

## Inclusive Syllabus Language

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| <p><b>Overview</b></p>       | <p>This Inclusive Teaching resource offers sample language written in an inclusive manner that instructors may adopt and adapt for your own syllabus. Particular attention is paid to discussion guidelines that can be used to communicate to students your expectations on how they approach material and one another in the classroom. The examples demonstrate how inclusive pedagogical practices can be implemented in syllabus construction.</p>   |
| <p><b>Goals</b></p>          | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) To provide examples of how inclusive language can be implemented in a syllabus that instructors can either cut-and-paste into their own syllabi or use as a model which they can adapt or supplement with their own words.</li> <li>2) To implement inclusive pedagogical practices in syllabus language and construction.</li> <li>3) To attend to student needs and identities in inclusive ways that are sometimes overlooked in department boilerplate language.</li> </ol>   |
| <p><b>Implementation</b></p> | <p>A class syllabus is not only a record of assignments and activities, but also a representation of who we are as instructors and the goals and ideals we wish to share with our students. The policies we choose to include in our syllabus – and the way we frame required policies – reflect our values and convey to students how we see them as learners and citizens in our classroom. For that reason, and where we have the latitude to do so, it can be useful to frame these policies in our own voices, rather than simply using department boilerplate language, thereby giving students an accurate image of how we would like to work with them.</p> <p>This resource guide will provide examples for the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Religious/Cultural Observance</li> <li>• Point of View</li> <li>• Discussion Guidelines</li> <li>• Accessibility and Accommodations</li> <li>• Student Mental Health and Well-being</li> <li>• Attendance, Participation, and Universal Learning</li> <li>• Title IX Statement</li> <li>• Plagiarism</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Challenges</b></p>     | <p>Some departments require specific language (such as the institutionally mandated statement on Disability and Accommodations) to be included in every syllabus. Those statements can be supplemented but must be included in their entirety on every syllabus. Clarify with your department what must appear on your syllabus.</p>  |

## Inclusive Syllabus Language Examples

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| <b>Religious/Cultural Observance</b>             | Persons who have religious or cultural observances that coincide with this class should let the instructor know in writing (by e-mail for example) by [date]. I strongly encourage you to honor your cultural and religious holidays! However, if I do not hear from you by [date], I will assume that you plan to attend all class meetings.  |
| <b>Point of View</b>                             | The readings, class lectures, and my comments in class will suggest a particular point of view. This perspective is my own and <b>does not have to be yours!</b> I encourage you to disagree with the ideas in the readings and lectures as well as the perspectives of your colleagues in the course. <b>Please express yourself!</b> A significant part of a college education is learning about the complexity of various issues; therefore, it is important that we listen and respect one another but we do not have to agree. A richer discussion will occur when a variety of perspectives are presented in class for discussion.   |
| <b>Discussion Guidelines (Multiple Examples)</b> | <p><b>Example 1:</b> (from U-M Faculty Member Evelyn Alsutany, American Culture)</p> <p>Class Conduct: A positive learning environment relies upon creating an atmosphere where diverse perspectives can be expressed, especially in a course that focuses on pressing and controversial social and political issues. Each student is encouraged to take an active part in class discussions and activities. Honest and respectful dialogue is expected. Disagreement and challenging of ideas in a supportive and sensitive manner is encouraged. Hostility and disrespectful behavior are not acceptable. Just as we expect others to listen attentively to our own views, we must reciprocate and listen to others when they speak, especially when we disagree with them. However, in this class, our emphasis will be on engaging in the mutual exploration of issues as presented in the course readings as scholars rather than in defending the points of view we have formed outside the classroom.</p> <p><b>Example 2</b> (from U-M Faculty Member Alisse Portnoy, English)</p> <p>You and your classmates are central to this course. Your professors are resources, of course, and this will be a collaborative environment. In our course, we will explore dynamic meanings of race, ethnicity, nationhood, sexual orientation, ability, gender, and class. That means we also will have opportunities to explore some challenging, high-stakes issues and increase our understandings of different perspectives, aided or complicated by our locations in place (for example, at a predominantly white institution) and time (for example, during a global pandemic and at a moment of amplified calls for racial and other forms of justice). It also is the case that some of us are social justice activists, some of us are in the course only because it fills a requirement; some of us lean far right, some of us lean far left; some of us will be outspoken, some of us will be shy; most of us will be somewhere in the midst of these binaries. We will have a very large range of intersecting identities in our classroom community. Our conversations may not always be easy; we sometimes will make mistakes in our speaking and our listening; sometimes we will need patience or courage or imagination or any number of qualities in combination to engage our texts,</p> |

