

Creating a “Brave Space”: Community Guidelines for Discussion and Communication

We will have discussions that may involve controversial topics and likely there will be differing opinions. Below you will find principles to help support the kind of environment we hope to create in this course.

Principles for a Brave Space

- 1) Be present and engaged.
- 2) Everything you say or do is a form of communication. “You cannot *not* communicate.”
- 3) Listen for understanding, not agreement.
- 4) Be willing to ask questions.
- 5) Leave room for others to speak to share their opinions and ideas.
- 6) Speak on the behalf of yourself, your family, your cultural group, etc., and allow others to do the same. Speaking on behalf of others not present can be an important way to give voice to those absent from the conversation.
- 7) Respect the speaker or speak respectfully, even if you don’t respect the statement or the views it represents. Respect doesn’t require agreement.
- 8) Be aware of your own privilege.
- 9) Be open and willing to take a risk.
- 10) Do your best to keep emotions in check.
- 11) Be forgiving of yourself and others. A key maxim of communication is “how do I know what I think until I see what I say?” That means we often don’t hear a problem in our message until it is said or reflected upon.
- 12) The only thing you should assume is positive intent.

--These principles were developed based on the combination of ideas from Angela Harwood, Alex Ng, Dana Gutierrez, Karen Stout, and LDST 101 and 450 students from winter 2016.

Statement on Inclusion

WWU is committed to an environment free of discrimination and harassment. Federal and State laws, as well as University policies, protect faculty, staff, and students against discrimination based on the following legally protected characteristics: Race, Color, Creed, Religion, National Origin, Sex (including pregnancy and parenting status), Age, Disability, Marital Status, Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression, Genetic Information and Veteran Status (See <http://www.wvu.edu/eoo> and Western’s Policies on Providing Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination and Preventing Sexual Harassment for more info).

If you have any concerns regarding respect within the classroom, please feel free to discuss the situation with Dr. Stout, your Discussion Section Leaders, or our course TAs.