

INCLUSIVE EXCELLENCE AND OUR TEACHING

Checklist of Inclusive Excellence (IE) in Syllabi

Does your syllabus:

O Show intent to create a promising learning environment by:

- Using a tone that is positive, respectful, inviting and directly addresses students as competent and engaged learners?
- Describing class meetings? For example, what types of activities should students be prepared to engage in: dialogue, lecture, teamwork, presentations, etc.?
- Providing multiple opportunities (throughout the quarter, not just at the end) for students to give feedback on the course and assess your teaching?
- Focusing more on possibilities, not on punishments?
 - For example, the syllabus can de-emphasize policies by positioning them in the latter part of the syllabus.
- Communicating that the instructor cares about students? Does the syllabus communicate that the instructor believes each student can succeed?
 - For example, the syllabus can offer strategies for how to meet and exceed expectations through review sessions, appropriate office hours, additional background materials, etc.

O Include statements related to *(see handout for examples)*:

- Establishing inclusive learning environments
- Your philosophy of teaching
- Accommodations for students with disabilities/medical issues, religious holidays, student athletes, etc.
- Elective gender pronouns

O Address Universal Design for Learning by:

- Using screen-reading (i.e., assistive technology) software?
- Offering variety of ways to contact the professor?
- Listing required and recommended texts and (a) state where they can be purchased, and (b) offer opportunities to order electronic equivalents early to ensure timely conversion to an alternative format?
- Describing multiple ways to submit course assignments?
- Containing general information about student-oriented campus resources and additional resources that may be specific to the course? For example:
 - writing centers
 - tutoring centers
 - computer centers
 - library hours
 - lab hours



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- O **State student learning outcomes by:**
 - __ Making explicit what skills and knowledge students should have by the time they complete the course?
 - __ Including learning outcomes that explicitly address skills and knowledge related to inclusivity?

- O **Explain how student learning will be assessed by:**
 - __ Making explicit what skills and knowledge you are assessing?
 - __ Using diverse range of assessment methods?

- O **Honor diversity by:**
 - __ Reflecting diverse backgrounds in your readings and in other course content materials, and/or allowing student choice in finding diverse sources of content?
 - __ Depicting a diversity of people in leadership positions and other desirable roles?

- O **Articulate the course schedule by:**
 - __ Listing topics/readings in chronological order with assignment due dates?
 - __ Taking into account religious holidays when scheduling major exams or deadlines? And explaining policies for students to make up assignments that are missed?

References

- EnACT-PTD: Ensuring Access through Collaboration & Technology ~ Partnerships, Technology, & Dissemination. (n.d.). *Universal design for learning: A rubric for evaluating your course syllabus*. www.udluniverse.com
- Madden, S., & Wood, T. (2011). *Suggested practices for syllabus accessibility statements*. Disability Studies-Special Interest Group: University of Oklahoma.
- Miller, D. (2008). *Diversity checklist: Guidelines for course planning*. Schreyer for Teaching Excellence: Penn State. www.schreyerinstitution.psu.edu
- Palmer, M.S., Bach, D.J., & Streifer, A.C. (2014) Measuring the promise: A learning-focused syllabus rubric. *To improve the academy: A journey of educational development*, 33(1), 14-36.
- The University of Monash (2009). *Inclusive Teaching*. <http://www.monash.edu.au/lls/inclusivity/>

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Sample Syllabus Statements

(<http://otl.du.edu/teaching-resources/sample-syllabus-statements>)

The statements below have been collected from various centers across campus to assist you when creating your syllabus. We recommend that you adjust and personalize the statements to match your particular course and teaching approaches. These statements help set the tone of your class and demonstrate your willingness to engage with students as individuals. The bottom line with many of these policies is that students should let you know by the end of the first week of class if they need a particular accommodation.

Inclusive Learning Environments (developed by the Faculty Senate)

In this class, we will work together to develop a learning community that is inclusive and respectful. Our diversity may be reflected by differences in race, culture, age, religion, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, and myriad other social identities and life experiences. The goal of inclusiveness, in a diverse community, encourages and appreciates expressions of different ideas, opinions, and beliefs, so that conversations and interactions that could potentially be divisive turn instead into opportunities for intellectual and personal enrichment.

