



Conflict with Faculty **Don't wait until course evaluations.**

Classes often don't meet our expectations for a variety of reasons. In our busy lives it's easy to leave the issues unaddressed and let our frustrations out in the end-of-term course evaluations. This can be problematic for two reasons:

1. Your experience in the class won't have improved as the class is already over.
2. Your instructor might not be aware of their behavior's impact on you, and would have gladly adapted their approach if they had known.

Addressing your concerns earlier in the term is the best way to deal with any issues. And remember, professors are people too.

Teaching Style Differences

Often the difficulty with a professor can come down to a mismatch between learning and teaching styles. If you're caught up on classwork and still having a hard time following in class, don't be afraid to **raise your hand and ask for another example or clarification**.

In the case where that doesn't work, visit your professor's **office hours**. Explain what's challenging you. They might have ideas on how they can help. If you know what will help you learn – like visuals or examples – ask if there's a way to incorporate more into the class.

Other Concerns

Some common conflicts students might have with staff are:

- My professor is making inappropriate comments in class.
- I don't understand why I got such a bad grade on the assignment.
- It feels like I am at the mercy of my professor.

Check in with other students in the class to learn their experience. However, if they don't have the same perception as you that doesn't necessarily mean you shouldn't take action. Talking directly with your professor is the first step. Don't blame your professor and make sure you are ready to speak calmly and politely. For example, instead of saying "You are saying terrible things in class." Say "I am uncomfortable with some of the language being used in class. Yesterday, the words _____ were used and those words made me uncomfortable because _____".

No change after talking to your professor? Speak to an academic advisor or other school administrator you trust. Frame the problem objectively by describing your experience, the steps you've taken to engage the professor, and what has or hasn't happened yet.

What to expect from SCRC. Through conflict coaching we can help you practice framing your concerns constructively so as to not make the professor defensive. Once we learn the specific context of your conflict, we can refer you to appropriate offices or advise on next steps.

**Note – if a professor or anyone's behavior feels discriminatory based on gender, race, or any other protected identity, please contact the Office of Equal Opportunity. You can also talk to the SCRC and we can help you create a plan and clarify your options.

Student Conflict Resolution Center

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