How-to:

- Email Etiquette
- Finding a Faculty Mentor

Email Etiquette:

When approaching a faculty member, a student must be above all things professional and informed. I’m Lily and as I write this I entering my senior year at UVM (scary!). Over the course of my college career there is something that I’ve learned and must pass along to the students; how to contact your professor. Whether it be to ask a question, submit a request, or ask about their research – information and respect create the most productive email conversations (and person-to-person as well). Below, I’ve demonstrated what not to do and what to do. I use research as an example here but this is useful for any kind of email to a professor.

No: Hey Ann,
Your research seems cool – can I help?
Peace,
Lily

Yes: Dr. Kroll Lerner,
I have been reading your CV and think that your research looks fascinating. I, too, have an interest in archeology and love Russian Literature. I took the introductory course to Archeology in the Anthropology department with (insert professor’s name here) and absolutely fell in love with the subject. I was wondering if you had any need for a research assistant at the present time. If so, I would be very grateful for the opportunity to discuss it further with you. If not, might you know a professor on campus doing similar research that may have need of a student? I appreciate any time and consideration that you can provide for me and look forward to hearing from you!

Best,
Lily

No: Hi Kelly,
I am writing a thesis and need an advisor, would you be it?

Yes: Dear Kelley,
I am writing to you to ask for your time and consideration on a big project. I am beginning to work on my thesis Kabbalah and Michelangelo. Your work on the Renaissance is world-renowned and your classes have inspired my topic. I know that you work on the thesis committees of many students and that you are incredibly busy but I would be honored if you would mentor me for my thesis. The basis on the project is from a paper that I have attached to this email. I am particularly interested in how philosophical rhetoric and religion influenced Michelangelo and other artists from the

Unless told otherwise, never call someone with authority by their first name. Ann has a PhD and worked for 10 years to get it. Respect that.

Kelley happens to prefer to the use of her first name, however you spelled it wrong!
Also, what is your research on?
Why did you choose to ask Kelley?
Renaissance. I am still working to whittle this down to a more specific project. I expect that to come naturally as I prepare my proposal for the September deadline. I will be graduating in the spring of 2016 and therefore I will need your support this academic year. If you are unable to accept my proposal, I would be very grateful if you could recommend another mentor for the project? Thank you for all the guidance and support you have given me in the past and for any you can in the future.

Best,
Lily

Whether you are going to miss a meeting or class with a professor or would like their assistance on a paper or need guidance of any kind – your emails must be straight to the point and demonstrate your knowledge of class policy and/or the subject you are approaching them on.

If you are looking for a faculty mentor, know about their research before you ask to join them. All tenured or tenure track faculty is doing research of their own. If you are interested in what they are studying, take the time to really understand what they are studying by looking into their Curriculum Veritae or their faculty page on the UVM website.

If a professor asks you for a resume of your research experience, you have done something wrong. This is a sign that you have not presented your credentials or lack thereof and have not demonstrated your understanding.

If you are struggling with your emails, feel free to stop by the Hub and get more information. [Link to the Hub]

Finding a Faculty Mentor
UVM is what is called a “high research activity” institution. What this means is that every tenured or tenure-track faculty member is doing their own research outside of what they might be teaching in their classrooms. That is one of the reasons that OUR cannot maintain a database with all the opportunities available to students. But the UVM website can act as one. If you search through the departments that you are interested in, you will find that each faculty member has a C.V., research website, or profile that will provide all the information that you could want about the research that is being done by your professors.
Step #2: Click on the Faculty Page in the Sidebar.

Step #3: Scroll through and click on Faculty names to see their profile. Our example will be Dr. Emily Bernard.

The Department of English offers instruction in a wide range of areas of literary and cultural studies, as well as creative writing and composition and rhetoric. From Shakespeare to Toni Morrison, the Renaissance through the modern era, from novels to poetry, from English literature to African-American literature, studying English at UVM exposes you to the world.

Department of English Faculty

UVF's English Department, one of the oldest in the United States, consists of 30 tenured and tenure-track professors, 19 lecturers, and 12 graduate teaching assistants. Our faculty members include ten winners of the Knepper-Maurice Award for Teaching Excellence and two recipients of the George V. Kider Outstanding Faculty Award.

You can learn more about individual faculty members by selecting their name from our directory or learn about a sampling of our faculty's research. If you’d like more information, you can contact the chair of the English Department, Professor Valerie Rady.
Faculty - Emily Bernard

Emily Bernard, Professor
* Ph.D. Yale University, 1996
* C.V. (PDF)
Area of expertise
* African-American and 20th Century Studies
* Critical Theory; Race and Ethnicity in Literature; Women's Studies
Contact Information
Email: emily.bernard@uvm.edu
Phone: (802) 855-3423
Office: 436 Old Mill
Fall Office Hours: TBD

Emily Bernard is a Professor of English and ALANA U.S. Ethnic Studies. Her first book, Remember Me to Harlem: The Letters of Langston Hughes and Carl Van Vechten (2001), was a New York Times Notable Book of the Year. Some of My Best Friends: Writers on Interracial Friendship (2004) was chosen by the New York Public Library as a Book for the Teen Age, 2006. Her essays have been published in several journals and anthologies, such as The American Scholar, Best American Essays, Best African American Essays, and Best of Creative Non-Fiction. Bernard has received fellowships from the Alphonse A. Fletcher Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the W.E.B. DuBois Institute at Harvard University. In 2008-9, Bernard was the James Weldon Johnson Senior Research Fellow in African American Studies at the Beinecke Library at Yale University. Michelle Obama: The First Lady in Photographs, a book she co-authored with Deborah Willis, was published by W.W. Norton in the fall of 2009. Another book, White Shadows: Carl Van Vechten and the Harlem Renaissance, was published by Yale University Press in 2010.


PUBLICATIONS: BOOKS

PUBLICATIONS: ARTICLES
Once you have generated a short list of professors you might be interested in working with, email them. For a guide on how to email professors, check out this page. [Link to Email Etiquette.]