

# Diversify your Syllabi: Development and Application of an Evaluation Tool for DEI in Course Syllabi

Diana Selmeczy, Rachel Weiskittle, Steve Bistricky,  
and Leilani Feliciano

Department of Psychology

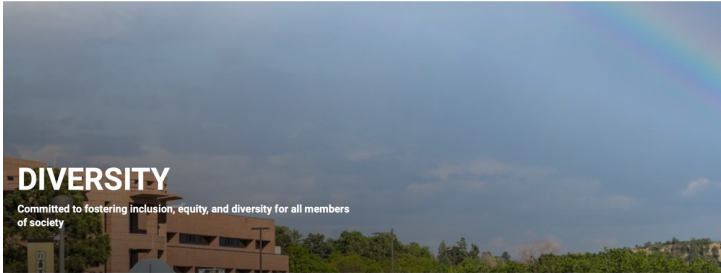
## Outline

- Introductions
- Evaluation Creation Process
- Implementation, Results, and Reflection of Evaluation
- Self-Evaluation of your own syllabus

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**DIVERSITY**  
Committed to fostering inclusion, equity, and diversity for all members of society

**PURPOSE & GOALS**

The Psychology Department Diversity Committee exists to catalyze the members of its community to foster inclusion, equity, and diversity of all members of society. Specifically, the committee actions will focus on educating and equipping faculty, staff, and students to live in ways that support equity and inclusion of diverse populations in the student body, faculty, and staff; and monitoring departmental policies and procedures for explicit and implicit support for inclusion, equity, and diversity.

<https://psychology.uccs.edu/about/diversity>

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# Introductions



**Diana Selmeczy, Ph.D.**  
Assistant Professor,  
Developmental  
Psychology



**Rachel Weiskittle, Ph.D.**  
Assistant Professor,  
Geropsychology



**Steven L. Bistricky, Ph.D.**  
Assistant Professor,  
Trauma Psychology &  
Associate Director of  
Clinical Training



**Leilani Feliciano, Ph.D.**  
Professor, Clinical  
Psychology & Director of  
Clinical Training

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## Introductions

- **Please share:**
  - Your Name
  - Department
  - Class(es) you teach

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## Creation Process

- **Culmination of two semesters**
  - Psychology Diversity Subcommittee formed
    - Tasked with:
      - Assessing extent to which diversity, equity and inclusion of various populations and experiences are addressed in Psychology learning experiences
    - **Focus on syllabus**
      - Course entry point; communication tool; sets tone
      - Researched best practices for syllabi
      - Recognition that syllabus is an incomplete representation of course



"Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better."  
– Maya Angelou

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## Creation Process – Literature Review

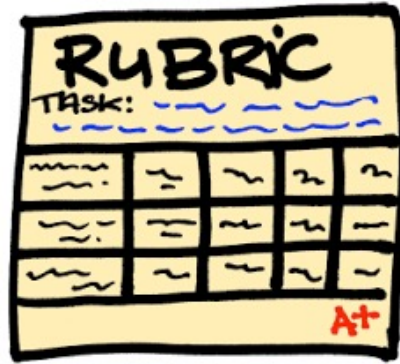
- **DEI-Promotive Learning Environment, Policies, and Procedures**
  - Elements help every student understand how to succeed, and know they will be included, valued, and assisted toward success
  - Information readily provided so students with less experience in higher education language and expectations can have equal access and opportunity to succeed
  - **Examples:** Aligned learning objectives; organized; inclusive learning community; safety cues/specific diversity statement; inviting office hours, accommodations, & campus supports; clear/fair grading criteria

## Creation Process – Literature Search

- **DEI-Promotive Course Content**
  - Initially assume can include in all courses
  - Scholarship by/about diversity of identities
  - Explicitly name course section or week focus
  - Open door to interest and additional resources to learn about DEI in the field of study

## Creation Process – Next Steps

- **Brought back to full committee**
  - Discussed findings
  - Discussed need for rubric development for course content
- **Data destinations and functions –**
  - Departmental aggregate
  - Instructor self-reflection for syllabus/course (individualized NOT for full department)



## Creation Process - Rubrics

- **Rubric development**
  - Goals - Objective, Constructive, Motivating
  - Divided items into those that were:
    - Easier to assess
    - Needing examples for clarity
    - More ambiguous and/or difficult to reliably assess by an outsider
  - Brought back to full faculty for revisions
- **Rubric application**
  - Piloted with 5 sample syllabi and revised
  - First time group use with “pre-test” frame
  - Revisit and adjust in future



"Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better."  
– Maya Angelou

# Finalized Rubric






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## Rubric Rating Anchors

<b>(A)</b> Criteria Met	<b>(B)</b> Criteria <u>Not</u> Met	<b>(C)</b> Cannot Determine/ Unclear	<b>Brief notes</b> (particularly if rated C)
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- Reviewers instructed to select one (A, B, or C)
- Brief notes *optional*, but encouraged for C ratings

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## Rubric Criteria

14 items total, organized by two themes:

### Learning Environment, Policies, and Procedures

- Items 1-11

### Course Content

- Items 12-14

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## Learning Environment, Policies, and Procedures

1. Contains clear **learning objectives**
2. Learning objectives and assignments are clearly aligned
3. Attempts to develop an inclusive learning community through communications and/or specific collaborative activities
4. Includes **different types of learning activities**
5. Contains a **Disability Accommodation** statement
6. Has an **Inclusive Learning Statement**
7. Has an inviting **Office Hours Statement**
8. The document has structured organization
9. The overall document **formatting is readable** (fonts 12+)
10. Has fair and clear **grading criteria**
11. Has evident "**safety cues**—such as representation of minoritized groups or a diversity statement"

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## Course Content

- 12. Class content includes **broad topic(s)** focused on diversity and/or diverse groups of people
- 13. Class content includes **research or readings** done with/about diverse groups of people
- 14. Syllabus points students toward **resources** to learn more about diversity in psychology

## Rubric Application – Course Content Example

12. Includes **broad topics** re: diversity, diverse groups of people

13. Includes research, readings about diverse groups of people

Topic/Activity	Readings	Assignments
Cultural Adaptations of CBT	Hinton et al. (2012); Hinton et al. (2011); Pachankis (2014)	Student-led discussion

### Course Readings

Hinton, D.E., Hofmann, S.G., Rivera, E., Otto, M.W., & Pollack, M.H. (2011). **Culturally adapted CBT (CA-CBT) for Latino women** with treatment-resistant PTSD...

Hinton, D. E., Rivera, E. I., Hofman, S. G., Barlow, D. H., & Otto, M. W. (2012). **Adapting CBT for traumatized refugees and ethnic minority patients...** *Transcultural Psychiatry*, 49, 340-365.

Pachankis, J.E., (2014). Uncovering clinical principles and techniques to **address minority stress, mental health, and related health risks among gay and bisexual men**, *Clinical Psychology Science and Practice*, (4), 313-330.



## Other Rubric Application Notes/Instructions

- Not every criterion will be relevant for every course
- One or more criterion can be “met” if additive in multiple parts and/or if overlapping
  - For example: C3, C6 - basic office hours listed, then later Inclusive Learning Statement *also* encourages office use hours for X, Y, Z

COURSE Number _____ SECTION Number _____ COURSE Title _____ COURSE Instructor _____		SEMESTER: Fall Spring Summer YEAR _____ CHOOSE (circle): Online <u>In</u> Person			
Objective Audit	(A) Criteria Met	(B) Criteria <u>Not</u> Met	(C) Cannot Determine/ Unclear	Brief notes (particularly if rated C)	
<b>DEI-Promotive Learning Environment, Policies, and Procedures</b>					
Items in this section focus on elements of the syllabus that make it easy for any student to understand how to succeed in the class and for them to know they will be included, valued, and assisted toward success in the learning environment. Best practices of an inclusive learning environment provide the information readily so students with less experience in higher education language and expectations can have similar access to important information that more experienced students might know by virtue of their experience. These items may or may not explicitly address student characteristics that are minoritized or marginalized.					
1. The syllabus contains clearly stated student <b>learning objectives</b> related to course content (facilitating equal access to learning).	Criteria Met	Criteria <u>not</u> met	Cannot determine/unclear		
2. <b>Learning objectives and assignments/assessments seem to be clearly aligned</b> , i.e., rational face validity (facilitating equal access to learning). - This alignment is explicitly mentioned or intuitively clear based on sufficient context (i.e., it does not require mindreading, filling in gaps in reasoning)	Criteria Met	Criteria <u>not</u> met	Cannot determine/unclear		
3. Attempts to <b>develop an inclusive learning community</b> through communications and/or specific collaborative activities - This might include one or more of the following: group work, group discussion; language and/or activities identifying student as a connected learner and part of the community rather than passive learning opportunities; use of collective phrasings and pronouns (we, us) around objectives and activities. - This could also include references to students' input on what is taught and how being taken into consideration.	Criteria Met	Criteria <u>not</u> met	Cannot determine/unclear		

