Undergraduate Syllabus Inclusivity Rubric:
Taking Stock of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Teaching of Psychology

developed by University of Washington Psychology Championing Inclusive Pedagogy Team

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Purpose: Underrepresented students in academic environments experience discrimination, indirect signals of exclusion, and presumptions about insufficient ability that can impact their performance and engagement in research and classes, as well as their mental and physical health. Intentional environments that cue diversity and inclusion can signal belonging and increase students of colors' interest and success in these environments. In creating a syllabus review process, our goal is to implement an intervention (rather, to spur professors to do so) to improve syllabi, and in doing so to increase belongingness and reduce barriers to success for underrepresented students. We acknowledge that the syllabus is simply a proxy for the student experience of course climate, structure, and content, though we use this as one tool to improve the student experience of diversity, equity, and inclusion in psychology courses.

Acknowledging the inequities that exist for people of color, first-generation college students, and other marginalized populations, we advocate for flexibility to accommodate students with other responsibilities and life circumstances (e.g., external jobs, childcare, care for family members). Moreover, we believe it is important to make insider knowledge and resources (e.g., a project extension will be provided if a student asks a week in advance) available to all students. A couple of ways to do so are to make implicit expectations as explicit as possible and to create "opt-out" accommodations rather than "opt-in" accommodations.

This rubric is informed by best practices documented by other universities, such as Brown University's Harriet W. Sheridan Center for Teaching & Learning and Yale University's Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning as well as in collaboration with invited faculty self-study participants from our own department. We hope that this document will grow and develop with our own department's knowledge and experiences.

Overview: For each of the three broad categories, we will assign a number according to a set of criteria we have developed based on a survey of available resources:

*Course Climate***:** *Does your syllabus communicate your intent to create a welcoming, inclusive environment for all students?*

- The syllabus is an opportunity to set a tone of respect, inclusivity, and collaboration.
- It is important to communicate classroom expectations clearly so that all students are on the same page as the instructor.
- Insider knowledge of how classrooms function and unspoken expectations and norms may disadvantage first-generation graduate students or those with less mentorship prior to graduate school.

Course Structure: *Does your syllabus lay out a course structure that allows multiple paths to success in the course (including and especially for those who may have additional burdens such as childcare, outside jobs, and physical or mental health issues), and does it communicate this course structure clearly?*

- Often, course structure can be rigid in a way that does not serve students with extenuating circumstances.
- Accommodations or options that differ from traditional norms are often not explicitly offered, such that individuals who might benefit most from these options must expend additional effort or must announce or demonstrate their need in order to get access to them.

Course Content: *Does your course content reflect perspectives other than the dominant one in your field? Does the course content encourage students to consider different perspectives or bring their own diverse perspectives into the course? Was the primary course content created by individuals with a variety of identities?*

Rubric Format and Example: The rubric created by the Syllabus Review Task Force is meant to capture the Task Force's current working knowledge on best practices in inclusive teaching. It is meant to be aspirational as well as attainable, and we will plan to evaluate whether the rubric is appropriate every several years. We acknowledge that some of the criteria may be challenging, yet we hope that faculty will see the intent behind assessing each facet.

The basic format of the rubric is to set out a description of different levels of addressing each criterion. We include the "What to Look For" column because we know that we are not able to enumerate all the ways in which the criterion might have been addressed. Rather than a checklist, these are meant to represent some concrete examples of addressing the more abstract criterion.

Criterion	Description	What to Look For	Score and Notes
Criterion Name	0: [Brief description of a 0] 1: [Brief description of a 1] 2: [Brief description of a 2]	+ [Features of syllabi which address the criterion well] - [Features of syllabi which do not address the criterion well OR do the opposite]	[The Syllabus Review Task Force will use this space to describe how the syllabus addresses the criterion in question]

Preparation for the Syllabus Review: We have presented the rubric in advance of requesting syllabi in order to give interested faculty the chance to update their syllabi before receiving feedback. The Task Force holds syllabus office hours (by appointment) to assist in this process. Please email the Syllabus Review Team (uw.psych.dsc.syllabus@gmail.com) to coordinate an appointment with a graduate student holding office hours.

