

# Sample Syllabus Statements

These samples include resources from the [American Society for Engineering Education](#), information relevant for [remote teaching/Covid-19 pandemic](#), and examples from the [Literature Sciences and Arts \(LSA\) College](#) at University of Michigan.

## American Society for Engineering Education

### Diversity Statement

[https://docs.asee.org/public/LGBTQ/Syllabus\\_Inclusion\\_Statement.pdf](https://docs.asee.org/public/LGBTQ/Syllabus_Inclusion_Statement.pdf)

### *Syllabus Inclusion Statement*

It is my intention that students from all backgrounds and perspectives will be well served by this course, and that the diversity that students bring to this class will be viewed as an asset. I welcome individuals of all ages, backgrounds, beliefs, ethnicities, genders, gender identities, gender expressions, national origins, religious affiliations, sexual orientations, socioeconomic background, family education level, ability – and other visible and nonvisible differences. All members of this class are expected to contribute to a respectful, welcoming and inclusive environment for every other member of the class. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated.

### *Lived Name/Pronoun Syllabus Statement.*

I will gladly honor your request to address you by an alternate name or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

## Resources related to Enhanced Remote Teaching/Covid-19

### ***Language acknowledging the challenging times***

“Students and instructors are all adjusting to the changes and regulations that have been put in place this term in response to COVID-19. I hope that we will all work together as a community to adapt to these times and this new situation as best as we can. I have tried to add flexibility to our course structure and assignments to accommodate anyone who may now be lacking resources they originally thought they would have available. However, if you have suggestions for how we might support your learning in this course, during these trying times, please do not hesitate to let us know.”

### ***Language Regarding Recording Classes***

“Course lectures may be audio/video recorded and made available to other students in this course. As part of your participation in this course, you may be recorded. If you do not wish to be recorded, please contact [instructor/GSI email address] the first week of class (or as soon as you enroll in the course, whichever is latest) to discuss alternative arrangements.”

“Students are prohibited from recording/distributing any class activity without written permission from the instructor, except as necessary as part of approved accommodations for students with disabilities. Any approved recordings may only be used for the student’s own private use. Please let me know if you have any questions.”

### **Language Regarding the Use of Face Masks**

“In accordance with Gov. Whitmer’s executive order on face coverings, all persons are required to wear face coverings when entering enclosed public spaces, including campus buildings and workspaces, where social distancing cannot be maintained. Therefore, if you arrive to class without a facemask, you will be asked to leave.”

## Resources from LSA Faculty Handbook

On p. 14 of the LSA Faculty Handbook, you will find some suggestions for syllabus statements. Below are some additional examples of language U-M instructors have used on their syllabi to set expectations around a range of policies and practices. We provide these because faculty often find it useful to consider a range of models and learn about colleagues' approaches when developing course policies.

You can learn more about norms in your department or related disciplines at U-M by reviewing historic syllabi, which are available electronically through the LSA Course Guide ([www.lsa.umich.edu/cg/](http://www.lsa.umich.edu/cg/)). Log in to your umich account, choose a course, and scroll to the section near the bottom titled "syllabi."

Syllabus statements and policies can be one way to signal your commitment to [inclusive teaching](#): for instance, they contribute to transparency in the learning environment and can support students' sense of academic belonging by acknowledging in a non-stigmatizing way a range of student needs and experiences.

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### Accessibility and Disability

*This statement has been endorsed by SACUA, the University's faculty senate, and is recommended by Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD):*

"If you think you need an accommodation for a disability, please let me/us know at your earliest convenience. Some aspects of this course, the assignments, the in-class activities, and the way the course is usually taught may be modified to facilitate your participation and progress. As soon as you make me aware of your needs, we can work with the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) to help us determine appropriate academic accommodations. SSD (734-763-3000; [ssd.umich.edu/](http://ssd.umich.edu/)) typically recommends accommodations through a Verified Individualized Services and Accommodations (VISA) form. I/we will treat any information you provide in as confidential a manner as possible."

*Some instructors include additional language to foster a welcoming environment for students with disabilities. For example:*

"If you need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability, please contact me to discuss your specific needs. Solutions that benefit one student can sometimes end up benefiting the class as a whole, so feel free to approach me with any questions or suggestions, including those that lie outside official SSD programs." (Victoria Langland, History)

“Your success in this class is very important to me. All people learn differently and need accommodations and adjustments to help them learn. If there are aspects of this course that prevent you from learning or exclude you, please let me know as soon as possible. Together, we’ll develop strategies to meet both your needs and the requirements of the Course.” (Charlotte Karem Albrecht, American Culture & Women’s Studies)

### **Student Well-Being**

*Some instructors choose to include statements that identify general resources for supporting student well-being. For example:*

“As a student, you may experience a range of issues that can negatively impact your learning, such as anxiety, depression, interpersonal or sexual violence, difficulty eating or sleeping, loss/grief, and/or alcohol/drug problems. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance and affect your ability to participate in day-to-day activities. In order to support you during such challenging times, the University of Michigan provides a number of confidential resources to all enrolled students, including Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) (734-764-8312; [caps.umich.edu/contact](http://caps.umich.edu/contact)), Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center (SAPAC) (24-Hour Crisis Line: 734-936-3333; [sapac.umich.edu](http://sapac.umich.edu)), Psychiatric Emergency Services (734-996-4747), and Services for Students with Disabilities (734-763-3000; 734-615-4461 [TDD]; 734-619-6661 [VP]; [ssdoffice@umich.edu](mailto:ssdoffice@umich.edu)).”