## Rubric Implementation

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## Rubric Implementation

- Piloted with 4 department members and 5 syllabi
- Then held a catered, **2-hour workshop** to apply rubric to all dept syllabi from F 2022 – SP 2023 (~70 syllabi)
  - 18 volunteer reviewers participated
  - Provided 20-min introduction of rubric and instructions, completed one example together
  - Each volunteer reviewed ~5 syllabi, randomly assigned
  - Rubric ratings were submitted via Qualtrics

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**\*#1: The syllabus contains clearly stated student **learning objectives** related to course content (facilitating equal access to learning).**

Criteria Met

Criteria NOT Met

Cannot Determine / Unclear


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**Results**

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# Results

		(A) Criteria Met	(B) Criteria Not Met	(C) Cannot Determine/ Unclear
1.	The syllabus contains clearly stated student <b>learning objectives</b> related to course content (facilitating equal access to learning)	96%	4%	0%
2.	<b>Learning objectives and assignments/assessments seem to be clearly aligned</b> , i.e., rational face validity (facilitating equal access to learning). - This alignment is explicitly mentioned or intuitively clear based on sufficient context (i.e., it does not require mindreading, filling in gaps in reasoning)	93%	3%	4%
3.	Attempts to <b>develop an inclusive learning community</b> through communications and/or specific collaborative activities - This might include one or more of the following: group work, group discussion; language and/or activities identifying student as a connected learner and part of the community rather than passive learning opportunities; use of collective phrasings and pronouns (we, us) around objectives and activities. - This could also include references to students' input on what is taught and how being taken into consideration.	73%	20%	7%

# Results

		(A) Criteria Met	(B) Criteria Not Met	(C) Cannot Determine/ Unclear
4.	The syllabus includes <b>different types of learning activities</b> (e.g., class discussion, written assignments, small group work, or presentations) - Thus, indicated by a variety of in-and out-of-class learning activities that allow students to learn in different ways and through various modalities (Opportunities for different student learning styles, strengths, growth)	78%	14%	4%
5.	There is a <b>Disability Accommodation statement</b> that addresses policy and ways to link to university accommodations.	88%	12%	0%

## Results

		(A) Criteria Met	(B) Criteria Not Met	(C) Cannot Determine/ Unclear
6.	<p>There is an <b>Inclusive Learning Statement(s)</b> that signals investment in effective learning for every student, with direct references and/or hyperlinks to relevant campus resources and other resources.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- E.g., “Your learning and success in this course matters to me...”</li> <li>- Typically references how instructor will be an enthusiastic, available resource throughout the whole course, not just through Office Hours (item #7).</li> <li>- This could be combined/integrated with Disability Accommodation statement but goes beyond disability accommodation.</li> <li>- IL Statement could also appear elsewhere in syllabus, but generally should be in earlier sections, more prominently featured (i.e., not an afterthought).</li> <li>- Typically links to one or more resources (beyond Disability Services) that can support student learning (through or outside of UCCS). Examples: UCCS Writing Center, Inclusive Services, Academic Services and Support—which includes Wellness Center and counseling services, First Year Experience, Academic Advising, Student Military Support).</li> <li>- Note: this is not intended to be a rating about overall tone used within syllabus, but rather simply noting the presence or absence of an inclusive learning statement. Commentary about tone can be added to note section, if desired.</li> </ul>	62%	32%	6%

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## Results

		(A) Criteria Met	(B) Criteria Not Met	(C) Cannot Determine/ Unclear
7.	<p>There is an <b>inviting Office Hours Statement</b>. E.g., Not only are the office hours listed, but the syllabus includes an explanation of how to use the office hours. E.g., It would be sufficiently instructive for a first-generation student (and all others).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- An elaborated example might be, “My office hours are an opportunity for you to connect with me, a chance to ask clarifying questions about content, explore what you many want to do after you graduate, and find support.” (continued on next page)</li> <li>- “Inviting” could also be exemplified by instructor willingness to meet outside stated office hours if those hours conflict with a student’s other responsibilities (e.g., school, employment, family)</li> <li>- Offers online as well as in-person access to office hours</li> </ul>	48%	48%	4%
8.	<p>The document has <b>structured organization</b> to facilitate engagement and understanding for the full diversity of students.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This might be evident in and supported by easy-to-follow thematic flow (e.g., course objectives should precede course schedule of topics and grading policies), use of headings and devices to accentuate core organizing components (boldface, underlining, italics, color highlighting, etc.)</li> </ul>	94%	3%	3%