In order to move toward a more inclusive psychological science, we ask that faculty review their reading lists and indicate, wherever possible, the full names and known marginalized identities of authors. Please be thoughtful in this process and know that we understand this is an inexact science.

We will take syllabi throughout the academic year for review. A few weeks prior to the start of each quarter, we will also send emails reminding instructors of this opportunity for feedback from the Syllabus Task Force. This will allow the Syllabus Review Task Force to review the syllabi in a timely manner if instructors choose to incorporate that feedback into their course.

Course Climate:

Does your syllabus communicate your intent to create a welcoming, inclusive environment for everyone?

Criterion	Description	What to Look For	
Overall Tone	0: The syllabus is challenging to read and/or is simply a list of dates and assignments. The syllabus may actively discourage students from taking the course due to challenge. 1: The syllabus describes the course adequately and does not actively discourage students from taking the course. 2: The syllabus introduces students to the class in a welcoming manner and lays out a clear path to success in the course for all students.	+ Syllabus uses primarily inviting language + Syllabus emphasizes possibilities for learning, de-emphasizes punishments + When applicable, the syllabus conveys that support is available to students at different stages of learning/background, whether that be when starting at UW or stage within the major for upper-level courses - Syllabus is full of jargon - Syllabus actively discourages certain learners from taking the course - Strong emphasis on how difficult the class is and how much of a time commitment it will be	
Learning Environment and Structure	0: No description of learning environment. 1: The professor describes a goal of creating a rich learning environment in the syllabus 2: The professor describes specific ways in which they promote an inclusive learning environment.	+ Professor endorses the potential for learning from peers + Instructor implements technologies or classroom practices that facilitate learning from peers + Syllabus endorses a less rigid classroom hierarchy - Syllabus only emphasizes final authority of instructor	

Learning Objectives	0: No description of learning objectives.	+ A clearly defined list of learning objectives is presented	
	1: The syllabus describes at least one primary learning objective	+ Students can get a clear sense of what skills and knowledge they would gain from a class	
	2: The syllabus clearly describes all primary learning objectives	+ Diversity/inclusivity-related goals are included	
		- Learning goals only relate to one career path (e.g., academia, graduate school) or to fulfillment of prerequisites	
Accessibility for Individuals with Disabilities	0: No mention is made of disability accommodations in the syllabus.	+ Includes mandated statement about DRS accommodations	
	1: Includes mandated statement about DRS accommodations.	+ Includes basic information on seeking out DRS accommodations	
	2: In addition to mandated statement, syllabus indicates that class materials and readings are presented in a format accessible to individuals with disabilities.	+ Syllabus indicates that accommodations are available (e.g., captions or transcripts for video materials, tags and text for images; see faculty resource list)	
		+ Syllabus encourages early action/clear steps for how to request in-class accommodation (e.g., a note-taker)	
	Note that we are not reviewing course Canvas pages, but the Canvas page should also be easily navigable and accessible for all students.	+ Syllabus outlines areas where accommodations are commonly applied and/or where accommodations are the default (e.g., exam time, copies of materials, transcriptions, etc.)	
		- Syllabus materials are difficult to read	
Syllabus Document	0: Syllabus document is difficult to navigate or does not contain the	+ All syllabus materials are contained in one document.	

	minimum information for students to participate in the course (e.g., meeting times, first readings, etc.) 1: Syllabus document shared with students is easily navigable, comprehensive, and accessible.	+ Syllabus document is searchable. + Syllabus includes headers or other organizational features so students can quickly find what they need. + Links are provided in online syllabus (i.e., links to readings, assignments, etc., not other sections of the syllabus). + Syllabus is made available on Canvas.	
Religious Accommodations	0: No mention is made of accommodations for religious holidays. 1: Includes mandated statement about religious accommodations. 2: In addition to the mandated statement, syllabus indicates specific accommodations that may be available.	+ Includes mandated statement on religious accommodations + Students are invited to contact the professor for religious accommodations in a welcoming manner + Holidays are considered when determining course deadlines, exams, etc.	
Financial Accessibility	0: No information about materials is provided, or expensive materials are required for the class with no alternatives. 1: A significant effort is made to limit the financial burden of taking the class, or if not possible, acknowledge the financial burden 2: All materials are free and/or optional.	+ Accepting older editions of a textbook +Page numbers for multiple textbook editions provided + Offering a form of financial help to students (not required but appreciated) + Providing copies on hold via the UW library system, links to online resources for purchasing used books, or suggestion to talk to psychology librarian for textbook chapters	

