

Sample Syllabus Language **Accessibility & Inclusivity**

This guide includes sample syllabus language for:

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Land Acknowledgement

Land Acknowledgement

The land acknowledgement used at UC Santa Cruz was developed in partnership with the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band Chairman and the [Amah Mutsun Relearning Program at the UCSC Arboretum](#)

The land on which we gather is the unceded territory of the Awaswas-speaking Uypi Tribe. The Amah Mutsun Tribal Band, comprised of the descendants of indigenous people taken to missions Santa Cruz and San Juan Bautista during Spanish colonization of the Central Coast, is today working hard to restore traditional stewardship practices on these lands and heal from historical trauma.

Instructor Resources on Land Acknowledgements

UC Santa Cruz, “[Land Acknowledgement](#)”

Native Land, “Territory Acknowledgement” (<https://native-land.ca/territory-acknowledgement/>)

Micki Luckey and AJ Pluss, “Living on Ohlone Land: What We Learned from Indigenous Women Leaders” (<https://medium.com/suribayarea/living-on-ohlone-land-what-we-learned-from-indigenous-women-leaders-efe3c47b7565>)

The Varsity, “To Properly Acknowledge Indigenous Territory, Go Off Script” (<https://thevarsity.ca/2019/03/16/to-properly-acknowledge-indigenous-territory-go-off-script/>)

Accessibility and Accommodations Statements

Standard Language from the Disability Resource Center (DRC)

UC Santa Cruz is committed to creating an academic environment that supports its diverse student body. If you are a student with a disability who requires accommodations to achieve equal access in this course, please submit your Accommodation Authorization Letter from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to me privately during my office hours or by appointment, preferably within the first two weeks of the quarter. At this time, I would also like us to discuss ways we can ensure your full participation in the course. I encourage all students who may benefit from learning more about DRC services to contact DRC by phone at 831-459-2089 or by email at drc@ucsc.edu.

Sample Personalized Accessibility Statement

Adapted from UC Santa Cruz faculty

I aim to make our learning community as accessible as possible. This means that I aim to provide accessible materials and to create opportunities for different kinds of engagement in our classroom space. If you come across materials that are not accessible to you, or experience a barrier to your participation in a class or meeting, please bring this to my attention and I will gladly work with you to ensure accessibility. If you are a student with a disability (disabilities can include mental health and attention-related, learning, vision, hearing, physical or health impacts) who requires accommodations to achieve equal access in this course, please submit your Accommodation Authorization Letter from the Disability Resource Center (DRC) to me privately during my office hours or by appointment, preferably within the first two weeks of the quarter. At that time, I would also like us to discuss ways we can ensure your full participation in the course. I encourage all students who may benefit from learning more about DRC services to contact the DRC by phone at 831-459-2089 or by email at drc@ucsc.edu.

Inclusivity Statements

Sample Inclusivity Statement (General)

Adapted from University of Iowa College of Education

It is my intent that students from all backgrounds and with all perspectives feel included and are able to learn and achieve their goals in this course. The diversity that all students bring to this class is a resource, strength, and benefit to us all. It is my intent to bring to class materials and activities that embrace a diversity of perspectives, experiences, and positions. Your suggestions for making this learning community as inclusive as possible are encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know if you identify ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups. If any of our class meetings conflict with your religious or cultural events, please let me know so that we can work together to make alternative arrangements.

Sample Inclusivity Statement (Discussion-based Courses)

Adapted from faculty at University of Michigan

In our in-class discussions and dialogues, we will have the opportunity to explore challenging, high-stakes issues and increase our understandings of different perspectives. 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, our classmates, and our own ideas and experiences. Always we will need respect for others. Thus, an important aim of our classroom interactions will be for us to increase our facility with the sometimes difficult conversations that arise inside issues of social justice as we deepen our understandings of multiple perspectives – and make the most of being in a room with people of many backgrounds, experiences, and positions.

