

## Course Ground Rules

Below are listed some ground rules for our discussions throughout the semester. In this class, we will...

1. Acknowledge that racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, and other institutionalized forms of oppression exist.<sup>1</sup>
2. Acknowledge that one mechanism of institutionalized racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, and the like is that we are all systematically taught misinformation about our own group and other groups. This is true for members of privileged and oppressed groups.
3. Agree not to blame ourselves or others for the misinformation we have learned, but to accept responsibility for not repeating misinformation after we have learned otherwise.
4. Agree not to “blame victims” for the conditions of their lives.
5. Assume that people – both the people we study and the members of the class – are doing the best they can.
6. Actively pursue information about our own groups and other groups.
7. Share information about our groups with other members of the class; we will never demean, devalue, or in any way “put down” people for their experiences.
8. Agree to actively challenge the myths and stereotypes about our own groups and other groups so that we can break down the walls that prohibit group cooperation and benefit.
9. Create a safe atmosphere for open discussion. We will assume that personal information shared in this class is confidential and should not be talked about outside of class.

Source: These guidelines were adapted from those developed by Lynn Weber and published in Women’s Studies Quarterly 18 (Spring/Summer 1990): 126-134.

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<sup>1</sup> Many other institutionalized forms of oppression could be listed here. A more complete list might include: ageism, ethnocentrism, ableism, religious intolerance, nativism, homophobia, transphobia.