		+First few chapters of textbook are provided for students while their textbooks arrive + Instructor provides information on expected textbook costs + Required vs. optional materials explicitly labeled. + Additional learning platforms are free or are not needed for the class (e.g., InQuizitive, TopHat, Mindtap). - Need to acquire course materials on a tight turnaround (e.g., have to pay for rush shipping)	
Personal Pronouns	0: Personal pronouns not addressed. 1: Instructor's personal pronouns are included, and students' personal pronouns are invited.	+ Instructor's personal pronouns are included + TAs' personal pronouns are included + Students' personal pronouns are invited	
Diversity and Inclusivity Statement	0: No Diversity and Inclusivity Statement. 1: A cursory Diversity and Inclusivity Statement is included. 2: A Diversity and Inclusivity Statement is included which is clearly intended to acknowledge systemic issues, put students at ease, and make them feel included.	+ Acknowledgment of specific facets of diversity (e.g., race/ethnicity, socioeconomic, gender, sexuality) + Specificity of the statement to the topic area of the course + A statement is included + A land acknowledgment is included (see https://www.washington.edu/diversity/tribal-relations/ for UW's acknowledgment)	

		- The statement has been copy/pasted verbatim from the university or another faculty member's syllabus	
Community Expectations	0: No mention of expectations for communication during class or among class participants. 1: An expectation is set for a baseline of respect in communication of ideas. 2: An expectation is set for an actively inclusive communication style, encouraging different viewpoints and disagreements while encouraging respect.	+ Presence of a communication protocol for in-class communication + Encouragement of diverse perspectives + Time set aside during class to co-create classroom norms and expectations around communication and respect. + Community norms for online communication are also set. + Specific description of how teaching staff will handle disputes or microaggressions that occur between students.	
Bias Reporting and Dispute Resolution	0: Resources for reporting a bias incident and resolving a dispute with a member of the teaching staff are absent. 1: Resources are provided for reporting a bias incident perpetrated by teaching staff.	+ Multiple (formal and informal) options given for students to report a bias incident perpetrated by teaching staff, including primary instructor. + Describes what might constitute a bias incident in more concrete terms. + https://psych.uw.edu/diversity/bias-reporting	

Course Structure:

Does your syllabus lay out a course structure that allows multiple paths to success in the course (including and especially for those who may have additional burdens such as childcare, outside jobs, and physical or mental health issues), and does it communicate this course structure clearly?

Criterion	Description	What to Look For	Score and Notes
Meeting Format	0: The course only meets in a single format (i.e., big group lecture or discussion each period). 1: The course meets in a variety of formats. 2: The format of the course includes opportunities to learn of several different types, each of which is meant to help different learners.	+ In a discussion course, both small and large group discussions are included + In a discussion course, both written and verbal discussions are included + In a lecture-heavy course, questions are welcomed either during class or other outlets are provided for questions and discussion + Study groups or classmate connections encouraged or facilitated + Course format presents opportunities to learn from peers + Instructor endorses principles such as a flipped classroom (watching lectures outside of class time and using class period for discussion) in a way that maximizes student learning - Course meetings follow only one format	
Attendance and Participation Policy	0: No policy listed or strict policy. 1: Attendance and participation policy is clear for all meeting formats (sections, lecture, office hours, CLUE sessions, etc.)	- Students will be penalized for missing any class + Expectations are clear – if/how many absences are allowed, how students can make up missed material, if/how to contact instructor if absent	

