

How Can I Build an Antiracist Syllabus?

Presented by:

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Amy B. Mulnix spent the first 25 years of her career teaching biology at Earlham College, a Quaker-affiliated institution, where respect for all persons and social justice permeated curriculum and pedagogy. She now directs a Faculty Center at Franklin and Marshall College and works where she supports faculty across the arc of their careers and the scopes of their academic identities. She has specialized in evidence-based practices that achieve inclusion as well as equity-mindedness.



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Our nation's history of the land and spaces we occupy is connected to histories of violations of basic human rights, including displacement, genocide, and slavery. This is part of the reason that we are committed to creating equitable and just educational opportunities. Thank you for joining us in this work.



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WHO AM I?

- ▶ Faculty developer
- ▶ 25+ year STEM educator
- ▶ Quaker-ish
- ▶ First-gen college student
- ▶ White, female-identifying
- ▶ On the journey

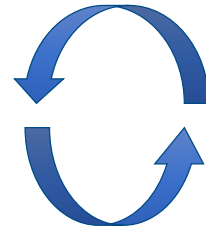


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An antiracist pedagogy

provides an **ongoing counternarrative** to structural racism, stereotype threat, micro and macro aggressions, imposter syndrome, lack of familiarity with American higher ed, and the many other ways minoritized individuals are systematically disadvantaged.



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An antiracist syllabus:

- Creates a sense of belonging.
- Invites partnership.
- Communicates a growth mindset.
- Provides transparency.
- Values students' identities and experiences.
- Communicates a social justice perspective.



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Example: Academic integrity statement

Academic integrity is an essential component of any learning community. I want you to be successful in this course, and there are many opportunities for assistance. Achieving grades that do not represent your own work is not true success. Stress, lack of sleep, demands beyond being a student, and completing assignments at the last minute can contribute to poor decision-making. If you find yourself tempted to cross the line, I encourage you to speak with me so we can strategize, discuss ways you can enhance your own learning experiences, and make you truly successful.



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Example: Grading expectation statement

Grade expectations: For a mid-level course such as this one, my goals for you are to learn not just content but also skills that are relevant to the discipline. I'll construct exams and projects so that about 80% of the points measure comprehension. But I also want you to learn how to do things with our content (e.g., apply it to problems, integrate it with other classes). Don't panic; we'll have numerous class activities that give you practice and feedback. Students that know the content will earn in the C+ to B- range. Earning higher grades will indicate you are developing the kinds of sophisticated skills of a professional in this field.



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Example: Assignment description

There is a major project that will span most of the semester. It is broken into segments not only to help you manage time, but also so that I can provide feedback so you can improve your work. This project is designed to let you explore a topic of interest to you, to guide your development of skills important to your advanced learning, and to provide alternative ways beyond exams and essays for you to demonstrate your knowledge. I love this assignment, and I think you will, too.



Check your syllabus

- Who are you?
- Inclusion statement
- Title IX statement
- Extension policy
- Images and quotes
- Graphical representations
- Inclusion of student resources and success tips
- Explanation of choice of authors





Example: Group work statement

Group Work: You will be working in groups regularly. While it is important to complete the assigned task, it is as, if not more important, that the contributions of all members of the group be sought and respected. This means that you will need to examine your unconscious assumptions and stereotypes. We will discuss the materials in the module “Myths of Group Work” in an upcoming class.



Setting Expectations for Group Work

Common Assumptions	My Expectations
Groups have a single leader.	Leadership is distributed among group members.
Group leaderships is about dominating and directing.	Quality group leaders seek consensus, equitable participation.
Persons who are quiet do not comprehend or are disinterested in the assignment.	Persons who are quiet have numerous contributions to make and the group should seek to make the space for those contributions.
Language learners cannot contribute to the task at the same level as fluent English speakers.	While cultural and language differences may be at play, fluent English speakers should not assume a lack of understanding or motivation of language learners.





Setting Expectations for Group Work

Common Assumptions	My Expectations
Intellectual understanding is the most important contribution a person can make.	Intellectual understanding is important but group members that promote shared contributions through consensus building, reflection, empathy, and conflict resolution are especially successful group members.
Mistakes and a lack of understanding are problematic for a group's function.	Mistakes and a lack of understanding are necessary in the learning process.
All members of the group have the same amount of time to devote to the project.	Many students have life responsibilities beyond coursework. While all members of the group need to make substantial contributions to the project, some flexibility may be necessary.
It is ok in group work to allow other persons to do more of the work.	Not carrying your share of the effort of a group is especially disrespectful and damaging to an academic community. If you find yourself in a situation in which you are having difficulty completing tasks on time, the responsible thing to do is to speak with your group members and/or me. We can more than likely work out a solution.



Summary

Antiracist syllabi embed evidence-based practices to provide an **ongoing daily counternarrative** to the barriers to the success of students minoritized due to race or ethnicity.





An antiracist classroom

Creates a sense of belonging.

Invites partnership.

Communicates a growth mindset.

Provides transparency.

Values students' identities and experiences.

Communicates a social justice perspective.



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Thank you!

Tell us what you think:



<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/antiracist-syllabus>