

Sample Syllabus Statements  
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Discussion Rules of Thumb:

1. *Step up, Step Back.* Be a good listener. Self-monitor your air time and truly listen to what others are saying so you can build on ideas. Don't just rehearse what you want to say next. Wait if you like to take a lot of turns. Remember "Step Up, Step Back." If you tend to wait for others to talk, then consider your own need to "step up." If you tend to dominate discussion, then consider your need to "step back." Engaged listening is just as important as speaking. Ask yourself: Does this build on what is being said? If not, can I write it down and wait for another opening? Please don't be a social loafer. Please contribute by speaking and guiding. If you find a few classes have gone by without speaking, it's probably time to step up your game. And I'll encourage you to look at others when speaking—not just at me.
2. *Be considerate about self-disclosure.* Too much self-disclosure can make others uncomfortable. Ask yourself if contributing a personal anecdote will help to build discussion or contribute to the topic. We have all read one text before class. Your own narrative is important, but we have not experienced it or read it, and your narrative can be difficult text to evaluate or critique as a group, so be judicious in your sharing. Discussion, debate, and dialogue are all different forms of communication. Most of the time, we will be discussing various topics, trying to present positions to one another using evidence, possibly to persuade or build consensus. Sometimes we will practice dialogue, or listening to understand one another, rather than to persuade, argue, win, or come to a resolution.
3. *Assume good intention in others.* Class is a space in which we can learn. Let people revise their positions, and take a moment to breathe if you feel a negative reaction forming. Don't hesitate to contact me if you want to talk about class.
4. *Be open to learning.* Rather than being hard-nosed about a stance, consider the opportunity to reframe or tweak your own ideas. It's more than ok to say, "I didn't know that" or "You made me think differently" or "I changed my mind."

Respectful Norms in the Classroom

Let's strive to uphold respectful norms of interaction in the classroom. Please arrive to class on time (if not a few minutes early) and plan to stay for the duration. If you have any concerns about the class, please let one of us know by speaking to one of us, preferably before or after class. If someone says something you do not agree with, we welcome debate; however, assume good intent from one another and ask clarifying questions. We want your classroom experience to be interesting and engaging. Please do not use your laptop, unless you are taking notes. Please put your phone on silent and step outside if you need to use your phone for an emergency. Our weekly meeting is brief; let's make the most of it.

Contacting me:

The best way to reach me is to approach me before or after class, or to send me an email, letting me know your question or the nature of your question.

### Checking your email:

I am expecting you to check your Mount Holyoke email on a regular basis (once per day) as this is the mechanism by which I can send updates about class.

### Readings/Assignments:

We are using Moodle to post readings and pre-assignments. You will use Moodle to submit your post-assignments. We cannot accept Mac pages. We can accept .doc, .docx, and .rtf. Please plan ahead and identify a way to submit your assignment using one of these formats. The LITS helpdesk (or email ris-d@mtholyoke.edu) is a good resource to assist you if you need to save into a portable format.

### Students with Disabilities:

In order to receive reasonable academic accommodations for a disability, students must register with the Office of AccessAbility Services (<https://www.mtholyoke.edu/accessability>). This office will provide a letter describing the appropriate accommodations that you must then submit to the instructors.

### Honor Code and Proper Citation of Sources:

For all written work in this course students are expected to adhere to principles of academic integrity and honesty as contained in the College's Honor Code. This means that all work you submit for this course must be your own. If you do use the ideas of someone else in your written work, you must provide the appropriate citation. A useful starting point is the online tutorial on the Proper Citation of Sources (<http://www.mtholyoke.edu/lits/ris/Plagiarism/correct1.htm>). If you ever have any questions or concerns as you complete work for this course, please contact one of the instructors for clarification.

### Attendance/Missing Class:

Attendance in class is important, especially since the class is speaking-intensive. If you miss too many classes, your grade will be negatively affected (as will your engagement with class). As a general rule, if you are going to be absent, you should first email me or leave me a voicemail (or ask a friend to) simply saying that you will not be in class and when I can expect to see you next. (I do not need to know why you are not going to be in class.) It **is** appropriate to ask a peer in the class what you missed; this should be your second action. I will upload materials (such as handouts) into Ella and so that way you can access the materials you missed. Please plan to stay after class, come early to a class, or stop by office hours to talk about class, if needed (this is your third action). You may email me to ask me the best course of action. *However, please do not email to ask for a class summary.*

### Deadlines/Late Assignments/Grading:

Please map out your commitments and plan ahead. If you have special needs regarding assignments, please talk to me in **advance**, meaning you should do so at least a week before the assignment is due. Requests for extensions that are made 24 hours before an assignment is due will generally not be accepted. I do not plan to accept late work. I will try to be fair to you as well as the whole class, but please regard deadlines with responsibility. If you have a question about how something is graded, please ask me about this individually, preferably after class.