	2: Attendance and participation policy is clear and alternatives to live attendance (e.g., watching recording and responding to prompts, extra credit assignments) are provided	+ Attendance policies for section are also provided + Alternatives to attendance are provided if students have to miss class + Course offers different ways to participate (e.g., written and spoken) + Alternatives to verbal participation in class are provided if participation is a grading criterion	
Expectations for Class Preparation	0: Little or no information is provided on how to prepare for class periods 1: A brief statement is provided on how to prepare for class. 2: Detailed information is provided on how to prepare for all class formats in order to maximize learning and success in the course.	+ The syllabus specifies the level at which students will be expected to understand readings or asynchronous lectures prior to class time + Expectations for engagement with material are congruent with the level of the course + A statement about the function and purpose of different materials is included (e.g., the textbook is meant to supplement in-class learning and should be read before/after class lecture) - Expectations are unreasonable given the number of units awarded for passing the course (3 hours per week per credit hour, including class time) - Expectations for lectures vs. sections/review are not distinguished	

Schedule of Topics and Assignments	0: The schedule of topics and assignments is either very unclear or too flexible to allow for planning ahead. 1: The schedule of topics and assignments is laid out clearly and encouragement is given to students to reach out in the event of a conflict.	+ A clear schedule is provided at the outset of the quarter so that students can plan around conflicts + Advance notice for more difficult readings (whether due to intellectual demand or sensitive topics) provided + Course workload is mindfully distributed across the quarter + Materials are available as early as possible to give flexibility in completing assignments + Materials are easy to locate within Canvas or other learning platform + Assignments and projects are clearly and consistently labelled across platforms (e.g., Canvas vs. PDF) - There are inconsistencies across different formats of the schedule (e.g., Canvas vs. PDF)	
Format of Graded Work	0: Assessments (both take-home assignments and graded tests) all follow a single format, and if students are not strong in that format, they may struggle in the course. 1: Assignments present a variety of modes of demonstrating knowledge (e.g., projects vs. in-class guided assignments vs. multiple-choice exams vs. short-answer questions)	+ Variety of graded work, including assignments, projects, and exams + Multiple options for demonstrating knowledge throughout the quarter. For example, exams vs. reading responses vs. group projects vs. class presentations + Balance of high-stakes and low-stakes graded work	

	2: Students are offered choices in the format or content of graded work to best demonstrate their learning.	+ Assignments provide some amount of student choice in topic, format, etc. + Flexibility provided for working alone on an assignment or in groups of different (reasonable) sizes - Strong reliance on out-of-class meetings for group projects - All assessments are of the same type or format	
Assignment Grading	0: No information is given on grading or only a total point value for an assignment is provided. 1: Grading criteria are vaguely described. 2: Grading criteria and rubric are specific and/or sample materials are provided beforehand. Grading reflects content and skills taught in the course.	+ Qualitative feedback is provided on assignments so that students who are struggling can improve their performance + Grading rubrics are made available before assignments are due + Assignment examples are provided for major assignments, at least for assignment structure - Assignments are graded largely based on writing skill rather than mastery of course material† - Assignments are graded based on skills that aren't taught in the course - Assignments are graded based on skills not covered by prerequisite courses (e.g., APA citations prior to learning them)	
Office Hours	0: Office hours are at an inconvenient time (e.g., conflicting with a known	+ Flexible office hours but an office hour is set + Office hours also available by request	

	other required course) and are inflexible. 1: An attempt is made to place office hours at an accessible time for students or to build in other methods of communication.	+ Built-in time after class for students to ask one-on-one questions + Expectations for office-hours related communication and preparation are communicated + The format/purpose of office hours is shared with students + Varied times are available across teaching staff + Accessible options (online/in-person, physically accessible space)	
Contacting the Instructor	0: No mention of expectations for communication. 1: The instructor and TAs offer a reasonable amount of availability and a good-faith effort to meet the needs of all students.	+ Multiple formats of communication with the instructor (e.g., after class, office hours, email) + Guidelines on purposes of different communication methods are provided (e.g., course email vs. individual email, office hours for detailed help vs. email for straightforward questions, TA vs. instructor) + Expectations of a timeline for reply (they do not have to be rigid) + Guidelines on what topics are appropriate to bring to office hours +Guidelines for format of communication are shared (e.g., email subject heading, student name and/or number included, etc.)	