Further Ideas for Inclusivity Statements

Adapted from Yale's Poornu Center for Teaching

An inclusivity statement can also provide a space for addressing the following:

- Giving explanations of why certain voices or identities are present or lacking on the syllabus reading list.
- Providing personal stories of how the instructor has been affected by marginalization or lack of diversity in the field or in higher education, or by efforts to promote inclusivity in the field or in higher education.
- Giving examples of how the instructor struggled with the course material as a student, and drawing from student experience to communicate strategies for how to succeed in the course.
- Acknowledging the history of exclusion of people with diverse identities, backgrounds, or ideologies from the field.
- Providing ground rules for discussing hot topics, such as national politics or campus controversies.
- Explaining how specific teaching practices are meant to address the learning needs of diverse students.

Principles of Community

Sample Community Principles Statement

I understand that every classroom represents a rich variety of student backgrounds and perspectives. I am committed to providing an atmosphere for learning that respects and embraces diversity. While working with you to build this community, I ask all of us to:

- share our unique experiences, values, and beliefs
- be open to the views of others
- honor the uniqueness of our colleagues
- appreciate the opportunity that we have to learn from each other in this community
- value each other's opinions and communicate in a respectful manner
- keep confidential discussions that our community has of a personal (or professional) nature
- use this opportunity together to discuss ways in which we can create an inclusive environment in this course and across the university community

Sample Community Principles Statement

Adapted from UC Santa Cruz faculty

I am committed to providing an atmosphere for learning that respects diversity and supports inclusivity. We need to work together to build this community of learning. I ask all members of this class to: (**OR:** We will collaboratively build community guidelines during the first week of the quarter. In addition to those class-generated guidelines, I ask all members of this class to:)

- be open to and interested in the views of others
- consider the possibility that your views may change over the course of the term
- be aware that this course asks you to reconsider some “common sense” notions you may hold
- honor the unique life experiences of your colleagues
- appreciate the opportunity that we have to learn from each other
- listen to each other's opinions and communicate in a respectful manner
- keep confidential discussions that the community has of a personal (or professional) nature
- ground your comments in the texts we are studying. Refer frequently to the texts and make them the focus of your questions, comments, and arguments. This is the single most effective way to ensure respectful discussion and to make the classroom a place where we are all learning together.

Content Advisories

Adapted from the [University of Michigan's LSA Inclusive Teaching Initiative](#)

Content advisories are verbal or written notices that flag the contents of course material so that readers, listeners, or viewers can prepare themselves to adequately engage or, if necessary, disengage for their own wellbeing. “Trigger warnings” refer to a specific variety of content advisories that attempt to forewarn audiences of content that may cause intense physiological and psychological symptoms for people with PTSD and other anxiety disorders. Content advisories and trigger warnings give people the forewarning necessary for them to make use of the strategies that will decrease the harmfulness of encountering triggering material. They are not intended to censure instructors nor invite students to avoid material that challenges them. On the contrary, warning students of challenging material can help their engagement by giving them the ability to take charge of their own health and learning.

Sample Content Advisory Statement (General)

Adapted from educators at UC Santa Cruz

Content Advisory: This course examines some texts, images, and videos that contain descriptions of violence and/or scenes depicting violence. I will do my best to provide individual warnings on the syllabus for course materials and in presentation slides for class content that are particularly sensitive. My hope is that these notifications will help your engagement by allowing you to prepare to work through challenging material. I encourage you to do what you need to care for yourself. If taking care of yourself means that you need to step outside during class, either for a short time or for the rest of the class, you may do so without academic penalty. If you do leave the room for a significant time, please make arrangements to get notes from another student or see me individually to discuss the situation.

[In addition to a general statement, educators may consider adding specific “tags” to specific course materials:]

I’ve included tags for [X, Y, and Z] next to specific course materials on the syllabus. If you have concerns about encountering anything specific in the course material that I have not already tagged and would like me to provide warnings, please come see me or send me an email. I will do my best to flag any requested triggers for you in advance.

Sample Content Advisory Statement (For Community Principles/ “Ground Rules”)

Written by Lynn Weber, Women’s Studies, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC.; modified by Regina Langhout and her Wesleyan University and UCSC psychology students, as well as Leslie López and her community studies students. Some adaptations made based on nonviolent communication strategies.

We understand that the material in this course (reading, films, discussion) may be disturbing, and may re-stimulate (trigger) upsetting experiences from people’s past. We understand that there is no way to predict which material or words may affect which individuals, although we will strive to be respectful and sensitive to others in our communication. We understand we each take responsibility for seeking our own balance of self-care and growth and appreciate community support as we pursue our path.