



Gender Equity in the Classroom and Beyond

Sample Classroom Policies

How we structure and manage our classrooms can help promote an inclusive, respectful, and welcoming climate that invites all students to participate and learn. Here are sample classroom policies that you might consider implementing and that can be written into syllabi.

Establishing Ground Rules for Discussion

This is an example of language that can be especially useful for courses that will be discussion-based. You can also have students develop their own agreed-upon rules for interaction in the classroom: this could be done in the first session, then typed up and distributed to the class.

We will use these ground rules to ensure both the quality and equity of discussion. We will all benefit from discussions that are thoughtful and spirited: this classroom is a place where you can be passionate about the subject, but we do not want our conversations to descend into arguments. We also want to be sure that everyone has a chance to be heard, and that we are working together toward a greater understanding of the material, rather than contributing disjointed pieces.

- Listen actively and attentively.
- Ask for clarification if you are confused.
- Do not interrupt one another.
- Challenge one another, but do so respectfully. Disagreements are natural and welcome in scholarly discussion. So are arguments. But arguments are not contests. You should grant the same courtesy and respect to the people with whom you disagree that you would want for yourself.
- Critique ideas, not people.

- Do not offer opinions without supporting evidence.
- You do not have to express your own opinion on a subject. You are also free to change your mind on any topic at any time.
- Avoid put-downs (even humorous ones).
- Take responsibility for the quality of the discussion.
- Build on one another's comments; work toward shared understanding.
- Always have your book/readings in front of you.
- Do not monopolize discussion.
- Speak from your own experience, without generalizing.
- Students bring lots of interesting experiences to the classroom, and you are encouraged to bring up your experience when it is relevant to class discussion (and when you feel comfortable doing so). Everyone's personal experience deserves respect. But if you bring up your own experience in class, please recognize that it becomes a public topic for discussion. Others may interpret your experience differently than you do, and they are free to respectfully disagree with your interpretation.
- If you are offended by anything said during discussion, acknowledge it immediately.
- Consider anything that is said in class strictly confidential.

Policy on Children in Class

Currently, the university does not have a formal policy on children in the classroom. The policy described here is a reflection of my own beliefs and commitments to student, staff, and faculty parents:

1. All exclusively breastfeeding babies are welcome in class as often as is necessary.
2. For older children and babies, I understand that unforeseen disruptions in childcare often put parents in the position of having to miss class to stay home with a child. While this is not meant to be a long-term childcare solution, occasionally bringing a child to class in order to cover gaps in care is perfectly acceptable.
3. I ask that all students work with me to create a welcoming environment that is respectful of forms of diversity, including diversity in parenting status.
4. In all cases where babies and children come to class, I ask that you sit close to the door so that if your little one needs special attention and is disrupting learning for other students, you may step outside until their need has been met.

5. Finally, I understand that often the largest barrier to completing your coursework once you become a parent is the tiredness many parents feel in the evening once children have *finally* gone to sleep. While I maintain the same high expectations for all students in my classes regardless of parenting status, I am happy to problem-solve with you in a way that makes you feel supported as you juggle school and parenting.

Sexual and Gender-Based Harassment and Violence

Chatham University faculty, staff, and students believe in creating a community free from sexual and gender-based harassment, violence, relationship /interpersonal violence, and stalking. I believe that each student deserves a safe environment to pursue an education and I understand the devastating impact power-based harassment and violence may have. I am dedicated to making this classroom and campus safe. If you or someone you know experience any form of harassment or violence, please know you are not alone. Please speak with me or any of our campus resources:

- Sean Coleman, Title IX Coordinator (Mellon Center, 2d Floor) 412-365-1164; scoleman1@chatham.edu or titleix@chatham.edu
- Public Safety (Rea Garage): 412-365-1230
- Residence Life On-Call (24-hours): 412-951-0003
- Office of Student Affairs (Woodland Hall): 412-365-1286
- Counseling Services *CONFIDENTIAL* (Woodland): 412-365-1282
- Student Health *CONFIDENTIAL* (Woodland): 412-365-1714
- Academic & Accessibility Resources (JKM Library): 412-365-1611
- Women's Institute (Braun Hall): 412-365-1578

At Chatham most university employees, faculty, staff and student leaders are designated as persons with a duty to report allegations of sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking and domestic and dating violence. The only exceptions are those few employees who operate with statutorily-protected confidentiality (counseling, health service, etc.). If you have questions about whether to report or how to connect with a confidential resource please connect with the Title IX office.

Community Resources:

- Pittsburgh Action Against Rape (PAAR; 24-hour): 866-363-7273
- Pgh Center for Victims 24-Hour Crisis Hotline: 866-644-2882
- National Sexual Assault Hotline (24-hour): 800-656-4673
- National Domestic Violence Hotline (24-hour): 800-799-7233

Additional resources and information about Chatham University's policies can be found at: <http://www.chatham.edu/about/titleix/>

Inclusion Statement

This course involves participation in discussions and activities. We each have different experiences that influence our perspective of the world. At times you may feel uncomfortable or even disagree with a certain idea or opinion expressed by others or with certain topics discussed in this class. You may even find that you share perspectives or experiences with others you did not expect to share. You are expected to treat your instructor and all other students in the course with courtesy and respect. Any discussion (especially disagreements) should be based upon facts rather than prejudices or personal dislike. Language or behaviors that are abusive, harassing, or disruptive—specifically those based on race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, age, disability, veteran status, marital status, or any other legally protected status—may result in disciplinary action (see Non-Discrimination Policy: <https://www.chatham.edu/about/hr/nondiscrimination.cfm> and Honor Code: <https://www.chatham.edu/campus-life/policies/honor-code.cfm>).

Cultural and Religious Holidays

Persons who have religious or cultural observations that conflict with class should let the instructor know the first day of class so I can make sure that you will not be penalized for missing class. I strongly encourage you to honor your cultural and religious holidays. However, if I do not hear from you by then, I will assume that you plan to attend all class sessions and full attendance will be required.

These policies were developed by Dr. Jessie B. Ramey, Director, Women's Institute and Associate Professor, Women's & Gender Studies; and Dr. Nichole Bayliss, Associate Professor, Criminology and Psychology at Chatham University.

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