## **Sexual Misconduct and Mandatory Reporting**

*The following statement is recommended by the University's Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center:*

[Our school] is committed to fostering a safe, productive learning environment. Title IX and [our school] policy prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, which regards sexual misconduct — including harassment, domestic and dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. We understand that sexual violence can undermine students' academic success and we encourage students who have experienced some form of sexual misconduct to talk to someone about their experience, so they can get the support they need.

Confidential support and academic advocacy can be found with the Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center (SAPAC) on their 24-hour crisis line, 734-936-3333 and at <http://sapac.umich.edu/>. Alleged violations can be non-confidentially reported to the Office for Institutional Equity (OIE) at [institutional.equity@umich.edu](mailto:institutional.equity@umich.edu). Reports to law enforcement can be made to University of Michigan Police Department at 734-763-3434.

*Some instructors choose to include additional guidance to students about their responsibilities if students disclose information related to sexual misconduct. For example:*

"Confidentiality and Mandatory Reporting: As instructors, one of our responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment on our campus. Dr. Wittkopp also has a mandatory reporting responsibility related to her role as Associate Chair for Graduate Studies in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology. Because of that role, she is required to share information regarding sexual misconduct or information about a crime that may have occurred on U-M's campus with the University. Students may speak to someone confidentially by contacting SAPAC's Crisis Line at (734) 936-3333." (Patricia Wittkopp and Meghan Duffy, Biology)

*Further information on statements related to sexual misconduct can be found on CRLT's blog at <http://www.crlt.umich.edu/node/81392> and the SAPAC website at <https://sapac.umich.edu/article/faculty-resources-sample-syllabus-language>*

## **Academic Integrity**

"All students and teams are required to abide by the academic honesty guidelines of the University of Michigan. Among other things, this means: (1) Students and teams must submit only their own, original work in fulfillment of course requirements; (2) Consulted works must be cited using an accepted documentation style; and (3) Students and teams must provide truthful representations to me on issues such as contributions to group projects and reasons for missing class. I reserve the right to clarify how this policy applies on specific assignments prior to the commencement of those assignments. Students and/or teams requiring additional clarification are strongly urged to consult with me before submitting questionable work. Violating this policy may cause a student and/or a team to suffer severe grade penalties, academic probation, and/or expulsion." (Sara Soderstrom, Organizational Studies)

"We urge you to consult <http://www.lsa.umich.edu/academicintegrity/> for more information on your rights and responsibilities as a student. Cheating will not be tolerated. If you are caught cheating, you will be required to meet with an instructor who will determine how to handle the situation. LSA expects all incidents of academic misconduct to be reported to the Office of the Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Education. Examples of cheating include copying off another person's exam, working with another student on the LaunchPad Portal quizzes, submitting answers copied from internet sources without proper citation, submitting discussion work copied from another student, and clicking in responses for another student on their i>clicker (or having

another student click in responses for you).” (Patricia Wittkopp and Meghan Duffy, Biology)

“Building on others’ words and ideas is an essential element of effective scholarship. However, we must give credit to those whose words and ideas we incorporate into our writing. Using someone else’s words, ideas, or work without proper attribution is plagiarism, and such an act is considered a serious ethical violation within the university community. If you complete an assignment for one course and then submit that same assignment as original work for a different course, you are also committing plagiarism. If you have questions about how to reference material that you find in books or online, please let me know. If you commit an act of academic dishonesty in this course either by plagiarizing someone’s work or by allowing your own work to be misused by another person, you will face the following consequences: You will fail the assignment and may fail the course. I will forward your case, with an explanatory letter and all pertinent materials, to the LSA Assistant Dean of Student Affairs. The Dean will determine an appropriate penalty, which may involve academic probation and/or community service. If you commit plagiarism while you are already on probation for plagiarism, you may be asked to leave the University.” (Meg Sweeney, DAAS and English)

### **Respectful Engagement**

“The University of Michigan Biological Station is committed to creating a culture of engaged learning and establishing a climate of inclusion and harmony. We are all here to learn from each other. In this spirit, we will work to actualize UMBS’ community standards of integrity and respect by practicing active listening and respectful communication. By acknowledging differences amongst us in our backgrounds, skills, interests, and values, we will collectively grow and improve our understanding of the world. Together, we strive to cultivate a camp where each individual feels a sense of belonging and well-being. This atmosphere is most conducive to teaching, learning, and building community.” (U-M Biological Station)

