

## **DRAFT:**

# **Potential Academic Freedom Syllabus Language**

**Academic Freedom.** In higher education, academic freedom is foundational to scholarly inquiry. Academic freedom helps to create a space that allows everyone in the classroom to develop the essential skills of critical inquiry and to experience intellectual growth. Part of my academic freedom as a professor is to make thoughtful judgments about appropriate content and assignments to achieve the student learning objectives in this course (see p. 1 of this syllabus for those learning objectives). Part of your academic freedom as a student is to use your own critical thinking skills to evaluate the texts and ideas that we encounter in this space. Mutual recognition of academic freedom is what allows each one of us to learn and grow. This involves the freedom to discuss all relevant matters in the classroom. Educators have the autonomy to determine course content, teaching methods, and materials, including addressing challenging topics. Students have the freedom to explore controversial ideas and engage in creative work. This freedom to learn allows us to question and discuss diverse perspectives within the academic setting <sup>[ASCCC]</sup>. This ensures that both teachers and students can engage freely in the learning process.

Please read more about the De Anza Academic Freedom policy [HERE](#).

**Diverse Perspectives & Experiences.** As a human being, I have perspectives that are shaped by my personal identity, life experiences, and political and religious commitments. The same is true for all of you. There is no reason to expect that we all share the same worldview and, indeed, I am glad that we do not! I do not expect or require students to share mine. Your grade in this course will not be affected by any real or perceived differences in our identities, experiences, or political and religious commitments. My responsibility in this class is to support you in achieving the student learning objectives. You will be graded in this course in relation to those objectives.

I am mindful that students are negotiating time for school, essential work, family, health, and the many other community activities that make up your full lives. This class is intentionally designed with that in mind and has a number of strategic support structures in place to help you succeed. For example, if it would be helpful to communicate with me about any experiences or circumstances outside of the classroom, please feel welcome to let me know.

**Sensitive Topics:** Active learning can be fostered within environments that encourage us to consider ideas that are outside of our comfort zones. In this course, you may encounter ideas that are challenging, controversial, or uncomfortable for you. As your instructor, I recognize that your life experiences and trauma may impact your learning, and I will always work to build a supportive and inclusive learning space for all of us. I invite any student who anticipates that a particular reading and/or discussion will not be comfortable to study, along with the class, to please communicate with me so that we can work with options. For example, we might meet separately to discuss the content, and/or I can offer an alternative reading/discussion. Please look over the course syllabus, especially the reading materials, so that you are familiar with the core content as the quarter begins.

**Mutual Respect.** Mutual respect means that you recognize and acknowledge the dignity, agency, and experience of every person in this class, regardless of whether you agree with what they are saying or whether you share their opinions. Therefore, I expect you to treat each of your classmates, and me, in respectful ways.

Students have the right to express disagreement with professors, and their classmates, and to participate in academic discussions. However, students must do so within the bounds of appropriate classroom behavior, ensuring that discussions remain relevant and inclusive of all participants. I expect all students to uphold respectful and inclusive conduct: listening to others, honoring diverse perspectives, and using inclusive language (e.g., proper

names/pronouns). I will also be doing the same. The goal is to create a more supportive classroom environment where students can feel encouraged to participate in all aspects of the class.

Recognizing that students learn and communicate in different ways, and that some may feel less comfortable speaking in large groups, alternative participation formats (written and/or small-group work) will be available. In particular, for students with disabilities, I will work with each of you individually on accommodations for class success.

### **Campus Student Support and Resource**

- *List with Comments*