

This is a sample syllabus that has been annotated to highlight only the Interdisciplinary-specific information. See the INT handbook and checklist for details. All University and CAPC syllabus policies must also be followed.

Sexual Identity and Culture (WOS 276)

Dr. Simon Ruchti

Department of Women's and Gender Studies, WCU

Spring 2026

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Location: Anderson 301

Course #: WOS 276-01 (11653)

Time: T/Th 9:30-10:45pm

Course # WOS 276-02 (14249)

Time T/Th 11-12:15pm

Office Hours: M: 10-11, T/Th: 11-12pm; W 1-3pm

Or email me for another time

Office: 234 Anderson or Zoom (link on D2L)

Campus Emergency #:(610) 436-3311

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, we will explore the diversity of human sexuality and the complex, bizarre, and often enlightening means we have used to make sense of our sex lives and the sex we imagine (whether correctly or not) others have. We also aim to understand how sexuality came to be understood as an identity. Because of the enormity of the field of human sexuality, I have opted to focus primarily on sexuality in Western culture. We will, however, address the limitations of a Western-only study of sexuality throughout the semester. The syllabus also follows a roughly historical trajectory, but the trajectory is occasionally interrupted by a-historical detours that highlight relevant issues of gender, race, class, and sexuality.

Identify clearly the two or more disciplines through which the course inquiry takes place.

This course meets requirements for the Interdisciplinary designation and will cover texts from fields such as biology, psychology, sociology, philosophy, theology, feminist theory, race theory, sexuality studies, and, of course, history. As this course also meets requirements for Women's and Gender Studies majors and minors, please understand that there will be a decidedly feminist tone to the lectures. Also, the materials covered will pay special attention to issues of inequality from intersectional perspective (by "intersectional" I mean attending to difference at the intersections of gender, race, class, sexuality, etc.).

PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH

While I do give lectures in this course, those lectures will also always include student discussion. I take a more Socratic approach to teaching, so I expect you to come to class prepared to discuss assigned readings and other materials as they relate to the lectures/discussions. Opinions are important and particularly useful when they engage the readings and lectures/discussions. This is not an easy class in that I expect you to grapple with complex ideas that often have no easy answers. Some of the assigned readings and the conversations about them will be controversial. Each of us must engage with the subject matter in a mature and scholarly fashion. In other words, respect your classmates and your professor (me), no matter how passionately you feel about a topic. I do not expect you to like or agree

with everything we cover in class. If you do not like or agree with something, I do, however, expect you to say so and explain why. In every class you will be encouraged to challenge the material we cover but you must also be willing to let the course challenge you.

WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES REQUIREMENT

This course is taught as part of the Women's and Gender Studies program. It is an elective for both the major and minor in Women's Studies and required for the Sexuality Studies minor. As such, the course is intended to help you:

- #2 Demonstrate the ability to analyze how gender operates historically and in the present
 - This will be achieved through assigned readings, DB posts, and lectures.
- #3 Demonstrate an ability to apply feminist theories, including theories of intersectionality, to personal, local, and global contexts
 - This will be established early in the term and re-established throughout. Many readings are designed to do specifically this. The readings that fail to use an intersectional approach will be challenged using intersectionality in class and, hopefully, in your DB posts.

For more information about a **major or minor** in Women's and Gender Studies or minor in Sexuality Studies, contact Dr. Liam Lair, Chair of Women's and Gender Studies. llair@wcupa.edu.

Provide a clear and prominent statement early in the syllabus that this course is an approved General Education course that meets the Interdisciplinary requirement (INT).

INT courses must meet Gen Ed goals #1, 2, & 4. Select the Gen Ed SLOs that you will use to achieve each goal--one each for Goals 1 & 2, both for Goal 4. Explicitly link Gen Ed SLOs with their instruction and assessment. Note, the assessment alignment must be at the SLO and not goal level.

Identify at least one substantive assignment that requires students to integrate two or more of the disciplinary subjects used in the course to engage the course subject.

