

Center for Teaching and Learning

Sample Syllabus Materials

Sample Civility Statements

These are samples of statements from a range of college and university campuses.

1. Because this class needs to be a participatory community if students are to fulfill their potential for learning, people who disrupt the community by their words or actions disrupt that community. Rude, sarcastic, obscene, or disrespectful speech and disruptive behavior have a negative impact on everyone's learning. When a person disrupts the class in these ways, the course instructor will remove the disruptive person from the class. This is the policy of the Department of Communication Arts with the support of Western State College.

(Adapted from Department of Communication Arts, Language and Literature, Western State College, Gunnison, CO)

2. Teachers in the Department of Communication Arts are committed to developing and actively protecting a class environment in which respect must be shown to everyone in order to facilitate and encourage the expression, testing, understanding and creation of a variety of ideas and opinions. Failure to meet these standards will result in removal from the class.

(Adapted from Department of Communication Arts, Language and Literature, Western State College, Gunnison, CO)

3. Any successful learning experience requires mutual respect on behalf of the student and the instructor. The instructor, as well as the fellow students, should not be subjected to any student's behavior that is in any way disruptive, rude, or challenging to the instructor's authority in the classroom. A student should not feel intimidated or demeaned by his/her instructor and students must remember that the instructor has primary responsibility for control over classroom behavior and maintenance of academic integrity. The instructor can order the temporary removal or exclusion from the classroom of any student engaged in disruptive conduct or conduct violating the general rules and regulations of the institution.

(Adapted from English Department at Middle Tennessee State University)

4. Disruptive behavior includes, but is not limited to the following: receiving beeper or cell phone calls during class, leaving class early or coming to class habitually late, eating in class, talking out of turn, doing assignments for other classes, reading the Daily Nebraskan, sleeping, and engaging in other activities that detract from the classroom learning experience.

(Adapted from English Department at Middle Tennessee State University)

5. Membership in the academic community places a special obligation on all members to preserve an atmosphere conducive to the freedom to teach and to learn. Part of that obligation implies the responsibility of each member of the Northern Arizona University community to maintain a positive learning environment in which the behavior of any individual does not disrupt the classes of teachers or learners.

It is the responsibility of the individual faculty member to determine, maintain and enforce the standards of behavior acceptable to preserving an atmosphere appropriate for teaching and learning. Students will be warned if their behavior is evaluated by the faculty member as disruptive.

Sanctions may include a range of responses from immediate removal from class to referral to the appropriate academic unit and/or the Office of Student Life to review pertinent alleged university violations of ethical and behavioral standards. Significant and/or continued violations may result in administrative withdrawal from the class.

(Adapted from Northern Arizona University)

6. The University of Oregon community is dedicated to the advancement of knowledge and the development of integrity. In order to thrive and excel, this community must preserve the freedom of thought and expression of all its members. The University Of Oregon has a long and illustrious history in the area of academic freedom and freedom of speech. A culture of respect that honors the rights, safety, dignity, and worth of every individual is essential to preserve such freedom. We affirm our respect for the rights and well-being of all members.

We further affirm our commitment to:

- respect the dignity and essential worth of all individuals
- promote a culture of respect throughout the university community
- respect the privacy, property, and freedom of others
- reject bigotry, discrimination, violence, or intimidation of any kind
- practice personal and academic integrity and expect it from others
- promote the diversity of opinions, ideas, and backgrounds that is the lifeblood of the university

(Adapted from the University of Oregon, Teaching Effectiveness Program)

7. Actions which make the campus environment uncomfortable or hostile for another person are considered serious offenses by the University. Contemporary technology makes it possible for mistakes to be made more rapidly, and spread about more widely, than ever before. The most difficult error to correct is one that affronts another's sensibilities, or assaults another's dignity. When you compose, send, or redistribute electronic mail or voice mail, when you create or publish postings to newsgroups, World Wide Web pages, or produce and submit for campus broadcast video materials, consider whether you would make identical statements face to face with the person or people who may read, hear or view your work. The same principles pertain regarding people or groups you may address outside the Princeton University community as to those within.

