DIVERSITY FACULTY GUIDE

The following Diversity Guidelines have been adapted for use at Dominican as a supplement to the institutional syllabus model/outline adopted and ratified by the Faculty Forum in Spring 2017.

Guidelines for Diversity in Curricula and Syllabi

This supplement is provided for school, department, program, and faculty use in developing curricula and syllabi that:

* Reflect and uphold the University’s[**Diversity Declaration**](https://www.dominican.edu/about/university-leadership/academic-affairs/diversity/office-of-diversity-lp);
* Meet the diversity assessment requirements for Academic Program Review at the University (Dominican Program Review Manual, July 2015, p. 9); and,
* Address the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC) Standards 1.1, 1.4, 2.7, and 4.4 (2013 WSCUC Standards, April 2015 revised version).

As such, these are very general suggestions, and depend on the context and discipline of the Academic Program, its role in the departmental and university curriculum, the level and size of your class, and your own preferred teaching styles.

Course Content

* Problematize terminology, language, and basic disciplinary concepts; allow new material to challenge basic concepts and to suggest different ways to approach materials in the course.
* Make explicit the epistemological tensions between a focus on community and one on diversity, a focus on the global and a focus on the regional or local, the need to generalize and the mandate to avoid facile generalizations and attend to the particular.
* Ask new questions about all material. Do not limit consideration only to gender for women; race/ethnicity for people of color; national-identity for recent immigrants and foreign nationals; sexuality for gays and lesbians; class for working-class people.
* Think about destabilizing assumptions of centrality when deciding how to begin your course, make assignments, etc. For example, do not implicitly identify one kind of experience, one culture, one nation, one body of art and literature as normative, as central, relegating others to the margins or to the categories of "variations" and "deviations."
* Mark inclusions and exclusions. For example, not "a top priority for women is pay equity at work," but an identification of which women (white middle class women in the U.S.?); not "the family," but an identification of what kind of family, where, such as “heterosexual nuclear families in modern western countries.” Marking usually unmarked categories can remind students that that there are other groups, forms, social contexts with a legitimacy of their own.
* Create opportunities in papers and presentations—any work that involves additional reading and research—for students to explore diverse materials beyond the assigned reading for the course.
* Consider making a discussion of structures and processes concrete through the use of materials speaking to personal or individual experience (e.g., in films, fiction, autobiography, poetry). Conversely, avoid presenting the stories of individual lives as wholly representative of a culture; contextualize with broader data.
* Avoid representing groups or individuals as victims or as exoticized "others.” Use "Empathy and realism, not sympathy and paternalism” (Jan Monk). Balance discussions of oppression with discussions of agency. Avoid taking "culturally challenging practices" like foot-binding, sati, etc. out of context; locate them in the histories and cultures of which they are a part, and draw analogies between them and practices and issues that will (or should) be more familiar to Western students (e.g., radical cosmetic surgeries, the history of like practices and hysterectomy in Victorian England and the U.S.). To critique such practices, cite the words and organizing efforts of activists from the regions in question.

Syllabus Structure

* Integrate material on gender/race/ethnicity, class, sexuality, national/cultural identity, etc., throughout the course.  Don't confine it to a single section of your syllabus.
* Re-examine the overall structure of your syllabus. For chronological structures, consider what events, activities, etc., are valorized by the periodization of the syllabus. For thematic syllabi, consider whose experience the themes reflect and/or exclude. For developmental syllabi, consider what developmental model is being imposed on the knowledge, and whether or not that model is exclusive.
* In engendering, diversifying, and internationalizing courses, thematic or topical organizations may work better than chronological ones. For international courses, consider focusing on a few carefully selected themes or issues across two-four regions. Don't try to cover the whole world.  Include diversity within regions and countries.

Assignments

* Create assignments which, ideally, encourage students to include materials on gender, race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, and/or region, country, rural-urban axis, etc., in their work, or at least work which can be completed equally well using such material and perspectives.
* Make assignments methodologically and epistemologically diverse.  They should push students to ask inclusive questions, to use different approaches, and to think in a variety of ways.
* Consider assignments that teach students to explore nontraditional sources of information (e.g., their own and their families' experiences; the histories and experiences of other students; popular culture and mass media; etc.).