GENERAL EDUCATION GOALS

Interdisciplinary

Finally, this course fulfills the Interdisciplinary requirement (INT) of the WCU General Education curriculum. As such, this course is designed to meet the following General Education Goals:

- **Goal 1: Communicate Effectively**
 - Demonstrate comprehension of and ability to explain information and ideas accessed through reading: assessed through DB posts
- **Goal 2: Think Critically and Analytically**
 - Reach sound conclusions based on a logical analysis of evidence: assessed through the final video submission.
- **Goal 4: Demonstrate the Ability to Think About and Across Disciplinary Boundaries**
 - Synthesize and/or integrate information, and/or approaches from multiple disciplines in the investigation of a concept, culture, or idea, or problem
 - Demonstrate the ability to appreciate how a given topic is informed and/or influenced by multiple disciplines simultaneously
 - Both Interdisciplinary objectives will be assessed through DB posts and the final video submission.

NO RECORDING OF CLASS, POLICY ON GUESTS

No one is allowed to record the class without explicit permission of the professor. Any recordings permitted are only to be used for the purposes of study and note taking and are not to be shared with others. To record this class and post it online is a violation of your classmates' privacy and likely illegal. I do NOT give you permission to share any recordings of the class.

Guests are welcome in class but must be approved by me before attending. All guests must adhere to the university code of conduct and the same rules and standards for all students in this class.

REQUIRED TEXTS

All Readings Available on D2L

GRADING

Attendance	-5 points, -5% DEDUCTED after 2 free misses
Participation	10 points, 10%
Intro Video	5 points, 5%
Discussion Board Posts	20 points, 20%
Midterm	25 points, 25%
Final Video	15 points, 15%
Final Exam	25 points, 25%

ATTENDANCE (-5% FOR EACH CLASSSED MISSED AFTER 2 FREE MISSES)

Attendance is critical to this course. **You** will be responsible for any material covered on **any** day you miss, don't ask me to catch you up. To be marked present, you must be both physically and mentally present: **if you are sleeping, texting, or studying for other classes during our class time, you are not present. Also, if you are excessively tardy, you will be marked absent.**

You are allowed 2 free misses. Use these absences wisely. **Every class missed beyond 2 causes your grade to drop by 5 points, up to -25 points.** That means, 4 absences makes an A impossible. You cannot fail this class for attendance deductions alone, though.

Notes on Attendance:

- In order to be present in class, you must be both physically and mentally present. Therefore...
 - Sleeping in class, "resting your eyes," visiting with friends, texting, playing on Facebook, etc. means you are not present. I will give you a warning, but, if it continues, **you will be marked absent.**
- Laptops and handheld electronic devices are also a distraction to your classmates and are therefore prohibited in class unless cleared with me prior to their use.
 - Repeated use of such devices in class, even after you are marked absent, will result in you being asked to leave class—as per the SCCCB.
 - As per the SCCCB, you will have to meet with me before returning to class.
- **To be clear:** If you sleep in class, play with electronic devices (phones, computers, etc.), or talk with friends, **I will mark you Absent.**
 - If the behavior continues, I will ask you to leave class.
 - If the behavior **still** continues, I will follow the SCCCB.

NOTIFICATION OF ATTENDANCE ISSUES:

DO NOT EMAIL ME ABOUT MISSING CLASS!!!! Instead, go to D2L, under Assignments. There you will find a category for Attendance/Lateness. Post there explaining why are absent/late. I am the only one who will see this. If you do not post there, I will not see it. I will not respond to emails about this. You must use D2L to notify me.

EXCUSED ABSENCES POLICY FOR UNIVERSITY-SANCTIONED EVENTS

Students are advised to carefully read and comply with the excused absences policy for university-sanctioned events contained in the WCU Undergraduate Catalog. In particular, please note that the “responsibility for meeting academic requirements rests with the student,” that this policy does not excuse students from completing required academic work, and that professors can require a “fair alternative” to attendance on those days that students must be absent from class in order to participate in a University-Sanctioned Event.

PARTICIPATION (10):

Class participation accounts for 10% of your grade. Participation will be assessed using Poll Everywhere as well as your engagement in class. Yes, this is a very large class; however, all of my classes are discussion based. I encourage questions, dialogue, and a willingness to challenge your classmates, yourselves, and me.

