

Restorative Justice: Principles and Methods
Class Guidelines

SAMPLES ONLY (MAKE YOUR OWN)

These are guidelines, not rules. They are intended to help each of us find our way in terms of engaging with each other in ways that support both our learning and our individual and collective well-being. Because each of us has a particular social positionality and combination of personality traits, each of us is likely to interpret and navigate these guidelines in our own way. In establishing these guidelines for ourselves, we recognize that they are both incomplete and fluid and therefore open to revision as the need arises. The guidelines are not in any particular order.

1. Come to class prepared (Engagement)
2. Actively listen with the goal of understanding
3. Build on others' thoughts (Respect)
4. Be mindful of the situation (Mindfulness)
5. Challenge ideas, not people (Community)
6. Follow Covid-19 Guidelines (Safety, Support)
7. Be aware that none of us, including the instructor, have all the relevant knowledge/information. Practice intellectual humility, especially as part of dominant group (Accountability)
8. Keep in mind that opinions are shaped by family background and culture (Shared reality)
9. Maintain autonomy/stay in choice (Autonomy)
10. Display empathy/compassion when you have the capacity to do so (we are all probably doing the best we can). See also #5.
11. Use inclusive language/Avoid violent language if the words do not apply to your own lived experience (Safety, Respect)
12. Share your opinion/perspective/lived experience, recognizing others may have different one (Learning/Growth)
13. Discern whether your voice is needed at any given point, especially if you are speaking from perspective of a dominant group (Learning/Growth, Respect, Justice)
14. Understand that discomfort is part of the territory of challenging conventional ways of doing things (Shared reality)
15. Take/invite a short break if things get tense, either in class or outside classroom, if necessary (Safety, Well-being)
16. Recognize that we have option of a student-initiated restorative dialogue during class (Community)
17. We all have some responsibility for supporting each other in following these guidelines (Accountability)
18. Check in about how guidelines are working later in semester (Community)

1. Take up space and do it mindfully
2. Be open to being challenged
3. Be curious, while respecting personal boundaries
4. Practice empathy (we all have a unique history and life story)
5. Listen with the purpose of understanding (agreement not required)
6. Check for understanding, as necessary
7. Separate ideas from the people presenting them (engage with the ideas)
8. Remember that it is “us” against “the problem”
9. Stay authentic (don’t drop your needs)
10. Think holistically (e.g., context, “forest and trees”, interactions/relationships of ideas)
11. Recognize “passing” as a contribution to the class
12. Talk about ideas, not people outside of class (no names or other identifying information)
13. Check in on individuals at your table who appear to be in distress
14. If tension is high, we may pause to check in on GROUP well-being (in the moment or at end of class)

1. Come to class prepared (i.e., read the readings). Know you’re still welcome regardless.
2. No technology (unless the class activity or individual circumstances require it)
3. Be respectful/courteous to others’ ideas and opinions. Don’t interrupt.
4. Disagree with people’s views, not their character
5. Attempt to empathize before forming your final opinion
6. Leave disagreements in the classroom
7. It’s ok to say “I don’t know”. It’s ok to step out of a conversation.
8. Be truthful and honest even when you may not agree with others
9. Keep an open mind about future endeavors and prior experience with the current criminal system
10. Aim not to agree but to understand. Dialogue is not debate. There are no sides and no winners/losers. It’s ok to “agree to disagree”.
11. Give people the benefit of the doubt - do not assume mal-intentions in sharing
12. Recognize we are all coming from different backgrounds and exposure to different knowledge/perspectives. Consider making your own positionality explicit.
13. When speaking after someone, ask clarifying questions and summarize what they said as a way to check for understanding, reflecting (without judgment) what they said or the part of the message you want to engage with.
14. Be aware that some people may need time to process unfamiliar or heavy topics or even just better absorb what is being shared.
15. Focus on OWN feelings and values
16. When asked a question, be aware that questions are often strategies for improving understanding, not attacks on others.
17. Don’t be afraid to speak- This is a community space. It’s ok to explore out loud. It’s ok to share unpopular perspectives. It’s ok to take risks. All of these can help us learn and may even contribute to further conversation
18. Use your classmates for help- as a community we need to rely on others and speak up when we need help