Grading

* Make evaluation criteria clear for each assignment and for the course as a whole. Write them out; students with learning disabilities will especially appreciate this, but all students will benefit from it.
* Combine several kinds of evaluation (e.g., by the instructor, by peers, by the student himself or herself).
* Give students some control over the evaluation process through elements of contract grading, revision processes, etc. Give early feedback.

Classroom Process

* Consider a model in which instructor and students are co-inquirers. Such a model makes it easier to introduce material on which an instructor is not an "expert."
* Make students significant sources of knowledge for each other, not only by drawing on their experience where appropriate but also by creating structures in which they share the knowledge gained from their research with their classmates.
* Vary classroom processes so that a range of approaches, which may favor students with a range of learning styles, is used such as lectures, rotating chair, panels, discussions, share and pair, simulations, games; audio, visual and kinesthetic modalities etc.
* Be aware of who speaks, whose ideas get valorized by other students (and the instructor), and who sits where in the classroom. Use various strategies: small groups, brief written exercises to open class, going around the circle, changing room arrangements to disrupt patterns that have developed and to create more ways to include more students.
* Ask students to share responsibility for the inclusivity of the classroom process.
* Use conferences with students to help them develop their interests. Do not advise students about what work to pursue on the basis of your assumptions about which group they belong to.  Do not assume that the student with a Spanish accent will want to do a project on Mexican or Mexican American women, that women students won't want to do quantitative work, etc.
* If "differences" in accent, race, nationality, ability, sexuality emerge as teaching issues in a class, try to avoid either shoving them under the rug or letting them lead to an explosion.  Listen openly to special needs and to “sides”, encourage students to learn from one another, and decide judiciously when it is time to move on. If appropriate, seek advice or help from relevant campus offices (e.g. Center for Diversity, Disabled Student Services, Human Resources, English as a Second Language institutes, etc.).
* Pay attention to your own and students' comments before and after class. Be aware of which students you interact with, and on which issues. Remember, that the informal curriculum matters too.

*Sources: Based on a handout from Wendy Kolmar, Drew University, The New Jersey Project, and on comments by Janice Monk, Director, Southwest Institute for Research on women, in a syllabus revision workshop at the University of Maryland at College Park. Revised and expanded by Deborah Rosenfelt, Director, Curriculum Transformation Project, University of Maryland at College Park. Adapted from the original for internal use only at Dominican University of California – Office of Diversity of Diversity and Equity/spring 2005/updated spring 2017.*

STEPS INVOLVED IN TRANSFORMING A COURSE

**1. Define Learning Goals (What do students in your field need to know about?)**

* The history of diverse groups; their writings, theories, and patterns of participation
* The social dynamics of identity formation and change
* Structures of power and privilege in society; prejudice, discrimination, and stereotyping
* Patterns of communication and interaction within and among different cultural groups
* Theories of personal, institutional, and societal change

**2. Question Traditional Concepts**

* Have traditional ways of organizing content in this course obscured, distorted or excluded certain ideas or groups?
* What new research is available that addresses past distortions and exclusions?
* How will the course change if I include this new research?
* How might a change in this syllabus affect its relation to the rest of the curriculum?

**3. Understand Student Diversity**

* What kinds of diverse perspectives and experiences will students bring to the class?
* How can I assess students’ prior knowledge of race, class, gender, etc.?
* How can I incorporate diverse voices without relying on students to speak for different groups?
* How will my own characteristics and background affect the learning environment?
* Will some students see me as a role model more readily than others?
* How can I teach to all students?
* What examples, writings can illustrate these topics?
* Is there a new thematic approach to this material that will help to foreground cultural diversity?
* How do I integrate new material so that it’s not simply an “add-on”?
* What teaching strategies will facilitate student learning of this new material?

**4. Select Materials and Activities**

* If the course topics remain the same, what new research, examples, writings can illustrate these topics?
* Is there a new thematic approach to this material that will help to foreground cultural diversity?
* How do I integrate new material so that it’s not simply an “add-on”?
* What teaching strategies will facilitate student learning of this new material?

**5. How do I prepare to teach a transformed course?**

* What are my strengths and limitations relative to the new content and teaching techniques?
* How will I assess student learning in the transformed course?
* How will I handle difficult or controversial subjects in class discussion?
* What resources are available to assist faculty members in transforming courses?

*Source: Betty Schmitz, Ph.D., Director of the Curriculum Transformation Project, University of Washington.*

Source: <https://www.dominican.edu/about/university-leadership/academic-affairs/diversity/diversity-faculty-guide>