To earn high participation points, you must be **both** physically and mentally present throughout the class. You must bring readings and note-taking materials. You cannot simply speak once or twice and tune out otherwise. **Keep in mind, if you sleep, text, do other work, or are generally not mentally present in class, you are not participating. I have no problems giving a zero to those committing the above-mentioned offenses, even when they attend every class.** Come to class prepared to discuss the readings as they relate to the lectures/discussions. Opinions are important when they engage course material. I may call on students to encourage participation.

Please note: Non-class related comments; changing topic in class; complaining about class, college, or life; or simply being obnoxious does not count as class participation and can hurt your score.

INTRO VIDEO (5 points) **Only I, your professor, will see the video! ******

I’m terrible with names and faces. I didn’t learn until a few years ago that people use faces to recognize people. If you are talking to me and then walk away and put on a hat and come back and talk to me again, I may have no idea I just talked to you. This makes some aspects of teaching difficult as I struggle to learn any names, let alone recognize students. That said, I’m pretty good at remembering personalities and the things you say and do in class. If I can combine that with a reminder of what you look like, your mannerisms, and overall personality, I do pretty good. So, to help me out, I am having you make a short, one minute video telling me about yourself. You will submit it to D2L under the Assignments Tab. This is nothing fancy. Think of it like this: “What can I say to help Prof Ruchti know who I am when I email him or when he assesses participation?”

Purpose: So, I can get to know who you are. It will also help me with participation grades later in the term.

How to Succeed: If you want to get full points for this, you really just have to put a video up there that looks like you took it seriously and put a little effort into it. It does not need to be fancy! If you spend two minutes making a one minute video, that's fine. So long as I can play it and I can see and hear you.

If you, for whatever reason, can't make the video, come talk to me. We will figure it out.

It is due by class on Feb 7th!

DISCUSSION BOARD (20)

You will submit **4** Discussion Board (DB) Posts throughout the term. Each DB Post assignment will consist of **at least three separate posts**. If you submit **less than three posts per set, I WILL NOT GRADE IT!!!**

So, this means, to complete the assignment, you must have at least three posts. Think of it like this: if you do the DB assignment for Unit 2, you will read both Katz and Picq and Tukana, watch any videos if there are any, and submit three different posts for that week. At least two must be responses to your classmates!!! These must be turned in before class starts!!

Two Sets (of three posts per set) must be done **BEFORE the Midterm** and Two Sets must be done **AFTER the Midterm**.

Length: Each post should be at the very least 50 words long. BUT!!! 150 words (3 X 50) is not enough to successfully complete the assignment. You should expect to write at least **250 words per set**. Please do not write more than 300 words per set, though. That's a lot of grading. ☺

Each set of posts is worth 5 points. **You must have three posts per assignment to get a grade.** Anything less and you will get a zero on the assignment. **I do not accept late assignments!!**

The purpose of this assignment is to get you engaging with the course material and each other. Basically, you do the readings and watch any videos assigned for that week. You then write a post about the material that demonstrates that you actually **read/watched everything** and you are trying to make sense of it. Every post must engage with questions of privilege and oppression. Every post must also attend to the disciplinary approaches used for that week's unit. For example, if the week draws on psychology and history, you must address how understanding those two disciplines helps you understanding the subject for the week.

Don't tell us what the readings and videos were about. We all read/watched them, too. Instead, **tell us what you thought of them**. Maybe say whether you agreed with them and why? **Just make it clear throughout your 3 posts that you actually read/watched everything.**

Remember, you only do 4 of these! Please don't do extra. I won't survive the semester if you do. ☺

- Post 3 posts on the readings/videos
 - One of these can be an original thread, but only one can be.
 - All three can be responses to other people's posts.
- You must demonstrate you are attempting to grasp and/or challenge the material presented for that unit.
- **Each set of posts should be at least 250 words and at the very least 50 words per set.**

- Again, the goal is to demonstrate you did the readings, watched any videos, paid attention in class, and are actually engaging with your classmates.
- Think of this like in-class discussion.
- You must address issues of **privilege and oppression** in your posts.
- You must address the **relevance of the disciplines used** for that week's unit.
- Each set of DB posts is worth a total of 3 points.
- **I will only give you a grade if you have submitted 3 posts per assignment.**
- The first week or two, I will grade easily as we get the hang of it, then I grade harder. So, you should submit earlier than later.
- Things like grammar, typos, and structure may impact your grade. Basically, if your writing makes it hard for me to understand what you are saying, then I will have to deduct that from your grade.
- NOTE: In these discussions, people will likely disagree with each other. That is fine. In fact, it's good.
 - You can also use these posts to disagree with things I've said.
 - We just all have to be respectful.
- If anyone starts trolling classmates or saying offensive things to offend, as opposed to trying to figure out how to talk about these topics, I will shut that down.