		+ Opportunities given for students to communicate life circumstances affecting them during the quarter	
Make-up and late policies	0: No policy stated. 1: Policy stated and made to sound completely rigid, 2: Policy is explicitly stated, and encouragement given for students to contact instructor in the case of an extenuating circumstance (within the bounds of the course policy).	+ Courses recorded via Panopto or Zoom, closed captioning or transcript provided + Build in lenience for late assignments (dropping lowest grade, one free late day per term, etc.) + Additional flexibility provided for late assignments with no questions asked during extenuating circumstances (e.g., Covid pandemic, political unrest, etc.) + Clearly state policy for grading late work, making-up work + Guidelines for contacting the instructor about late work are provided (e.g., email before deadline vs. after, fill out late pass form, etc.) + encouragement to reach out and work with instructor collaborating - Explicitly state that no exceptions will be made - Accommodations are only provided to those who ask, but no encouragement is provided to ask	
Opportunities for Instructor Feedback	0: No opportunities given other than those mandated by UW. 1: Opportunities are given for feedback more than once during the quarter.	+ Feedback opportunities are given to students (e.g., open feedback form throughout quarter, in-class poll, etc.) + Honesty is explicitly encouraged and responses are truly anonymized	

		+ Mid-quarter evaluation requested	
Other Resources for Academic and Non-Academic Support	0: No mention of other resources for struggling students. 1: Some mention of other resources for struggling students (reach out to instructor, DRS, tutoring, study skills, etc.)	+ A list of departmental or academic resources is provided (e.g., tutoring, study tips, study groups; see http://academicsupport.uw.edu/campus-resources/) + Students are encouraged to reach out to the TA or instructor for additional support and guidelines for how to reach out are provided + Instructor includes communication (or community-building) platform for students to connect or form study groups (e.g., discussion board, Canvas study group) + Including communication norms for online platforms that are used independently by students and/or supervised by instructors + A list of non-academic student resources is provided (e.g., Hall Health, caregiver support; see http://academicsupport.uw.edu/campus-resources/) + Additional resources such as those provided on the Syllabus Team's faculty resource list are provided	

Course Content :

Does your course content reflect perspectives other than the dominant one in your field? Does the course content encourage students to consider different perspectives or bring their own diverse perspectives into the course? Was the original course content created by individuals with a variety of identities?

Please note that for certain courses (including but not limited to quantitative courses and animal behavior courses), the inclusion of human subjects is not part of the course content. These syllabi will not be penalized for not including these types of research.

Because faculty know their areas of study intimately, and are likely to know the individuals in their field who have generated research, we ask faculty to take stock of and indicate, when possible, the minority identities of authors in their reading lists. Doing so can signal to students that they are welcome in the field, regardless of their own identities.

Criterion	Description	What to Look For	Score and Notes
Pre-Requisites and Course Preparation	0: No mention of prior knowledge required (or statement that all students should be able to succeed in course) 1: Explicit acknowledgment of prerequisite skills and coursework, OR if there are no specific skills or knowledge needed for the course, syllabus states that all students should be able to succeed in the course.	+ Syllabus lists the specific skills and knowledge needed to succeed in class + When possible, clearly lists courses or topics that would prepare students for course (for example, that students may find a course easier if they first take statistics or research methods) + Provide students an opportunity to assess understanding at the beginning of the course AND provide opportunities to bolster knowledge (e.g., pre-test, suggestions for refresher material, opportunity to meet w/ instructor), + Syllabus indicates that this is an introductory course - Prerequisites are given vaguely (e.g., "strong quantitative skills", "experience with data analysis")	

