

Discussion Norms | Resilience for Underrepresented Graduate Students

- True listening includes affirming gestures and a commitment to not interrupt or disengage when someone is speaking. However, we also acknowledge that people may need to take space when discussing difficult topics.
- Ask clarifying questions to check in throughout a conversation. We find it encouraging when people take the time to make sure they're understanding what we mean.
- Give space and time for people to opt out of a discussion (or part of a discussion) when the topic is emotional or otherwise tough. Don't expect everyone to share about every topic, and don't ask anyone to be the representative for their demographic group.
- Be mindful of taking up airtime equitably. If you tend to talk a lot or hold a dominant perspective on a topic, consider stepping back to make sure others can talk. If you tend to be quieter in discussions, challenge yourself to speak up in a way that feels comfortable. We'll make a collective effort to notice and adjust if someone is having trouble talking in the group.
- Intent doesn't erase impact, but none of us are perfect when it comes to discussing identity and justice. If someone says something hurtful, we'll try to assume best intentions AND also address how it did/could have negative impacts. If someone tells you that you've caused harm, remember that they're doing valuable work to help educate you. Try to accept the feedback graciously even if it's embarrassing or hard to understand right away.
- We have a shared goal of understanding and learning from one another in class discussions. If conflict or misunderstanding arises, keep this goal in mind and stick with the struggle!