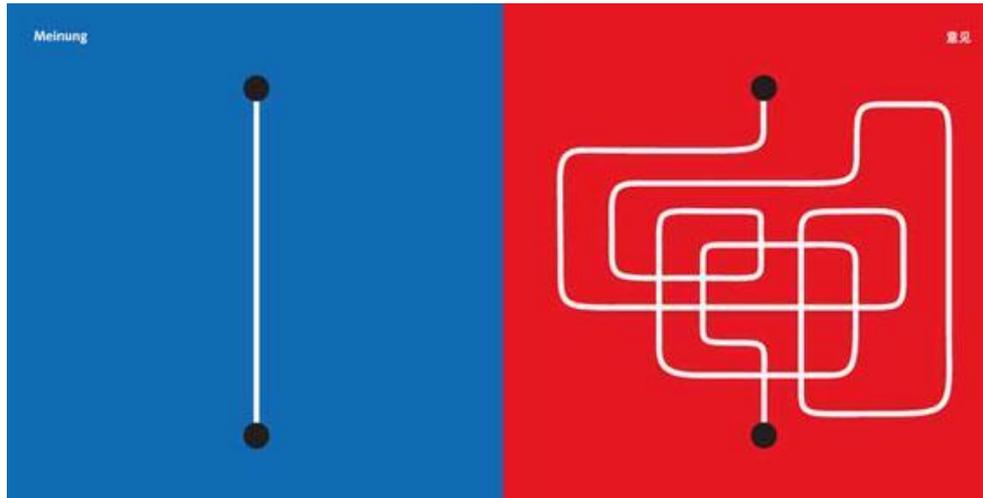
Direct

- Emphasis on words
- Instructions are **explicit**, less room for interpretation
- Focus of communication is on the **task**, not the relationship.
- More **formal, written** communication
- Most **policies are written and made public**
- Business conducted by **email and phone**
- Criticism is given **privately**

Indirect

- It's **how** you say it, **not what** you say!
- Emphasis on **tone of voice, body language, silence** etc..
- **Details and relationships** between communicators more important – **power distance**
- Business conducted **in person**
- Often times the key point or request is **unspoken** and not written but expected to be understood
- Often uses story telling to make key point

Cultural Differences - Communication



Cultural Differences - Communication



In this scene, we will see one example of how a staff member and a student interact. The student is trying to get help and the staff person is answering the phone and the student's questions. How does the student express that they need help and is the staff member helpful?

Cultural Differences - Communication



Arti: Hello, welcome! How can I help you today?

Josh: Hello, my name is _____. I'm a new student from South Africa and I just arrived last week. I'm studying at the business school and...

Phone Rings

Arti: Excuse me please, I need to get the phone. *(Staff is busy for several minutes while the student looks around. Finally, returns attention to the student.)*
Yes, now how can I help you?

Josh: Well, as I was saying, I'm a new student at the business school and

Arti: I'm sorry, but can you tell me what your question is?

Josh: Oh, well, I wanted to know the deadline to submit my application.

Arti: Okay, that's easy to answer! Have you had a chance to review our website?

Josh: Oh, no. I thought I would just come and ask.

Cultural Differences - Communication



Arti: That's fine. First, please review this sheet of paper, it has all the deadline information on it.

Josh: So, the deadline is September 15?

Arti: Yes, that is the final deadline.

Josh: And what items do I need to bring for the application?

Arti: There are five things you need to submit. They are listed on the back of that handout and on our website.

Josh: Oh, I see, and do they need to be original documents or are photocopies acceptable?

Arti: Please sit and read that handout entirely. I'm sure everything you need to know is on there. I'm happy to answer any questions you may have after reading through it!

Cultural Differences - Communication



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Cultural Differences - Communication



Discussion Questions (Please type your answers in the chat box):

Was the staff member rude or was she straightforward?

Did the student need too much help?