A dedication to inclusiveness requires respecting what others say, their right to say it, and the thoughtful consideration of others' communication. Both speaking up and listening are valuable tools for furthering thoughtful, enlightening dialogue. Respecting one another's individual differences is critical in transforming a collection of diverse individuals into an inclusive, collaborative and excellent learning community. Our core commitment shapes our core expectation for behavior inside and outside of the classroom

Students with Disabilities/Medical Issues

If you qualify for academic accommodations because of a disability or medical issue please submit a Faculty Letter to me from Disability Services Program (DSP) in a timely manner so that your needs may be addressed. DSP is located on the 4th floor of Ruffatto Hall; 1999 E. Evans Ave. 303.871/ 2372 / 2278/ 7432. Information is also available on line at <http://www.du.edu/disability/dsp>; see the Handbook for Students with Disabilities.

Please let me know if there is anything I can do to help you better access the materials in this course, and I will try to do it if I can. I am here to support your growth and learning!

Title IX

Gender violence can happen to anyone regardless of race, class, age, appearance, gender identity, or sexual orientation. The University of Denver is committed to providing an environment free of discrimination on the basis of sex (gender), including sexual misconduct, sexual assault, relationship violence, and stalking. The Center for Advocacy, Prevention and Empowerment (CAPE) provides programs and resources to help promote healthy relationships, teach non-violence and equality, and foster a respectful and safe environment for all members of the University of Denver community. All services are confidential and free of charge. For assistance during business hours, call 303-871-3853 and ask to speak to the Director of CAPE.

After hours, please call the Emergency & Crisis Dispatch Line at 303-871-3000 and ask to speak to the CAPE advocate on call.



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Gender Neutrality

This course supports elective gender pronoun use and self-identification. As the course includes group work and in-class discussion, it is vitally important for us to create an educational environment of inclusion and mutual respect.

Religious Accommodations Policy

University policy grants students excused absences from class or other organized activities or observance of religious holy days, unless the accommodation would create an undue hardship. You must notify me by the end of the first week of classes if you have any conflicts that may require an absence. It is your responsibility to make arrangements with me in advance to make up any missed work or in-class material. The DU Chaplain's website contains interfaith resources and calendars: <http://www.du.edu/studentlife/religiouslife/>.

Honor Code/Academic Integrity

All work submitted in this course must be your own and produced exclusively for this course. The use of sources (ideas, quotations, paraphrases) must be properly acknowledged and documented. For the consequences of violating the Academic Misconduct policy, refer to the University of Denver website on the Honor Code (www.du.edu/honorcode). See also <http://www.du.edu/studentconduct> for general information about conduct expectations from the Office of Student Conduct.

Student-Athletes

If you are a student-athlete, you should inform me of any class days to be missed due to DU sponsored varsity athletic events in which you are participating. Please provide me with an absence policy form by the end of the first week of class. You will need to make up any missed lectures, assignments, and/or exams.

Use of Technology in the Classroom

Access to the Internet can be a valuable aid to the classroom learning environment. You may be encouraged to use a laptop, smart phone, or other device to explore concepts related to course discussions and in-class activity. Keep in mind, however, that these technologies can be distracting – not only for you, but to others in the class. Please avoid the temptation of Facebook, texting, or other off-topic diversions.

Online and Web-supported Classes

It is your responsibility to procure reliable, readily-accessible Internet service in order to fulfill course expectations. I am under no obligation to accept late assignments or waive required tasks (e.g., discussion participation) due to lack of online access or malfunctioning computer hardware. Please consider identifying an alternative Internet source in case of technical problems. Look here for a list of computer labs on the DU campus. Computer support is available from the University Technology Support (UTS) Help Center.

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Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. Based on the checklist, which aspects of your syllabus demonstrate a commitment to inclusivity?
2. What aspects of your syllabus do you want to change?
3. What are the essential aspects of your syllabus you want to make sure students really understand/internalize?
4. What might you do to ensure students' understand/internalize these essential aspects (for example, on the first day of class)?



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