Top Writing Style Tips
These tips were developed to foster a consistent appearance in all campus communications.

SUNY Cortland name
The name is written State University of New York College at Cortland or SUNY Cortland. Cortland or the university can be used in subsequent reference.

Buildings and rooms
Rooms that have a number are written: Building name, Room number.
- Old Main, Room 204-C
- Miller Building, Room 408
Rooms that don’t have a room number are written with the building name followed by the room name.
- Corey Union Function Room
Alumni Arena does not include “Ice” in its name.

Office and department names
Academic units are generally called departments and administrative units are offices. Refer to the A-Z department and office list online for correct names. Write names followed by “Office” or “Department.”
- President’s Office
- English Department

Dates
Abbreviate month names when written with a date, except March, April, May, June and July.
Avoid writing ordinal numbers such as 1st, 2nd, 3rd or 4th.
Write out days of the week.
- Friday, May 24, 2019
- Thursday, Oct. 31

Times
Write a.m. and p.m. with periods.
- Write noon for 12 p.m. and midnight for 12 a.m.
- When indicating a time span in print, use a hyphen with no spaces. For web and email, write “to” instead.
  - 6-6:30 p.m.
  - 6 to 6:30 p.m. (note p.m. is not repeated)
  - 9 a.m.-noon
  - 9 a.m. to noon
  - 11:15 a.m.-1 p.m.
  - 11:15 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Phone numbers
Write phone numbers with hyphens after the area code and exchange. Include the entire phone number rather than just an extension: 607-753-2011.

URLs
URLs for university web addresses, and many others, are written without the www.
- cortland.edu/admissions
- facebook.com/sunycortland

Punctuation
Reserve capitalization for proper nouns.
Use exclamation marks rarely.
Insert only one space after periods, colons and other punctuation marks.
Write simple lists without the serial comma: The event includes breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Symbols
Avoid using the ampersand (&). Use “at” instead of @, except in email addresses.

Underlining
In electronic communications, reserve underlining for hyperlinks.

Resources
Writing Style Guide  cortland.edu/writing-style
Communication Guide  cortland.edu/commguide
Marketing Office  607-753-2519 · marketing@cortland.edu · cortland.edu/marketing