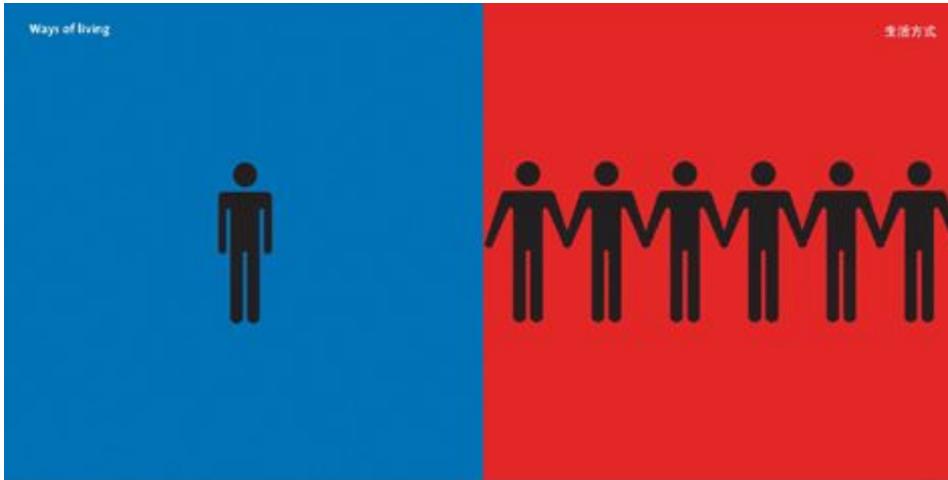
What can you do or say if you need more help than you are receiving?

In the U.S., you are often expected to investigate for the information you need on your own. Also in the U.S., it is common that much important information is put in writing, so you do not have to speak to someone directly to find out something vital. Therefore, it's important to realize that in this culture, someone may be providing you what they believe to be acceptable help by handing you written instructions or referring you to a Web site.

Remember:

- Make sure to ask clarifying questions if you are unsure.
- This is also applicable in the classroom. Check your syllabus for example outlines all the necessary assignment deadlines and expectations for your class. While it is encouraged to ask the professor to clarify certain points, it's important to first read through the syllabus.

Cultural Differences – Relationships



Cultural Differences – The Individual

Individualism

- People are viewed as **individuals** before they are viewed as group members
- Parents and teachers want to help people become **independent**
- Speak about “I”
- Emphasis on truth telling.
- People have their **own needs** and need to be **alone**
- Success of the **individual** is the most important

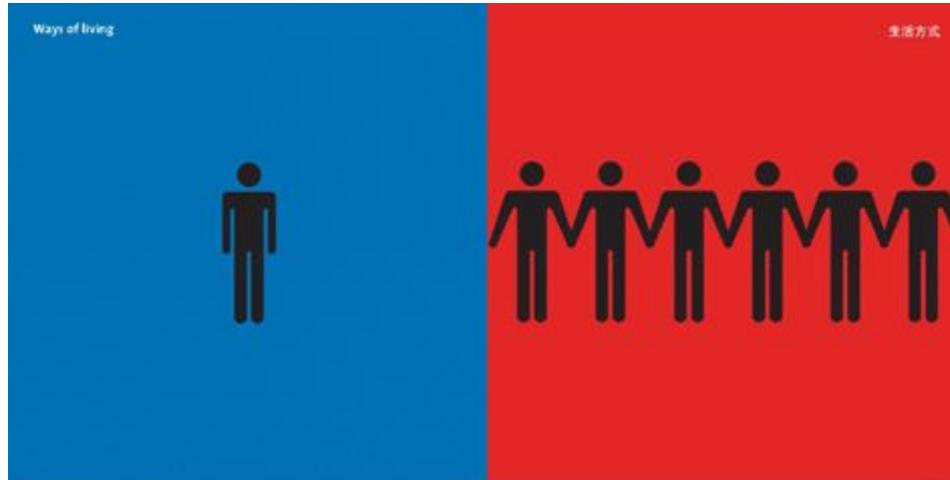
Collectivism

- Sum of the parts is more valuable than any one individual
- Parents and teachers want to help young people feel **safe** and that they will never have to be alone
- The needs of the **larger group/family** are more important than an individuals needs
- Success of the **group/family** is most important
- Goal of parenting and mentoring is **develop loyalty** to the **family** or social **group**

Collectivism and Individualism Working Together

- People from collectivist cultures might need to limit the expectations they have of receiving help from others and do more for themselves
- People from collectivist cultures may enjoy the new freedom of having fewer obligations.

