

Ideas for Inclusive Language for Course Syllabi
Compiled by Kendra Pyle, Summer 2017
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MSU Examples

Language from the Office of Institutional Equity (OIE) website: <http://oie.msu.edu/>. I've added the sentence on reporting and the websites for the listed policies.

MSU is committed to creating and maintaining an inclusive community in which students, faculty, and staff can work together in an atmosphere free from all forms of discrimination. The Office of Institutional Equity (OIE) reviews concerns related to discrimination and harassment based on sex, gender, gender identity, race, national origin, religion, disability status, and any other protected categories under the University Anti-Discrimination Policy (https://www.hr.msu.edu/policies-procedures/university-wide/ADP_policy.html) and Policy on Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct (https://www.hr.msu.edu/policies-procedures/university-wide/RVSM_policy.html). If you experience or witness acts of bias, discrimination, or harassment, please report these to OIE: <http://oie.msu.edu/>.

This could then be followed by a statement on mandatory reporting (see example from Donna Rich Kaplowitz below).

Recommendations on Pronouns from LGBT Resources Center:

<https://lbgtrc.msu.edu/home/resources-for-staff-and-faculty/>

- Consider including your personal pronouns on your syllabi with your name and contact information.
- Consider including language regarding name and gender change on your syllabus. Suggested language is as follows:

Chosen Name and Pronoun Policy: All people have the right to be addressed and referred to in accordance with their personal identity. Many people do not identify with the name on their birth certificate, school ID, or other forms of identification. In this class, I will include the opportunity for students to indicate the name and the pronouns they use. If you would like to change your name, you can do that through StuInfo. Your gender marker can be changed by filing a request at the Office of the Registrar at the Hannah Administration Building. More information about MSU's preferred name policy can be found at:

<https://lbgtrc.msu.edu/trans-msu/msu-preferred-name-policy/>. I will do my best to respect students by using the correct name and pronouns for them. Please advise me at any point if you need to update your name and/or pronouns in my records.

Accommodations for Persons with Disabilities

<https://www.rcpd.msu.edu/get-started/faculty-departmental-resources/model-statements-disability-inclusion>

Michigan State University is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Requests for accommodations by persons with disabilities may be made by

contacting the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities at 517-884-RCPD or on the web at rcpd.msu.edu. Once your eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, you will be issued a verified individual services accommodation (“VISA”) form. Please present this form to me at the start of the term and/or two weeks prior to the accommodation date (test, project, etc.). Requests received after this date will be honored whenever possible.

Dean of Students Office (<https://www.deanofstudents.msu.edu/>)

The Dean of Students Office (<https://www.deanofstudents.msu.edu/>) supports student success by ensuring a civil and inclusive learning environment based on academic and personal integrity. All community members have a responsibility for establishing, maintaining, and fostering a commitment to our shared values, ethical decision-making, and personal and collective excellence. The Dean of Students Office supports personal and community accountability and addresses conduct inconsistent with the Spartan Code of Honor with honesty, respect, and fairness.

MSU Land Acknowledgement (<http://aisp.msu.edu/about/land>)

We collectively acknowledge that Michigan State University occupies the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary Lands of the Anishinaabeg – Three Fires Confederacy of Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi peoples. In particular, the University resides on Land ceded in the 1819 Treaty of Saginaw. We recognize, support, and advocate for the sovereignty of Michigan’s twelve federally-recognized Indian nations, for historic Indigenous communities in Michigan, for Indigenous individuals and communities who live here now, and for those who were forcibly removed from their Homelands. By offering this Land Acknowledgement, we affirm Indigenous sovereignty and will work to hold Michigan State University more accountable to the needs of American Indian and Indigenous peoples.

Ombudsperson’s Office (<https://ombud.msu.edu/>)

The Office of the University Ombudsperson (<https://ombud.msu.edu/>) offers students a confidential and impartial place to discuss academic and nonacademic concerns. Staff will assist students to define problems, explore options, outline strategies, review policies, find resources, and manage expectations while upholding the values of respect, integrity, diversity and freedom from bias or harassment.

