

Twenty Things That College Professors Think

(and that you need to know)

1. There are two sets of rules - one for bad students and one for good ones. Earn my trust and show me you're a good student, and I'll give you the benefit of the doubt. It's not "fair," but then, life isn't fair either.
2. I'm not an idiot. Tell me the truth. Don't make excuses. I can recognize BS a mile away so don't waste my time with it.
3. Your problems are your concern. Everyone has problems, and adults are expected to function in society in spite of them. Learn to do the same. I'll help you cope, but problems in and of themselves do not entitle you to relief from your responsibilities
4. I'm here to teach. You're here to learn. As long as we both do our parts, we'll get along and my teaching should help your learning. But if you think that a college education involves nothing more than simply sitting in classes while I talk AT you, and you make NO effort to learn something, we'll have problems.
5. There is a distinction between "getting an education" and "getting a degree." My job is to help you get an education.
6. Effort is important, but generally, it's results that count.
7. It's my class, so I get to set the rules. I may ask for input from students, but I get the final say.
8. I do not GIVE grades, you EARN them. It is inconsistent to assert "I earned an A" and "Prof. X gave me a D." You yourself are responsible for both the good and bad when it comes to grades.
9. I don't especially want to fail anyone, but you have to show me you learned something somewhere along the way.
10. Remember that teaching you is only part of my job. I do research, go to meetings, prepare for class, and I have a life outside of college. You can expect me to help you, but don't expect me to regard you as the center of the universe.
11. It's easier to give you the benefit of the doubt (on late homework, grades, etc.) if I know your name. Students who think that they're better off if the instructor doesn't know who they are, who sit in the back of the room, and who never participate, are sadly mistaken.
12. Asking questions is not an indication that you're stupid. It's an indication that you care - and caring about material I teach is important to me.

13. If you ask my advice on something and I give it, follow through. If for example, you're performing poorly in my class and I suggest the Learning Center, go to the Learning Center. Don't continually ask my advice and then ignore it. That just shows that you're looking for a quick fix.
14. I have 120 students. You have only five teachers. I have office hours. You don't. Don't expect me to come to you.
15. I'm more tolerant of students who are nice to me than students who are rude or disrespectful. Attitude matters.
16. Disagreeing with me is okay, as long as the debate is tolerant, logical, and respectful.
17. Whining by three year olds is annoying, but understandable. Whining from college students is just annoying. Take responsibility for yourself and act like an adult.
18. Neatness counts - I'm more tolerant of neat garbage than sloppy or illegible stuff.
19. I can't give you partial credit if you don't write anything down. Even if you don't know the answer, try to say something, and I'll try to reward you.
20. Remember that at one time, I was in your position as a college undergraduate. I lived through the experience, and I can probably help you live through it as well.