Cultural Differences – The Individual



Cultural Differences - The Individual



Josh is an international student, their roommate Arti is from the U.S. The two get along well and go to the Coles Sports Center together once a week to a yoga class. They are both Ph.D. students and have a lot of pressure to do well in their studies. Arti, the U.S. student, has noticed that Josh, the international student, doesn't seem to be as happy the past week. Arti finally takes the opportunity to talk to Josh.

Cultural Differences - The Individual



Arti: Hey Josh, I was waiting for you to get back from the library. You know our yoga class is in thirty minutes. I'll wait for you to get ready.

Josh: Hi Arti. Actually, maybe you can go to the yoga class without me.

Arti: What do you mean? We always go to class together! It's our stress break!

Josh: I just don't have the time today.

Arti: I'm worried about you. You've been very quiet this past week and spending more time at the library. I've hardly seen you. I really want to spend time together. Are you mad at me?

Josh: No, I'm not mad at you. I'm just busy.

Arti: I'm worried something's wrong. Do you want to talk about it?

Josh: No, thank you. I don't want to discuss it.

Cultural Differences - The Individual



Arti: You may not want to talk to me, but did you know there are counselors here you can talk to?

Josh: Oh, I'm able to solve my problems on my own. Thank you for your concern.

Arti: Really, counseling can be good. I went last year when I was worried about my grades. They're really nice and it's totally confidential.

Josh: Well, even if I did go there, I wouldn't ever want anyone to know.

Arti: They won't! The counselors are forbidden to share information with anyone else about your visits there. Not even your family can find out about it.

Josh: Really, not even my parents? Even though they pay my tuition? Well, maybe I will think about this. Thank you for the suggestion.

Cultural Differences - The Individual



Discussion Questions (Please type your answers in the chat box):

What happened here? Is the U.S. student being helpful?

A value exhibited here is self-help. The U.S. student is trying to think of ways that the international student can get better by taking action on her own.

Another value exhibited: People are individuals and have the right to privacy and independence. This value can be taken to what some may see as extreme measures, preventing family or friends from obtaining information about someone without their written consent, for example, physical or mental health records.

Remember:

- It's ok to ask for help whether it is academic help or help for personal or mental health problems.
- UMBC's Counseling Center has resources and counseling services available to students in the Maryland area. If you are currently outside of Maryland, the Counseling Center's Welltrack (umbc.welltrack.com/) tool is great for monitoring your mental health

US Classrooms

- US American Value: equality
- Meeting leader values input from participants- learn from each other
- Participants actively engage in class discussion by sharing their thoughts and personal perspective
- Normal for participants to ask questions when they don't understand or disagree; encouraged to challenge authority
- Don't forget to step up and step back when appropriate



1. What do you call the two 15-week periods that make up an Academic Year (August – May)?

- a) Terms
- b) Semesters
- c) Your worst nightmare
- d) The best days of your life

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2. What is the average number of credit hours for most courses you will take?

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Courses: 1-4 Credit Hours – Most courses are 3 credit hours

****Remember****

For students in the U.S.:

Undergraduates are required to enroll in a minimum of 12 credits.

Graduates are are required to enroll in a minimum of 9 credits.

For NEW students enrolling from outside the U.S.:

There are no credit requirements

3. A syllabus is a contract between students and professors. This document is given at the beginning of each course.

Which of the following would likely NOT be found on a syllabus?

- a) Professor's name & contact information
- b) Your classmates' names & contact information
- c) List of assignments
- d) Class location
- e) Class day/time
- f) List of readings
- g) Class Policies
- h) Expectations
- i) Office hours
- j) Exam schedules
- k) Exam answer keys
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4. Where would I find a syllabus?

- A) In my email inbox
- B) In my mailbox/P.O. Box at home
- C) In the library
- D) On BlackBoard

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- C) In the library
- D) **On Blackboard**

5. What are the most commonly accepted ways to address your professor?

Mark all that apply.

a) Professor

e) Doctor

b) Teacher

f) Captain

c) Auntie/Uncle

g) First Name

d) Master

h) Your Majesty

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6. True or False?

