Netiquette for USask Instructors and Students

Instructor	Student
Principle 1: Be Kind	
• Treat students online like you would face to face (F2F). We are all dealing with a life-altering experience. It's easy to misinterpret emotions and meaning online. • "Challenge ideas rather than the students who offer the ideas."[i] You hold a position of power in this relationship. • Move towards Reconciliation. Foster learning environments that are welcoming and safe for all, including Indigenous students, staff, and faculty.[ii] • Estimate the amount of time it would take for students to complete the tasks you've assigned, including those to consume (read, watch, listen, etc.) and produce (write, record, etc.). This should not exceed F2F expectations. • Select materials and activities that are low bandwidth whenever possible.[iii]	• The goodwill you show online will help to create a safe space for learning and productive community of learners.[iv] • Keep in mind that your instructors and peers have feelings and imperfections just like you. Follow this basic rule: if you wouldn't say something in-person, don't say it online. • Critique ideas, not people. • Take action if you receive threatening or inappropriate messages by connecting with the appropriate channel.[v] • Engage in scholarly discussions by sharing your ideas and knowledge and responding meaningfully to others. • Be aware of course deadlines and post in a timely manner. • Be patient. Expect a delay of 24-48 hrs before someone responds to your messages (or any other communicated schedule/frequency).
Principle 2: Be Mindful	
• Determine which elements of your online life you want to share with students and which elements will remain private. • Use language appropriate for the learning context. • Just like F2F, be attired for the classroom. Consider your appearance when filming: what's the non-verbal story you are telling?	• Respect others' privacy. What's said in class stays in class. Be discreet with others' personal details and opinions on sensitive issues. • Keep your microphone muted when you're not speaking, and follow instructor guidelines about your video settings. • Ensure you are dressed appropriately for your online class. • Be aware of what your peers and instructor can see and hear when live or recording.
Principle 3: Check Before You Share	
• Read a message aloud to yourself to interpret the tone before sharing or sending. • Consider the student's privacy before forwarding an individual student's question to the whole class or using reply-all. Ask permission before sharing ideas/questions that they've only shared with you. • Set clear guidelines about expectations. Have students contribute to the norms of the group. Remind them frequently of these norms. • Encourage students to share their perspectives and to be curious about what others are trying to convey in their messages. [vi] • Be present. Contribute to the course discussions and correct errors or misconceptions with kindness. • Focus assessment on your course outcomes, not primarily students' mechanical errors. • Plan for ways for students to collaborate in small groups, peer review, or engage with each other and be clear about how it will be assessed.	• Use formal salutations. For example, use the greeting "Dear Professor [last name]" instead of "Hey". • Include your full name and use your USask NSID[vii] email when emailing your professor or anyone else in your course. • Use a spelling and grammar checker. • Read your messages aloud before posting to help verify the intended meaning and identify basic errors in writing. • Find out from your instructor if they feel it is appropriate to use emoticons in communicating within the course. • Utilize course communication tools with discretion. • Remember that this is an online course, not social media; take care to approach your class respectfully. If a discussion or collaboration leads you to feel impassioned, slow down, and resist the temptation to post impulsively. Take some time to formulate your response. • Add value to the conversation and move the discussion forward by engaging in discussions that foster productive exchanging of knowledge and ideas. [viii]
Principle 4: Respect Copyright	
• Ensure that you are appropriately using the works of others in your class in a way that is respectful of Canadian copyright law. • "If it was okay to do in class, it is often okay to do online; especially when online access is limited to the same enrolled students (for example via an LMS[ix])."[x]	• Do your research ahead of time so you don't post misleading or incorrect information, and always reference your sources. • If you are unsure about copyright, visit the USask Copyright website to learn more and get help.[xi]
Comply with university expectations for appropriate conduct. None of the advice above, however, is to be construed as restricting your freedom to raise controversial issues or views within the context of an open, healthy and respectful dialogue.	

References and Notes (July 2020)

[i] "Netiquette" in Online Courses, Carleton University https://carleton.ca/online/online-learning-resources-2/netiquette/
[ii] Indigenization and The University of Saskatchewan https://teaching.usask.ca/curriculum/indigenization.php#IndigenizationandTheUniversityofSaskatchewan
[iii] Simple Strategies to Elevate your Asynchronous Delivery https://words.usask.ca/gmcte/2020/05/22/strategies-to-elevate-your-asynchronous-delivery/
[iv] Guidelines for Academic Conduct https://secretariat.usask.ca/governance/guidelines-for-academic-conduct.php#About
[v] Safe Disclosure Reporting https://secretariat.usask.ca/about/safe-disclosure-reporting.php
[vi] Our Learning Charter, Educator Commitments https://teaching.usask.ca/about/policies/learning-charter.php#Educators
[vii] Your default university email is based on your NSID, a unique combination of 3 letters and 3 numbers, followed by @mail.usask.ca
[viii] Our Learning Charter, Student Commitments https://teaching.usask.ca/about/policies/learning-charter.php#Students
[ix] LMS = learning management system, ie. Blackboard or Canvas.
[x] Shifting Your In-Person Course to Online: Copyright Considerations, USask https://library.usask.ca/copyright/instructors/online-teaching.php
[x] Copyright information for students https://library.usask.ca/copyright/students/
-Netiquette for Online Communication, Oklahoma State University. https://canvas.okstate.edu/courses/19865/pages/netiquette-for-online-communication
-14 Great Tips for Student Netiquette, Online Study Australia; https://onlinestudyaustralia.com/netiquette-rules-guidelines-students/