

Recommendations based on our syllabus audit and best practices from others doing this work elsewhere:

1. Clearly indicate your availability for consultation outside of class to students by including contact information, office hours, and a welcoming statement in your syllabus. This statement could also offer some reasons students might come to office hours (e.g., to get tips on how to study, ask follow-up questions, ask for a letter of recommendation). Not all students feel comfortable seeking out faculty members. This can help close that gap.
2. For our students (and faculty and staff) with vision impairment, post the syllabus in three formats: Word, html, and PDF, emphasize text by underlining and not italicizing, change all font to sans serif (e.g., Arial, Calibri), use a 12-point minimum font, and a 1.5 minimum line spacing. See here for more: [Digital Content Accessibility](#)
3. Consider including a statement about preferred names and personal gender pronouns. This can signal to transgender, gender diverse, and students in general that their identities will be respected.
4. Consider including a statement acknowledging and respecting difference, and setting some general guidelines for classroom participation. This is what I use, adapted from a syllabus created by one of my mentors:

*I expect that you will attend class, having read all the assigned readings. A successful classroom community exists when we all come to class prepared and contribute to the class discussion in a thoughtful, critical, and active manner. Carefully listening to your classmates and building on their contributions will help facilitate a constructive, interactive classroom experience.*

*Please be respectful of your classmates' thoughts and opinions. In this course we will explore a variety of socially sensitive topics. We will engage these topics directly but respectfully in order to explore important mechanisms and theories that underlie beliefs and behaviors with respect to policy domains. Consequently, this course will have an emotional impact on many of us. It will require an ability to listen and think, sometimes with as much dispassion as can be mustered. If you are willing to assume that everyone's perspective is likely to have some merit, however, it is my belief that you will leave this course equipped with strategies for thinking about important and complex social issues.*

*In addition, please be professional in your communications. Be especially mindful of this over email, where tone is difficult to ascertain (e.g., sending me an email with "hey, I need the lecture slides" is not appropriate).*

You might also consider a follow-up discussion with students where they discuss what "respect" looks like and how we might have different interpretations of respect.

Lastly, you might consider encouraging students to take care of their well-being when reading and discussing particularly heavy topics (i.e., *step back, return when you can, come see me if you can't*).

If you would like to write your own DEI statement for your syllabus, [Clemson has a good guide](#) and [UVA CTE has some sample statements](#).

5. Be mindful of who is represented in your readings and who is not. Check to see if authors from underrepresented groups are in the final week/s and/or optional or not on the syllabus at all—this can give the impression that their work is less important. And make sure they are listed in your syllabus!
6. Relatedly, consider using full names (not abbreviated first names) to highlight female authors; people tend to assume authors are male unless otherwise specified. Some faculty even include photos of authors on their slides for this reason.
7. Check use of syllabi for terminology: avoid general use of male pronouns, academic jargon, and cultural idioms (e.g., *assignment will not be a piece of cake*).
8. Make attendance policies and due dates clear and avoid major changes. Tell students how they will know if you have made changes (e.g., you will time stamp your syllabi). Students with work and/or family responsibilities are disproportionately inconvenienced and even hurt by unexpected changes in schedule.
9. Avoid religious holidays for due dates or especially important class periods.