As soon as my last class of the semester is over, I can stop submitting assignments and studying!

6. False!

As soon as my last class of the semester is over, I can stop checking submitting assignments and studying!

You still have final exams and final assignments to complete! Don't forget to check your syllabus and remember - exam period is 12/10/2020 – 12/16/2020

7. Office hours are times when professors make themselves available for students outside of regular classroom hours.

Mark all reasons you might attend office hours.

- a) Introduce yourself
- b) You feel homesick
- c) Question on an assignment
- d) Question about the class
- e) Ask advice
- f) Your boyfriend/girlfriend broke up with you
- g) Ask the professor to speak more slowly/clearly in class
- h) You want to review your test results with the professor
- i) You want tips on how to prepare for an exam
- j) If you are struggling in the class
- k) If you are struggling with something outside the class
- l) Request a recommendation

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8(a) How often should you check your UMBC email account?

8(b) Where should you send an email if you have questions about your visa?

8(a) How often should you check your UMBC email account?

At least once a day

8(b) Where should you send an email if you have questions about your visa?

ies@umbc.edu

9. True or False?

Please explain.

If I go to class every day, but I never talk in class or participate in class discussion, I can still get an A in the class.

9. True AND False... it depends!

If I go to class every day, but I never talk in class or participate in class discussion, I can still get an A in the class.

Participation is *very often* part of your grade, but not *always*. Check your syllabus to see what is considered participation in a virtual environment.

10. In my college classes, I could be graded on...

Mark all that apply.

- a) How often I come to class
- b) How often I ask questions or speak in class
- c) My good looks
- d) My test scores
- e) The papers I write
- f) How well my classmates like me
- g) How well I work in a group with others
- h) My cool accent
- i) My presentation skills
- j) Projects I turn in
- k) Gifts I bring to my professor

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k) Gifts I bring to my professor

11. If I want to make a statement or ask a question in class, what is the appropriate way to do that?

- a) Wait for my professor to pause, then start speaking
- b) Raise my hand and wait for the professor to call on me
- c) Stand up and wait for the professor to call on me
- d) Start dancing and wait for the professor to call on me
- e) I should not ask questions during class, only after

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Remember: In a virtual classroom, this can also mean using the “Raise Hand” feature or Chat feature in platforms like WebEx, Zoom or Blackboard Collaborate. Please make sure to review your syllabus and follow your Professor’s participation guidelines.

12. True or False?

To write a research paper for a class, I should read academic articles, and then copy and paste the relevant information directly into my paper.

12. False!

To write a research paper for a class, I should read academic articles, and then copy and paste the relevant information directly into my paper.

**You must cite sources! Visit
UMBC's Citation Guide to prepare:
lib.guides.umbc.edu/citing**

13. When are your breaks (holidays – no class!) during Fall Semester?

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September 7th - Labor Day

November 26th - Thanksgiving Day

November 27th - American Indian Heritage Day

December 9th - Study Day

Go to **registrar.umbc.edu** and click on **Calendars & Deadlines** then **Academic Calendars**

Big exams and projects are often due right before breaks. Check your syllabus to make sure you're prepared!

14. There are many services on campus to support students' academic success. List as many academic support services as possible and why you might go there (what services do they offer).

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Office of Equity and Inclusion

Ensures compliance with sexual misconduct and non-discrimination laws, regulations

The Mosaic: Center for Culture and Diversity

Develops innovative programs that celebrate cultural diversity, equality, & social justice

The Women's Center

Advances gender equity through programming, support services & advocacy for marginalized groups

International Education Services Office

Provides activities, services and advising for international students, scholars & faculty

