Whether this is your first experience with an online course, you have taken an online course or webinar, or have had experience with some form of electronic communication (chat, IM, etc.), the guidelines below provide an overview of appropriate etiquette for interaction in the MICA e-Learning environment, and can be used as a general rule of thumb in any online communication.

(The information has been adapted from the University of Wisconsin Online Courses website at http://online.uwc.edu/technology/onletiquette.asp.)

Disembodied Discussions: Online course communications are primarily written so participants (students and instructors) cannot interpret body language, voice tone, and listener cues or feedback present in the traditional classroom. It is important for participants to be constantly mindful of this fact.

Tone Down Your Language: Written text can easily be misinterpreted so avoid using strong or offensive language and excessive use of exclamation points. When you feel strongly about a point, you may want to consider writing your response first as a draft, then review it before posting, in order to remove any strong language.

Keep A Straight Face: Comments that would be inappropriate in a traditional classroom are just as inappropriate online. Treat your instructor and your fellow students with respect. Humor and sarcasm do not always translate without tone or visual cue for feedback so it is best to avoid off-the-cuff remarks.

Be Forgiving: If you find that something or someone was offensive to you, please consider that if may have been unintentional. Should this occur, you should provide feedback to the instructor, who may send a general reminder to the class about online conduct or may contact the person directly with a reminder about online conduct. You should not contact the person directly about an issue you find offensive.

The Recorder Is On: This is the internet so once something is posted, it is permanent; there is no taking it back. Many conventions have already been established for online communications.
- **Do not type in all caps.** This is regarded as shouting and is out of place in a classroom.
- Acronyms and emoticons (arrangements of symbols to express emotions) are popular, but excessive use of them can make your message difficult to read. When responding to an assignment, you should not use abbreviations. Some common ones include:

Acronyms	Emoticons
FYI = for your information	**:-)** = smiley face: happiness, pleasure
B/C = because	**:-(** = frowning face: displeasure
W/ = with	**;-)** = wink
BTW = by the way	**:-0** = shock, surprise
F2F = face to face	**:-/** = skepticism, unease, apologetic
FAQ = frequently asked questions	

Test for Clarity: Messages may often appear perfectly clear to you as you compose them, but turn out to be unintelligible or abstract to your reader.

- Be mindful of grammar, spelling, and sentence composition before posting a response or message. If necessary, check your comments in a word-processor before posting them, or read your response or message aloud to see if it flows smoothly. If you can read it to another person before posting it, even better.
- Online courses require a lot of reading, and your points might be missed if hidden in a flood of text. Contributions to a discussion should have a clear subject header, and you need to stick to the subject. Be as concise as possible when contributing and try to avoid going off on irrelevant tangents.

Read First, Write Later: Again, online courses require a lot of reading and writing. It is good form to read the comments of other students before posting your own comments, unless the assignment specifically asks you to. Comments related to the content of previous messages should be posted under them to keep related topics organized, and you should specify the person and the particular point you are following up on.