“Class Conduct: A positive learning environment relies upon creating an atmosphere where diverse perspectives can be expressed, especially in a course that focuses on pressing and controversial social and political issues. Each student is encouraged to take an active part in class discussions and activities. Honest and respectful dialogue is expected. Disagreement and challenging of ideas in a supportive and sensitive manner is encouraged. Hostility and disrespectful behavior is not acceptable. Just as we expect others to listen attentively to our own views, we must reciprocate and listen to others when they speak, especially when we disagree with them. However, in this class, our emphasis will be on engaging in the mutual exploration of issues as presented in the course readings as scholars rather than in defending points of view we have formed outside the classroom.” (Evelyn Alsutany, American Studies and Ethnicity, University of S. California)

“In our structured and unstructured discussions and dialogues, we also will have many opportunities to explore some 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 second aim of our course necessarily 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 – whatever our backgrounds, experiences, or positions.” (Alisse Portnoy, English)

“...At the beginning of the course, we will create discussion guidelines together, which will help us create a space where everyone has equal access to participation. This is especially important in a class that focuses on controversial social and political issues. Just as we expect others to listen attentively to our own views, we must also listen to others when they speak, especially when we disagree with them. However, in this class, our emphasis will be on exploring the issues in the course readings as scholars rather than in defending points of view we have formed outside the classroom. Please see me at any time during the semester if you feel that the

class atmosphere is not conducive to your participation.” (Charlotte Karem Albrecht, American Culture and Women’s Studies)

### **Attendance**<sup>1</sup>

“Attendance & tardiness: Attendance is essential to the success of this class. Therefore, each unexcused absence after two will result in the lowering of your final grade. Excused absences include those for documented illness, family tragedy, religious observance, or travel for inter-collegiate athletics. Five absences may result in failure for the course. Whether you are excused or not, if you miss a class, you are expected to make up the work. This means, if you miss on a day that involves an in-class exercise, you must make arrangements to complete the exercise on your own time. Additionally, I will count you as absent if you are more than 15 minutes late to class, sleeping, texting, emailing, and most especially, if you come to class unprepared to discuss the day’s assigned readings. I reserve the right to hold pop quizzes to spot check for preparedness.” (Melanie Yergeau, English)

“Preparing before class and taking part in the in-class learning activities improve the effectiveness and efficiency of your studies. [...] We use in-class assessments using i>clickers. Full credit for a given class is awarded for any response to questions. We allow you to miss up to 5 classes for any reason without penalty. Sickness, participation at sporting events or other official University events, personal emergencies, religious holidays are all included in your 5 allowed absences.” (Joel Bregman and Eric Bell, Astronomy)

### **Electronics**

“Except for an emergency, cell phones should not be in sight or used in class. Laptops, tablets, and other electronic devices should be used only in conjunction with exercises directly related to class activity. We recognize that laptops can be a useful way to take notes or even to search out additional information. However, inappropriate use—defined as use that inhibits the learning experience for you or for others in the room—is prohibited.” (Stephen Berrey, History)

“Aside from required iClickers, electronics (cell phones, laptops, iPods, tablets, etc.) are not permitted in lecture or section. Please put them away before class begins. If you must use a computer for notetaking in lecture, you may apply for a waiver to this policy by emailing the professors in the first two weeks of class. If granted a waiver, you will be given one of the seats in lecture (first front rows) designated for computer use.” (Paulina Alberto, History)

### **Communications**

“Please be professional and courteous when writing emails to the professors and GSIs. Remember, these are official communications, not texts to a friend (for example, begin with “Dear Professor” rather than “hey” or “I need...”). It is helpful if you write “History 101” in the subject line. We will try to respond as promptly as possible, but it might take 24-48 hours (longer during weekends).” (Paulina Alberto, History)

“I’m happy to correspond with you over e-mail if you need to make an appointment. Questions, comments and observations are best shared in class. In general, you can expect me to answer a short e-mail within 24 hours, except between 5 pm on Friday and 9 am on Monday or as otherwise noted. When e-mailing, please provide a subject line that makes it as clear as possible what you are e- mailing about.” (Robin Queen, Linguistics)

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<sup>1</sup> These attendance policies were designed prior to Covid-19. You may need to adjust attendance expectations for remote or hybrid courses.

## Regrading

“Grade Contestation Policy: If you wish to dispute a grade on any assignment, you must submit a statement in writing explaining the mistake you think has been made and what alternate grade you suggest. Give your statement to your GSI (by email or on paper) at least a few hours before you discuss it with her in office hours. Your GSI will make a decision, which you may bring up to me if you like. You must follow this procedure with your GSI first, and then bring me copies of both the paper and your written statement. We only discuss grades in private; please do not approach me or your GSI in lecture or in section to discuss your grade. If you simply want to understand what you can do to improve your next paper, you do not have to follow these procedures and we will be happy to help you during our regular office hours.” (Anna Kirkland, Women’s Studies)

“You may submit a brief **written** explanation of your request for additional credit; make sure to include your name and UM ID number on the request. You should explain the **scientific basis** for the dispute. Your request will be returned to you as soon as possible with an explanation of the instructor's decision. Requests for re-grades should be handed in **no later than one week following the day that exam grades are posted.**” (Orie Shafer, Biology)