Etiquette for College Classes

1. Unlike high school students, college students pay for their courses. For this and other reasons, no student has the right to behave in the college classroom in ways that prevent other students from getting their money’s worth—from learning. Educators have identified specific classroom practices that generate a productive learning environment, and these have yielded standards for classroom conduct in the academic community. The following guidelines for behavior in college classes are provided for the benefit of students who are either new to the college environment or in need of a refresher.

2. Demonstrate respect for your classmates and the instructor at all times.

3. Be ready to begin work when class is scheduled to begin—take care of all personal business (finding a stapler, making phone calls, getting a drink, using the bathroom) ahead of time. Turn off alert sounds for cell phones, beepers, wrist watches, etc. before class begins. Remain in class until the scheduled ending time. If you cannot avoid leaving the classroom for a moment, come and go discreetly, with a minimum of disruption to others.

4. Do everything you can to avoid tardiness and/or early departure, both of which are disruptive to learning for both you and your classmates. If you absolutely must arrive late or leave early, come or go discreetly, with a minimum of disruption to others.

5. Bring all necessary materials—course texts and documents, notebook, pen or pencil.

6. Do not eat or sleep in class.

7. Pay attention to the business of the class. Taking notes facilitates concentration on class business. If you are distracted, sit quietly and do not disturb others. Your inability or willingness to attend to course work is no excuse for interfering with other students’ earning.

8. In most classes, if you wish to ask a question during lecture, you may raise your hand to engage the instructor’s attention. If s/he is reviewing assignments or otherwise giving instructions, you should save any questions you may have until s/he has finished presenting the information; most instructors will call for questions at that time.
9. You are encouraged to take an active role in discussion, to ask relevant questions of
the instructor and your classmates and to answer questions posed by the instructor
and by your classmates. You can ask for clarification, add additional support to
another student’s point, disagree and explain why, etc. Talk and listen to other
students, not just to the instructor.

10. Avoid speaking when you do not have the floor. Do not engage in side conversations
with people sitting near you, which other students routinely find extremely
annoying. Remain attentive to the business of the class at all times. If you must
communicate with another student when you do not have the floor, do so as quietly
and unobtrusively as possible, taking care not to disturb others.

11. Prepare for class so that you can participate. Do not take part in discussion if you
have not read the material under consideration. In the event that you are not
prepared, listen carefully to the informed discussion of those who are.

12. The instructor will moderate and direct full-class discussion. Because this is often a
relatively large discussion, it will sometimes be necessary for you to raise your hand
to indicate that you wish to contribute. Once the instructor has nodded or
otherwise acknowledged your raised hand, lower it and wait until you are given the
floor.

13. Do not dominate discussion; listening is every bit as important as talking. In
effective discussions, all participants speak a few times each. In ineffective
discussions, a few participants speak all the time.

14. Do not, under any circumstances, indulge in clownish or disrespectful behavior whose
primary purpose is to draw attention to you. Remember, students pay to take this
course, and no student has the right to behave in ways that prevent other students
from getting their money’s worth—from learning. If you encourage inappropriate
behavior in others, you are equally at fault.

15. Disruptive classroom behavior is that which a reasonable person would view as
substantially or repeatedly interfering with other students’ opportunities to learn.
Following are examples of behaviors considered disruptive at CSM and in the wider
academic community: “Persistent or gross acts of willful disobedience or defiance,”
“any behavior that causes a disruption of teaching and learning,” chronic lateness,
arriving late and/or leaving early, and abuse of computing and/or Internet
privileges. As at most colleges, at CSM the instructor has the right and
responsibility to protect all students’ rights to a productive learning environment.
Disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Repeat offenders will be barred from the
classroom and referred to the Dean of Student and Instructional Support for
disciplinary action.