Content of Readings and Lecture Materials	0: Readings and lecture materials are from a single course text. 1: Some mention is made of alternate perspectives during one class period 2: Readings and lecture materials come from a variety of sources other than the main course text.	+ Diverse perspectives are presented in course material + Course materials include sources other than the main course textbook or peer-reviewed literature (e.g., put research findings into broader societal context with other media sources) + Limits of current literature are emphasized + Lecture time is dedicated to a discussion of the current and historical effects of systemic bias in psychology - Textbook content or peer-reviewed literature is treated as objective truth	
Authorship of Readings and Lecture Materials* *We acknowledge that these percentages are not empirical benchmarks. These numbers are meant to be aspirational.	0: Fewer than 10% of readings and lecture materials have at least one author who identifies as BIPOC**. Less than 30% of authors identify as an underrepresented gender minority. 1: Fewer than 25% of readings and lecture materials have at least one author who identifies as BIPOC**. Less than 40% of authors identify as an underrepresented gender minority. 2: Fewer than 40% of readings and lecture materials have at least one author who identifies as BIPOC**. Less than 50% of authors identify as an underrepresented gender minority.	+ Balance of male and female authorship. + Balance of White and non-White authorship + Representation of Black, Indigenous and/or Latinx authors + Full names provided in reading lists, or references to web presence provided + Formatting (colors, bold/italic) is used to signal identities of authors - No commentary provided on source of knowledge	Syllabi reviewers, please highlight the readings on the syllabus with diverse authors to send back to the instructor.

	3: Over 40% of readings and lecture materials have at least one author who identifies as BIPOC**. Over 50% of authors identify as an underrepresented gender minority.		
Representation of Minoritized Groups in Human Subjects Research and of Cross-Cultural Perspectives* ***Only courses that assign empirical research articles with human subjects will be judged on this criterion.	NA: Does not apply to course 0: Fewer than 15% of studies discussed purposively sample minoritized groups or cross-cultural perspectives. 1: Fewer than 30% of studies discussed purposively sample minoritized groups or cross-cultural perspectives. 2: Over 30% of studies discussed purposively sample minoritized groups or cross-cultural perspectives.	+ Research is discussed in the context of how it may or may not apply to minoritized groups. + Research which explicitly explores psychological questions in minoritized groups is discussed. - Race and gender are treated as nuisance variables. + If unethical or non-representative samples are used, the ethical implications of the research are thoughtfully discussed.	
Recency of Course Readings**	0: Most or all of course readings are 20 years old or older 1: Course materials offer a balance of foundational and recent research material	+ Recent perspectives are included to supplement historical ones + Reading lists are updated periodically - Only historical perspectives are provided, with no caveats (e.g., replication issues, ethical issues with terminology) + If older research is used, it is foundational work with historical context provided	
Assignment Content	0: No course assignments require critical thinking about DEI in psychology.	+ Assignments which encourage exploration of diverse aspects of individual identity	

	1: At least one major course assignments requires critical thinking about DEI in psychology. 2: Several assignments, and at least one major course assignments, require critical thinking about DEI in psychology.	+ Assignments which challenge dominant frames or describe the boundaries of current theory with respect to minoritized groups. + Assignments which require students to analyze or propose a study which addresses DEI. - Assignments which encourage students to treat gender, race, disability, or another aspect of diversity as a nuisance variable.	
Integration of DEI into Course Content	0: Content focused on DEI (minoritized groups, the role of culture, disability, gender, etc.) is not presented or presented on a single day. 1: Content focused on DEI is presented throughout the term.	+ Alternate perspectives are discussed regularly, as a matter of course - Alternate perspectives (or "the role of culture") is discussed on only a single day.	

*We acknowledge that these percentages are not based on a substantial evidence base. These numbers are meant to be aspirational, and we plan to take this year's data as a benchmark and adjust these numbers accordingly.

**For empirical research articles and textbooks, authors in the first, second, or last author position will be considered for these criteria. For all other forms, all authors will be considered.

***Only courses that assign empirical research articles with human subjects will be judged on this criterion.

****Courses on history will not be judged on this criterion, though an effort should be made to provide modern perspectives.

† Courses designated for writing credit will not be judged on this criterion, though the general principles communicated by this criterion still apply.