

Email etiquette

Cecile Fabre, Lincoln College, September 2010.

Were would we be without email...and yet, however necessary and useful we find it, we also, all of us, complain about it: too many emails, too many needless messages where a quick phone call, or a moment's reflection, would have done the trick. As my students, either current and prospective, you are always welcome to contact me electronically, but please bear in mind the following points:

- (a) Start your email with the correct form of address (You can address me by my first name, which is Cécile; if you would rather use a title, go for 'Dr Fabre', but please do not go for 'Miss' or 'Mrs': in an *academic* context, *academic* titles are appropriate.)
- b) Give a brief description of the subject of your email in the subject line, as this will help me prioritise (this is essential).
- (c) Be mindful of grammar, punctuation, and style: treat an email to staff members, whether administrative or academic staff, as if it were a proper letter, rather than a quick, informal phone call.
- (d) Sign off with name (obvious, I know, but you would be amazed at the number of unsigned emails I get, which is particularly problematic if the address itself does not contain the person's name.)
- (e) Try not to fire off an email at 2am (or at any other time, for that matter), without first reflecting as to whether or not you might track down the required information (on e.g. lecture times, exam locations, readings) by checking the web.