MIDTERM (25)

Tuesday, March 7th

- The exam will be taken in person, but I reserve the right to move it online.
- If it is online:
 - The final exam for this class will be timed with randomized questions.
 - It will be open notes and book and such, but I recommend preparing a study sheet in advance or you will get overwhelmed and run out of time.
- The exam is **cumulative**.
 - It will cover everything we have studied in class from day one.
- I will draw questions from the readings, class discussions, lectures, and videos.
- The exam will be multiple-choice, fill in the blank, short answer, and one short essay.
- There will be NO review before the exam. It's early enough in term that you shouldn't need one.

"WHAT I LEARNED" VIDEO (10 points) **Only I, your professor, will see the video! ******

Due Tuesday May 2nd by the start of class!!!

I'm having you each create a short, 3-5 minute video telling me what you learned from the course, what disciplines helped you learn it (at least two covered in class), and what you contributed to class. This is nothing fancy. Think of it like this: "What can I say to help Prof Ruchti know who I am when I email him or when he assesses participation?" AND "What did I learn from this class that I might find interesting when I look back on it?" Again, name at least two disciplines that we discussed this term that helped you better understand the subject of the course. How did those disciplines help you?

In summary, what to cover in video:

- How will Dr. Ruchti recognize me?
- What did I learn?
- How did two or more disciplines help me understand the subject matter?

You will submit it to D2L under the Assignments Tab.

Purpose: To Identify what you have learned AND to demonstrate how multiple disciplines helped you learn it. It will also help me with participation grades.

How to Succeed: If you want to get full points for this, you really just have to put a video up there that looks like you took it seriously and put some effort into it. AND cover the key topics. It does not need to be fancy! If you spend ten minutes making a five-minute video, that's fine. So long as I can play it and I can see and hear you.

If you, for whatever reason, can't make the video, come talk to me. We will figure it out.

FINAL EXAM (25)

Sec 01: Thursday, May 7th, 8-10am

Sec 02: Tuesday, May 5th, 10:30-12:30pm

- The exam will be taken in person, but I reserve the right to move it online.
- If it is online:
 - The final exam for this class will be timed with randomized questions.
 - It will be open notes and book and such, but I recommend preparing a study sheet in advance or you will get overwhelmed and run out of time.
- The exam is **cumulative**.
 - It will cover everything we have studied in class from day one.
- I will draw questions from the readings, class discussions, lectures, and videos.
- The exam will be multiple-choice, fill in the blank, short answer, and one short essay.
- There will be a substantial review before the exam.

EXAM MAKEUP POLICY

If you miss an exam, you must provide a university sanctioned excuse **in advance** of the exam. You are responsible for arranging to make up the exam within either 3 days prior to or after the exam date. To give a separate exam, your professors must write a whole new exam. This is a lot to ask of us. Therefore, I will not likely be generous in my willingness to make exceptions to this policy.

EXTRA CREDIT (MAX 10 POINTS):

I will do my best to provide extra credit opportunities throughout the semester. I will also try to find them at a variety of times and days to accommodate all of your schedules. I cannot make any promises, however, that I will find opportunities that meet your needs. I cannot offer extra credit assignments for one student or group of students without offering something to other students. Please do not ask me to do this. You are not allowed to have extra credit points that exceed 10% of your grade. In other words, you cannot have more than 10 points worth of extra credit. Remember, extra credit assignments are not guaranteed. They take work on my part to provide them. Please do NOT demand I give you extra credit. That's just rude.

The syllabus must identify in the course schedule where and how it will be made explicit to students how interdisciplinarity enhances the study of the course subject: Why are we using interdisciplinarity to explore this topic?

The course schedule should identify multiple occasions where the meaning of interdisciplinarity is markedly engaged and explicated: what interdisciplinarity is and how to use it.