As stated in Rights, Rules, Responsibilities:

"Respect for the rights, privileges, and sensibilities of each other is essential in preserving the spirit of community at Princeton. Actions which make the atmosphere intimidating, threatening, or hostile to individuals are therefore regarded as serious offenses. Abusive or harassing behavior, verbal or physical, which demeans, intimidates, threatens, or injures another because of his or her personal characteristics or beliefs is subject to University disciplinary sanctions...."

Rights, Rules, Responsibilities language also states:

"Free inquiry, free expression, and civility within this academic community are indispensable to the University's objectives. Inclusion of the name, telephone number, and/or e-mail address of the University sponsoring organization or individual member of the University community on material resembling petitions, posters, and leaflets distributed on campus, including material disseminated using campus information technology resources or University Internet access is encouraged, since such attribution promotes or facilitates civility as well as vigorous debate in the academic community. Anonymous public postings without sponsorship of a recognized University organization shall be removed or deleted if a complaint by a member of the University community is lodged with the Office of the Dean of Student Life or the Office of Dean of the Graduate School."

Using the campus technologies or access to network technologies provided by the University under its name, or in any other venue in which you may act as an agent of the University, you must refrain from creating and sending or posting, or causing to be sent or posted, or assisting to create and send or cause to be sent or posted, any malicious, harassing, or libelous messages or statements regarding another person, via e-mail or voice mail, by posting to mailing lists or newsgroups, by posting to the World Wide Web or by inclusion in a video produced for broadcast via the campus network or TigerVideo.

While it is possible to create examples of actions that would not violate the University's code of conduct, those which might be most meaningful would still describe undesirable behavior. For instance, it does not violate University policy for you to send a private e-mail message or leave a private voice mail message detailing your speculations regarding

an individual's sexual orientation, or explaining why you think poorly of someone. But such actions still are not in keeping with the ideals of the University community.

(Adapted from Princeton University)

8. Student Responsibilities

It is the student's responsibility to:

1. read and understand the contents of the university catalog.
2. become familiar with all university policies and procedures.
3. be aware of all university deadlines, including dates for registration, change of registration and fee payment.
4. contribute to the maintenance of a campus environment conducive to intellectual curiosity, civility and diversity.
5. keep the university informed of changes in address, phone number, enrollment changes which might affect financial aid awards and/or any other circumstances which could affect satisfactory progress toward a degree.

Student Expectations

Students are expected to:

1. attend class and complete all assignments in accordance with the expectations established by their instructors and programs of study.
2. conduct themselves in the classroom in a manner which contributes to a positive learning environment for all.
3. familiarize themselves with all university policies and procedures.
4. ask questions and seek clarification, direction and guidance to any class assignment, university policy or procedure which is unclear.

Students may be expected to complete class requirements beyond the published meeting times.

(Adapted from the University of Nevada, Reno)

9. Respect and Responsibilities: Students can expect the instructor to be concerned for the educational experience of each student in the class, respectful of individual differences, encouraging of creativity, knowledgeable of and enthusiastic about the course material, prepared for class, reasonably open and accessible to discuss material and assignments, thorough and prompt in evaluating assignments, and rigorous yet supportive in maintaining high standards for performance.

Students are expected to work, individually and together, to create an atmosphere that is safe, valuing of one another, and open to diverse perspectives. Students are expected to show courtesy, civility, and respect for one another and for the instructor. Comments that

degrade or ridicule another, whether based on individual or cultural differences, are unacceptable.

(Adapted from the University of South Dakota)

10. University Policy Statements

- Refer to the current UMUC Undergraduate Catalog for formal statements of policy concerning Academic Integrity, Attendance, Code of Civility, Code of Student Conduct, Nondiscrimination, Students with Disabilities, and Writing Standards.

(Adapted from the University of Maryland University College)