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|   | <p>our classmates, our intentions, our impacts, and our own ideas and experiences. We also can acknowledge that those needs will not fall equitably in our classroom space, given the predominance of majority identities – and we can seek ways to attend to those disparities as we consider our course texts, concepts, and goals. Always we will need self-care for ourselves and respect for others, as we deepen our understandings of multiple perspectives – whatever our backgrounds, experiences, and positions. The results of our work together will be exponentially more valuable – and more interesting – than that which we could do on our own.</p> <p><b>Example 3</b> (<a href="#">From U. of S. Carolina Center for Teaching Excellence</a>)</p> <p>In order to learn, we must be open to the views of people different from ourselves. In this time we share together over the semester, please honor the uniqueness of your classmates, and appreciate the opportunity we have to learn from one another. Please respect each other’s opinions and refrain from personal attacks or demeaning comments of any kind. Finally, remember to keep confidential all issues of a personal or professional nature that are discussed in class.</p> |
| <p><b>Accessibility and Accommodations</b></p>                  | <p>If you think you need an accommodation for a disability, please let us know at your earliest convenience. Some aspects of this course, such as the assignments, in-class activities, or the way we teach may be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. As soon as you make us aware of your needs, we can work with you, the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities, or the Adaptive Technologies Computing Site to help determine appropriate accommodations. We will treat any information about your disability with the utmost discretion.</p>   |
| <p><b>Student Mental Health and Well-Being</b></p>              | <p>The University of Michigan is committed to advancing the mental health and wellbeing of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of support, services are available. For help, contact <b>Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)</b> at (734) 764-8312 and <a href="https://caps.umich.edu/">https://caps.umich.edu/</a> during and after hours, on weekends and holidays, or through its counselors physically located in schools on both North and Central Campus. You may also consult <b>University Health Service (UHS)</b> at (734) 764-8320 and <a href="https://www.uhs.umich.edu/mentalhealthsvcs">https://www.uhs.umich.edu/mentalhealthsvcs</a>, or for alcohol or drug concerns, see <a href="http://www.uhs.umich.edu/aodresources">www.uhs.umich.edu/aodresources</a>. For a listing of other mental health resources available on and off campus, visit <a href="http://umich.edu/~mhealth/">http://umich.edu/~mhealth/</a>.</p>  |
| <p><b>Attendance, Participation, and Universal Learning</b></p> | <p>Attendance and participation are highly important in this [small, collaborative, seminar-style] class. If you must be absent because of an emergency or illness, please make every effort to speak with me about it beforehand, if possible, or after the next class. I will excuse such absences with a doctor’s note or other form of official documentation. Please notify me of absences due to religious observance or University sporting events as soon as you can, or by the <i>third week of the semester</i>. Keep in mind that more than two unexcused absences will begin to affect your final grade.</p>  |

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|                                  | <p>I am committed to the principle of universal learning. This means that our classroom, our virtual spaces, our practices, and our interactions be as inclusive as possible. Mutual respect, civility, and the ability to listen and observe others carefully are crucial to universal learning. Active, thoughtful, and respectful participation in all aspects of the course will make our time together as productive and engaging as possible. I will give you midterm feedback on your participation.</p> <p>If you have a particular need, please arrange a meeting with me so I can best help you learn in this course. I will treat as private and confidential any information that you share. I also suggest you contact Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) at the start of the semester. Please ask SSD to forward any necessary information to me.</p> <p>Here is the contact information for Services for Students with Disabilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Location: G-664 Haven Hall</li> <li>• Phone: (734) 763-3000</li> <li>• Website: <a href="http://ssd.umich.edu/">http://ssd.umich.edu/</a></li> </ul> <p>Your success in this class is important to me. If there are circumstances that may affect your performance in this class, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can work together to develop strategies for adapting assignments to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course.</p> |
| <p><b>Title IX Statement</b></p> | <p>Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender is a Civil Rights offense subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources here:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UM Sexual Assault and Prevention Center (SAPAC) 24-hour confidential crisis line <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ (734) 936-3333 * <a href="http://sapac.umich.edu/">http://sapac.umich.edu/</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>• UM Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ (734) 764-8312 * <a href="http://caps.umich.edu/">http://caps.umich.edu/</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>• University of Michigan Police (DPSS) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ (734) 763-1131 (or 911 for emergency) * <a href="http://www.dpss.umich.edu/">http://www.dpss.umich.edu/</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>• UM Office of Student Conflict Resolution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ (724) 936-6308 * <a href="http://oscr.umich.edu">http://oscr.umich.edu</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>• UM Newnan Academic Advising Center <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ (734) 764-0332 * <a href="https://lsa.umich.edu/advising">https://lsa.umich.edu/advising</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul>            |
| <p><b>Plagiarism</b></p>         | <p>The LSA Office of Academic Affairs defines plagiarism as “representing someone else’s ideas, words, statements or other work as one’s own without proper acknowledgment or citation” (see <a href="https://lsa.umich.edu/lsa/academics/academic-integrity/academic-misconduct.html">https://lsa.umich.edu/lsa/academics/academic-integrity/academic-misconduct.html</a>). New writing challenges can tax your writing fluency and entering</p>  |

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|                 | <p>new academic discourses can test your abilities to synthesize and take ownership over source texts and concepts. My job as an instructor in this course is to help you through these obstacles so that you can find your footing as a writer in new domains. Your job as a student is to keep the faith, so to speak, and work through these new domains until you regain confidence. This work requires patience, planning, and focus.</p> <p>Much plagiarism occurs because of a lack of care regarding reading, note-taking, and citation practices, or from procrastination, and/or panic. Care, timeliness, and communication will eliminate most of the risk. If you have questions about whether you should give credit to a source in your work, you may clarify it with me. In general, though, I always recommend citing sources you have consulted as well as those you borrow from directly. <i>If you are having difficulty with an essay, please contact me right away!</i> That is what my email address and office hours are for.</p> |
| <b>Citation</b> | Adapted for use by CRLT, University of Michigan.   |