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## Results

		(A) Criteria Met	(B) Criteria Not Met	(C) Cannot Determine/ Unclear
9.	The overall <b>document formatting is readable</b> (fonts 12+), facilitating access and engagement for all, and particularly any for whom viewing smaller fonts could be a barrier. Also, per above, use of headings, boldface, italics could be ways of increasing readability for all students.	88%	9%	3%
10.	Fair and clear <b>grading criteria</b> (equitable opportunity to perform to standard, accountable and concrete grading to reduce/eliminate any type of potential bias) - Most commonly this is evident in a pre-specified breakdown of how different grades are earned through assignment-specific opportunities for points that accrue to a point total. However, there may be other ways that, if clearly articulated, grading criteria can be conveyed. - Inclusion of checklists and/or rationales for grading to enhance clarity and transparency of expectations and grading could also help indicate meeting this criterion. - Ultimately, it should be clear that the pre-specified standard applies to all students, such that all students have the same opportunity to succeed.	90%	6%	4%
11.	Evident <b>"safety cues—such as representation of minoritized groups or a diversity statement."</b> Such a statement <u>may include one or more</u> of the following, (1) proclamation of respect for DEI, (2) inclusive list of relevant dimensions of diversity, (3) explicit valuing of diverse perspectives, (4) expectations with respect to the classroom climate and behavior, (5) micro- and macroaggressions will be addressed and used as teaching moments.	59%	33%	7%

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## Results

		(A) Criteria Met	(B) Criteria Not Met	(C) Cannot Determine/ Unclear
12.	Class content includes <b>broad Topic(s)</b> focused on diversity and/or diverse groups of people - Ways this may be evident might be in titles of textbook(s), weekly topics, and/or assigned readings. - Compared to the last criterion, this one would <b>likely require more explicit focus at the level of topics rather than readings</b> . However, an infusion of DEI topics within other broader course topics may be notable. Note that the rater is not expected to make judgment on quantity of topics but rather indicate if DEI is present or not in the topics.	38%	41%	22%
13.	Includes <b>research or readings</b> done with/about diverse groups of people - Ways this may be evident might be in labels/titles of weekly topics and/or assigned readings. - Additional examples of evidence in some courses could include best-practices in research for working with diverse populations, community-based participatory research practices, value of measure validation and adaptation among diverse groups, and how to create demographics forms in surveys that attend to DEI considerations. I - Note, because many course lessons or readings might be relevant to this criterion without being evident in a title, rater should consider use of the "cannot determine/unclear" rating as more appropriate than "criteria not met". E.g., many texts have improved their integration and focus on research across diverse groups.	32%	25%	44%

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## Results

		(A) Criteria Met	(B) Criteria Not Met	(C) Cannot Determine/ Unclear
14.	Points students toward <b>resources</b> to learn more about diversity in psychology - Could either be integrated into main course activities or included as additional resources - Example: APA's virtual exhibit of women of color in psychology	16%	77%	7%

## Reflection

- There was a high rate of engagement from both students and faculty in workshop participation
- Some criteria were underreported because instructors chose to include that information on Canvas rather than the syllabus
- This rubric was applied to syllabi created before criteria were disseminated as suggestions to department instructors. We are interested in repeating this process in two years to determine if there is improvement following instructors' awareness of rubric suggestions
- Despite these limitations, percentage of criteria met by the psych department was high

## Your Turn!

- Rate one of your own syllabi using our rubric
- Printed rubrics will be passed around for you to use
- If you do not have one of your own syllabi on hand, you can practice applying the rubric to a psych department course syllabus, available as needed
- Please do not photocopy rubrics without permission of the authors
- We will spend ten minutes rating and ten minutes discussing our reflections and comments

## THANK YOU!

**For a digital copy of the syllabus rubric for  
your personal use please email:**

**[psychdiv@uccs.edu](mailto:psychdiv@uccs.edu)**



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