Sample Inclusion Statement from College of Natural Science DEI statements:

<https://natsci.msu.edu/diversity-equity-and-inclusion/news-events/dei-statements/>

Inclusion and diversity are core values of MSU and the College of Natural Science. As Spartans, we are dedicated to respecting people of all backgrounds, beliefs, identity status, and political beliefs. The college is committed to creating a safe, supportive, and welcoming environment where all students, faculty, and staff can pursue academic and professional success. All members of the MSU community deserve each other’s respect, support, recognition, and protection.

Maintaining a respectful and inclusive campus community requires vigilance. We must, therefore, all stand up against derogatory and discriminatory language or actions whenever we see them. It is essential that we all work together to foster an inclusive community where Spartans of all backgrounds can study, work, and thrive.

Sample Inclusion statement from Katusha Galitzine (2017):

My intention is to create a classroom that is conducive to everyone's learning. Along with the expectations for coursework, I have an expectation that we will treat each other with respect and collegiality, and that we will be open to conversations and perspectives that challenge our perspectives. I have made a conscious effort to diversify the syllabus and course content with the understanding that diverse perspectives are necessary for full understanding. If you have a concern about the policies and procedures of the class, or the content of the course, please contact me. If you would like to use a different name, or pronouns than those provided by the University, please let me know.

Language that Donna Rich Kaplowitz (former College of Education and RCAH professor) used in her syllabi (2017):

Policy on Academic Freedom and Integrity

Article 2.3.3 of the *Academic Freedom Report* states that "the student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards." In addition, the University's *General Student Regulations* 1.0, Protection of Scholarship and Grades, and the all-University Policy on Integrity of Scholarship and Grades, which are included in *Spartan Life: Student Handbook and Resource Guide*, apply to student conduct in all RCAH courses

Policy on Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities should contact the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities to establish reasonable accommodations. For an appointment with a counselor, call 353-9642 (voice) or 355-1293 (TTY). It is up to you to let the professor know if you need an accommodation.

Policy on religious observance

It is the policy of MSU to permit students to observe holidays set aside by their chosen religious faith. If you absent yourself from class on your religious holiday, please make arrangements with me in advance.

Grief Policy

Please visit Grief Absence Policy:

<https://msu.edu/unit/ombud./classroom-policies/index.html#GriefAbsencePolicy>. Please speak directly to me to let me know what has happened.

Mandatory Reporting Policy

As a professor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment for my students and for the campus as a whole. As a member of the university community, I have the responsibility to report any instances of sexual harassment, sexual violence and/or other forms of prohibited discrimination. If you would rather share information about sexual harassment, sexual violence or discrimination to a confidential employee who does not have this reporting responsibility, you can find a list of those individuals here:

<https://centerforsurvivors.msu.edu/resources-and-coping/resources-and-coping-2/>.

Trigger Warning

During the course of this semester, we may discuss historical or current events that may be disturbing or even traumatizing to some students. If you suspect that the material is likely to be emotionally

challenging for you, please discuss your concerns with me prior to the class in which the subject comes up. Similarly, if we are discussing something in class and you feel the need to step outside during a class discussion, you may always do so without academic penalty. You will be responsible for getting the material from a classmate or see me individually to discuss the situation.

Examples from Other Universities

LGBTQ Equality Statement example for Chico State:

<https://www.csuchico.edu/diversity/resources/teaching/syllabi-examples.shtml>

I am firmly committed to diversity and equality in all areas of campus life, including specifically members of the LGBTQ community. In this class I will work to promote an anti-discriminatory environment where everyone feels safe and welcome. I recognize that discrimination can be direct or indirect and take place at both institutional and personal levels. I believe that such discrimination is unacceptable, and I am committed to providing equality of opportunity for all by eliminating any and all discrimination, harassment, bullying, or victimization. The success of this policy relies on the support and understanding of everyone in this class. We all have a responsibility not to be offensive to each other, or to participate in, or condone harassment or discrimination of any kind.

Diversity Statement Suggestions from Yale University: <http://ctl.yale.edu/DiversityStatements>

Diversity & Inclusion Syllabus Statements from Brown University:

<https://www.brown.edu/sheridan/teaching-learning-resources/inclusive-teaching/statements>

Name/Pronoun Strategies from Lake Forest:

<https://www.lakeforest.edu/live/files/3549-classroom-inclusion-strategiespdf>