The course schedule should identify multiple occasions that at least two disciplinary subjects will be used to engage the course subject in a substantive way: put interdisciplinarity into practice.

COURSE SCHEDULE

I reserve the right to add Short/Easy videos or to replace readings with Comparable readings.

Week 1, Jan 24-26: Introduction to the Course and Terms

This week we will layout the expectations for the course and establish some common language, or terms, we can all draw on as we move forward. **We will also unpack how an interdisciplinary approach will be useful in a study of sexual identity and culture.**

Readings: None

Week 2, Jan 31-Feb 2: Establishing a Context for the Course

This week, we will work to confuse, or challenge, our traditional understandings of the role of sexuality in Western culture. We will look at hegemony and how we regulate gender and sexuality.

We will also talk about Foucault's theory of Docile Bodies and establish how it, along with intersectionality, will function as a primary tool for approaching this course.

Readings:

1. Katz, "Invention of Heterosexuality"
2. Picq and Tikuna, "Indigenous Sexualities"

Week 3, Feb 7-9: Dangerous Sex: Damnation, STIs, and Orgasms

Now that we aren't so sure what sexual identity is, are we sure we know what sex is?

This week, we look at how we have defined sex, what makes sex seem like such an important part of our worlds, and why it scares so many of us? We consider this through the lenses of **philosophy** and **psychology**.

Readings:

1. Valenti, "Cult of Virginity"
2. Freud, Infantile Sexuality

Submit your Intro Video!!!

Week 4, Feb 14-16: Sex, Race, Gender, and Colonialism

Sexuality can be used as a tool of oppression, but it can also be used as a tool of resistance. Throughout this semester, we will look at ways that various groups and/or individuals fought back against oppressions through their sexuality. This week, however, we focus more on the far-reaching damage that can be done when sexuality is used as a tool for control within a sexually repressed society.

Davis provides a historical view of the construction of stereotypes around black women's sexuality in the U.S. Using a feminist analysis of **historical** and **sociological** texts, she presses us to consider how sex, gender, and race intersect to control bodies for economic benefit. **Davis's critique of sociological studies using historical analysis is an important model for how we will approach this interdisciplinary course.**

Readings:

Davis, "Legacy of Slavery"

(This essay is not as long as it seems)

Week 5, Feb 21-23: How did we get here? Judeo-Christian Scripture and the Discourse on God's Views of Sex

This week, we look at the early texts that served to shape Western culture's understanding of sexuality and sexual morality. So often, we think we have a firm understanding of where our morals came from. In some cases, we assume sexual norms have always been the way they are today. We are going to take some time to question our assumptions about sexuality, morality, social norms, and where they come from.

We are not looking to challenge anyone's religious beliefs. We are just going to look at some of the **historical** sources for contemporary sexual morality alongside **religious studies**.

Readings:

1. Book of Ruth
2. Assorted Ancient Judeo-Christian writings on sexuality

Week 6, Feb 28-Mar 2: Sexual Identity and Power: Greeks, Foucault, and BDSM

Sexuality has not always served as an identity. To understand ancient forms of sexuality, we need to understand them in their original contexts. We will do this by looking at ancient Greek sexual norms and the Judeo-Christian Bible.

This week, we will spend a good amount of time looking at **theological** and **philosophical** explanations of sexuality. Our focus, however, will be on theological methodology.

Readings:

1. Assort Writings on Greek Sexuality
2. Aristophanes from the Symposium

Week 7, Mar 7-9

MIDTERM!!!!

Midterm is on Tuesday. We will go over the exam on Thursday.

Readings: None

SPRING BREAK

Week 8, Mar 21-23: Consent: Sexy or Mandatory? Who has the Power to be Sexy?

This week, we consider the double binds that women's sexuality has been expected to function under and through. How can women be sexual beings when their sexuality is under such control?

This week's readings look at sexuality in the renaissance. We are now beginning to look at how culture and religion combine in creative ways to shape our sexual norms, and we do this through a **women's and gender studies** lens.

