

## Department of Sociology – Centre for the Study of Politics

### Online Communications

Online communication has been growing for years, and especially of course in the last six months. So it is a good time to remind ourselves about the best ways to talk to each other online.

In general, our department is fairly informal and has easy relationships between staff and students.

However, we do try to be respectful to you and to each other in our work. Similarly, when you are communicating with your lecturers and tutors, it is best if you remember to try to be as clear and polite as possible.

Please call your lecturer by the title they prefer – some lecturers are fine with using their first name, others prefer their formal title. Typically, they will give you some guidance on this.

If in doubt, please start at the more formal end e.g. “Dear Dr. Ó Riain ....”. Then you can follow the lecturer’s lead from there.

This isn’t a matter of being formal for it’s own sake – it’s about politeness and professionalism.

It’s also best to include all the relevant information. Remember that your lecturers have many students and receive many emails, so it helps if you give all the information that they might need – even if you just spoke with them after class, for example.

So, if you don’t know the lecturer, you might try starting off with something like this:

“Dear Dr. Ó Riain

I am a student in your SO201 class.

Could I ask .....

Thanks and best wishes,

Zoey (Student ID: 1876534)”

None of this should stop your personality shining through in the rest of your communications!

But it helps smooth our communications with each other – especially in a time of very many, and often rushed, communications.

Many thanks and, of course, we plan to attempt to write clear, polite emails back to you!

Best wishes, Seán Ó Riain, Head of Department