

# INCLUSIVE TEACHING RESOURCE

## DISCUSSION GROUND RULES

This resource is part of the **Inclusive Teaching Toolkit** which is designed to assist faculty in understanding the concepts of inclusive teaching and incorporating these ideas into your classroom. This toolkit is part of the [GWSPH DEI Initiative](#) that is being developed to respond to a societal call for social justice by changing the way GWSPH works to integrate DEI into every sphere of our work. This initiative encompasses Academics, Research, Practice, and Operations. The **Inclusive Teaching Toolkit** is one of many aspects of the Academic branch of the initiative

### BACKGROUND

The following ground rules were designed to encourage participation and foster an inclusive learning environment. Professors should discuss, review, and revise with the class at the beginning of each semester. Feel free to tailor the Ground Rules to your particular classroom. Remember that this classroom is a safe space for disagreement. The goal of class discussion is not that everyone agrees, but that everyone gain new insights and be able to discuss difference respectfully. All students are expected to contribute and remain open to the ideas and experiences of others. Class discussions are private and should not be shared without permission.

1. Respect the opinions of others in class discussions. When you disagree, make sure that you use arguments to criticize the idea, not the person.
2. Be an active listener even if you don't agree with what is being asserted. If you decide to object or make a comment, it should be clear that you were listening.
3. Take notes to help you remember key points and to recall questions or comments you want to make but need to hold off on so as to not interrupt or change the subject prematurely.
4. Don't interrupt.
5. Be conscious of body language. Nonverbal responses can also indicate disrespect. Online this might involve obviously doing something other than listening (e.g., taking a cell call, not looking attentively).
6. When offering an opinion or answering a question, support your assertion with arguments and evidence, not generalizations.
7. Don't attempt to dominate discussion.
8. If you are nervous about speaking in class, remember that your perspective is valid and the class deserves to hear it.
9. Speak from your own experience. Use "I" not "we" or "you."
10. If a statement is made that offends you or you think might offend others, speak up and challenge it but always show respect for the person who made it. If online, use the feature to "raise your hand" to ensure you are called on.
11. Students whose behavior is disruptive may be asked to leave the room.
12. Private conversations should be avoided —especially when others are speaking.
13. Texting is not allowed during class. Laptops can be used for note-taking and class-related activities only.

*Based on content from [Creating a Positive Classroom Climate for Diversity](#) and with permission from UCLA's office of Diversity & Faculty Development.*