Readings:

1. Cadden and Ruggiero
2. Renaissance to Enlightenment

Week 9, Mar 28-30: Sex and Capitalism: Regulating Gender and Sexuality for Profit in the Victorian Era

This week we explore the impact of social and economic class on sexuality in the 19th century through **historical** and **philosophical** analyses. The rise of the industrial revolution impacted just about

everything, and sexuality was no exception. It became a tool for regulating class and we will see how and why.

Readings:

1. 19th Century and Class readings.
2. Foucault, "We other Victorians"

Week 10, Apr 4-6: Sex and Biology

By the end of the 19th century, Western culture's interest in sexuality shifts dramatically. The efforts by social scientists like Havelock Ellis and Freud to medicalize and control human sexuality have resulted in our current sexual culture (more or less).

How did late 19th century developments in **biological science** and the **social sciences** shape our understanding of culture? Or, more precisely, how did our understanding of culture shape the development of biological science and the social sciences? **And why is it that we can't understand sexuality without understanding the fields of biology and social science together? In other words, we are going to revisit why we do things interdisciplinarily.**

Readings:

Darwin and Biology

Week 11, Apr 11-13: 1st Wave Sexology: Sex Becomes an Identity

It's time to return to sexual deviance. From sexual hysteria to prostitution to all of the Others' ways of doing sex "wrong," 19th century sexology and Victorian sexual norms provide a seemingly endless supply of information for understanding sexuality today.

Early **social sciences** were trying to develop methods for understanding the world based on empirical data. While their work has been of great benefit to us, the limitations of their early methods, available data, and social norms led to some dangerous conclusions. This week we will work to become more astute readers of sociological data.

Readings:

1. Krafft-Ebing
2. Assorted Readings on 19th Century Sexuality
3. Freud

Week 12, Apr 18-20: 2nd Wave Sexology: Re-Thinking Sexuality as an Identity

With the rising imperative to catalog sexual behaviors, a new urge to label and regulate sexuality as an identity emerged. This gave us hetero and homosexualities. Beginning with 1st wave sexology in the 19th century and evolving in the middle of the 20th century with 2nd wave sexology, we see the evolution of rules about sexual perversion. We will look, in particular, at how this impacted the rise of Gay Liberation.

Readings:

Assorted Readings about Kinsey and mid-20th century

Week 13, Apr 25-27: Gay Liberation, Feminism, Ways to Make Sex Work

This week we look at two things that are often lumped together even when they shouldn't be. By juxtaposing these topics, we will see the problems and benefits when groups from various sexual(ized) communities join forces. We will pay particular attention to sex workers and to the impact of HIV/AIDS on the gay and trans* communities.

Readings:

Assorted readings on sexuality post 1970s

Week 14, May 2-4: Review for Final

This week, we get caught up and prep for the final exam.

Readings: None

Submit your final Video!!!

Final Exam

Our Classroom!!!

Sec 01: Thursday, May 7th, 8-10am

Sec 02: Tuesday, May 5th, 10:30-12:30pm

ADDITIONAL COURSE POLICIES AND INFORMATION**EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

All students are encouraged to sign up for the University's free WCU ALERT service, which delivers official WCU emergency text messages directly to your cell phone. For more information and to sign up, visit www.wcupa.edu/wcualert. To report an emergency, call the Department of Public Safety at 610-436-3311.

Evaluation & Grading:

A letter grade will be assigned based on performance in the course according to the following scale:

A: 4.00, 93-100, Excellent

A-: 3.67, 90-92

B+: 3.33, 87-89, Superior

B: 3.00, 83-86

B-: 2.67, 80-82

C+: 2.33, 77-79, Average

C: 2.00, 73-76

C-: 1.67, 70-72

D+: 1.33, 67-69, Below Average

D: 1.00, 63-66

D-: .67, 60-62

F: 0, < 60%, Failure

ACADEMIC & PERSONAL INTEGRITY

It is the responsibility of each student to adhere to the university's standards for academic integrity. Violations of academic integrity include any act that violates the rights of another student in academic work, that involves misrepresentation of your own work, or that disrupts the instruction of the course. Other violations include (but are not limited to): cheating on assignments or examinations; plagiarizing, which means copying any part of another's work and/or using ideas of another and presenting them as one's own without giving proper credit to the source; selling, purchasing, or exchanging of term papers; falsifying of information; and using your own work from one class to fulfill the assignment for another class without significant modification. Proof of academic misconduct can result in the automatic failure and removal from this course. For questions regarding Academic Integrity, the No-Grade Policy, Sexual Harassment, or the Student Code of Conduct, students are encouraged to refer to the [Undergraduate Catalog](#).