Academic Success Center

Provides centralized support services to all undergraduate students at UMBC

Graduate Student Association

Provides centralized support services to all graduate students at UMBC

UMBC Hillel	On campus incubator for students to experiment & create their ideal Jewish communal experience
Student Events Board	Student-led board that provides programming and events for the UMBC community
Career Center	Provides career & professional skills education, & applied learning opportunities
UMBC Campus Life	Facilitates a student-centered learning environment
Interfaith Center	Dedicated to creating, fostering, and supporting interfaith collaboration at UMBC
Pride Center	A welcoming, inclusive space for hanging out, meeting other LGBTQ+ students and allies, and hosting student group meetings and events
Counseling Center	Offers free and confidential mental health resources for UMBC students, faculty and staff (must be located in Maryland to utilize services)

15. True or False? Please explain.

This is an appropriate email sequence from a student to faculty or staff.

hey 



Angela Smith

to me 

4:00 am (2 days ago)

Sry I missed class yesterday, my friends took me to the beach. Did I miss anything important?

 Reply

 Forward

hey 



Angela Smith

to me 

8:00 am (2 days ago)

did you get my email?

Yes, I did.

No, I didn't.

Yes, I got it.

 Reply

 Forward

14. False!

This is NOT an appropriate way to communicate with faculty and staff. Here is a better example:

Missing CMSC 104 this Friday » Inbox x

 Angela Smith

12:45 PM (47 minutes ago)

to me ▾

Hello Professor,

I wanted to let you know in advance that I will miss class on Friday. I've already completed and submitted the required discussion due this Friday. Please let me know what I can do to make up the work or material I will miss.

Thank you!

Angela

 Reply

 Forward

Questions?

- Advisers are always available via email at ies@umbc.edu
- Our website: IES.UMBC.EDU - [Information for Admitted Students](#)
- Virtual Walk In Hours starting 8/31:
 - Monday, Wednesday, and Friday 10:00 am - 11:00 am EST
 - [Make An Appointment](#)



- See what we're up to! @UMBC_IES
#UMBCInternational

See you at our next session!

Orientation Session 2:

Wednesday, September 30th 8:30 am EST

Orientation Session 3:

Wednesday, December 2nd 9:00 am EST

Campus Resources and Contacts

Topic	Office	Website	Contact
Academic Calendar	Registrar's Office	registrar.umbc.edu	
Academic Help/Tutoring (Graduate)	Graduate Student Association	gsa.umbc.edu	Contact Form
Academic Help/Tutoring (Undergraduate)	Academic Success Center	academicsuccess.umbc.edu	academicsuccess@umbc.edu
Course/Academic Questions (Graduate)	Your Specific Department	Graduate School Programs List	
Course/Academic Questions (Biology)	Biology Department	Biology Department	bdarcey@umbc.edu
Course/Academic Questions (Chemistry)	Chemistry Department	Chemistry Department	pgagne1@umbc.edu
Course/Academic Questions (Computer Science/Electrical Engineering)	Computer Science Department	Computer Science Department	fliggins@umbc.edu
Course/Academic Questions (Data Science)	Data Science Department	Data Science Department	datascience-mps@umbc.edu
Course/Academic Questions (Information Systems)	Information Systems Department	Information Systems Department	keegan@umbc.edu

Campus Resources and Contacts

Topic	Office	Website	Contact
Course/Academic Questions(Physics)	Physics Department	Physics Department	jen.salmi@umbc.edu
Course/Academic Questions(Public Policy)	Public Policy Department	Public Policy Department	shelleym@umbc.edu
Course Registration/ Academic Questions (Undergraduate)	Registrar's Office, Academic Advisor	Registrar.umbc.edu / Advisor Directory	Registration Help
Course Registration Troubleshooting	Registrar's Office	Step by step registration guide	
Diversity and Inclusion/Campus Life	Initiatives for Identity, Inclusion & Belonging (I3B)	Initiatives for Identity, Inclusion & Belonging (I3B)	i3b@umbc.edu
Graduate Assistants - Assistantship Questions	Your Specific Department	Graduate School Programs List	
Immunizations/Health Insurance	University Health Services(UHS)	uhs.umbc.edu	uhs@umbc.edu
Off Campus Housing	Off Campus Student Services	ocss.umbc.edu	Staff Directory
Programming, Clubs, Activities	Student Events Board	Seb.umbc.edu or Student Organizations	studentevents@umbc.edu
Tuition and Billing/Payment	Student Business Services	sbs.umbc.edu	Contact Form