Course Policy Statement

Trigger Warnings and Accessibility

This class will use trigger warnings as a matter of course. A trigger is a graphic representation of a subject matter that could spur a mental health crisis for a reader or viewer. Common triggers are: representations of rape, violence, suicide, discrimination, or victim-blaming of any kind. Since triggers might revolve around topics that I have not anticipated, I have created an anonymous Google form where you can indicate to me topics that you’d like me to warn for. I will send this form out via email. I encourage you to let me know how I can make this classroom as inclusive and accessible as possible.

I strive to provide an environment that is equitable and conducive to the learning of all students. To do so, I ask that class members be respectful of each another and the diverse backgrounds, abilities, and opinions that each student brings into the classroom. If there are circumstances affecting your performance in or access to this class, please let me know so that we can work together to develop strategies for adapting assignments or assessments to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. If you have a documented disability and require specific accommodation, be sure to contact the Office of Disability Services in College Hall 104 odsl@smith.edu. It is your responsibility to see that we receive all paperwork from ODS.

Statement on Revision

Students are allowed to revise and resubmit any assignment before the next one is due.

Anonymous Google Form

Are there specific topics or images for which you’d like a trigger warning?

Are there any accessibility needs you’d like for me to address or know about?

Is there anything you’d like me to know in order to enhance your learning in this course? I cannot promise to accommodate every request (for instance, if you ask me to hop on one foot while I lecture, I’m not sure I can promise to do that), but I will always make a good faith effort to ensure that my classroom is serving all students in the best possible way.

Collabedit or Google Doc

The last time I worked with students who wanted to use trigger warnings, in the Trans*/Queer Writing Group [...] one of my clever students created an anonymous collaborative document on the web (http://collabedit.com), so people could anonymously list things for which they wanted warning. We compiled our list, which was fairly short and comprised of pretty common categories (sexual violence, suicide, cutting, etc.), and people mostly did offer warnings when they included representations of these subjects in their pieces—which they did! including self-identified survivors, who sometimes wrote pieces which very graphically depicted some of the things on the trigger list[...] Trigger warnings in a workshop might allow student writers to write in MORE compelling, more honest, more powerful ways about our world, which includes trauma.


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