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

West Chester University is committed to providing equitable access to the full WCU experience for Golden Rams of all abilities. Students should contact the [Office of Educational Accessibility \(OEA\)](#) to establish accommodations if they have had accommodations in the past or if they believe they may be eligible for accommodations due to a disability, whether or not it may be readily apparent. There is no deadline for disclosing to OEA or for requesting to use approved accommodations in a given course. However, accommodations can only be applied to future assignments or exams; that is, they can't be applied retroactively. Please share your letter from OEA as soon as possible so that we can discuss accommodations. If you have concerns related to disability discrimination, please contact the university's ADA Coordinator in the [Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance](#) or 610-436-2433.

UNIVERSITY-EXCUSED ABSENCES POLICY

Students are advised to carefully read and comply with the University-Excused Absences Policy, including absences for university-sanctioned events, contained in the WCU Undergraduate Catalog. In particular, please note that the "responsibility for meeting academic requirements rests with the student," that this policy does not excuse students from completing required academic work, and that professors can require a "fair alternative" to attendance on those days that students must be absent from class in order to participate in a University-Sanctioned Event.

REPORTING INCIDENTS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

West Chester University and its faculty are committed to assuring a safe and productive educational environment for all students. In order to comply with the requirements of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 and the University's commitment to offering supportive measures in accordance with the new regulations issued under Title IX, the University requires faculty members to report incidents of sexual violence shared by students to the University's Title IX Coordinator. The only exceptions to the faculty member's reporting obligation are when incidents of sexual violence are communicated by a student during a classroom discussion, in a writing assignment for a class, or as part of a University-approved research project. **Faculty members are obligated to report sexual violence or any other abuse of a student who was, or is, a child (a person under 18 years of age) when the abuse allegedly occurred to the person designated in the University Protection of Minors Policy.** Information regarding the reporting of sexual violence and the resources that are available to victims of sexual violence is set forth on the [WCUPA Sexual Misconduct website](#).

INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND ANTI-RACIST STATEMENT

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are central to West Chester University's mission as reflected in our [Mission Statement](#), [Values Statement](#), [Vision Statement](#) and [Strategic Plan: Pathways to Student Success](#). We disavow racism and all actions that silence, threaten, or degrade historically marginalized groups in the U.S. We acknowledge that all members of this learning community may experience harm stemming from forms of oppression including but not limited to classism, ableism, heterosexism, sexism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism, and xenophobia, and recognize that these forms of oppression are compounded by racism.

Our core commitment as an institution of higher education shapes our expectation for behavior within this learning community, which represents diverse individual beliefs, backgrounds, and experiences. Courteous and respectful behavior, interactions, and responses are expected from all members of the University. We must work together to make this a safe and productive learning environment for everyone. Part of this work is recognizing how race and other aspects of who we are shape our beliefs and our experiences as individuals. It is not enough to condemn acts of racism. For real, sustainable change, we must stand together as a diverse coalition against racism and oppression of any form, anywhere, at any time.

Resources for education and action are available through WCU's [Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance](#) (OEOC), DEI committees within departments or colleges, the student [ombudsperson](#), and centers on campus committed to doing this work (e.g., [Dowdy Multicultural Center](#), [Center for Women and Gender Equity](#), [Veterans Center](#), and the [Center for Trans and Queer Advocacy](#)).

Guidance on how to report incidents of discrimination and harassment is available at the University's [Office of Equal Opportunity and Compliance](#).

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

All students are encouraged to sign up for the University's free [WCU ALERT service](#), which delivers official WCU emergency text messages directly to your cell phone. To report an emergency, call the Department of Public Safety at 610-436-3311.

ELECTRONIC MAIL POLICY

It is expected that faculty, staff, and students activate and maintain regular access to University provided e-mail accounts. Official university communications, including those from your instructor, will be sent through your university e-mail account. You are responsible for accessing that mail to be sure to obtain official University communications. Failure to access will not exempt individuals from the responsibilities associated with this course.