

Equity Checklist for Journalism Courses

Carleton's journalism program is committed to creating a welcoming, stimulating, professional and creative environment for our increasingly diverse student body. We commit to eliminating racism against Racialized and Indigenous people as well as inequities or other barriers based on ethnicity, nationality, religion, gender expression, sexual orientation or ability. We hope our program's commitment to anti-racism and anti-oppression practices will benefit all of our students while they are here and that it will foster a wider culture of equity and inclusion in newsrooms of the future as they respond to and report on an increasingly diverse society.

As we prepare to teach our courses, here are some important questions you should keep in mind to ensure we are creating inclusive classrooms:

Accessibility: Accessibility issues may be different when delivering online classes. Be conscious that the drive to run our classrooms like hardened newsrooms with a philosophy of "if you can't hack it here, then you can't hack it in a newsroom" can be exclusionary and present disproportionate challenges to some students.

- Did you send a survey to all students before the first class to inquire about physical or other disabilities, as well as issues of technology, privacy, or other unforeseen factors?
- How is the feedback you received from students who completed the survey incorporated into your plans for delivering the course, including assessments?
- Does your syllabus explicitly outline how students can participate in class discussions and other activities, even if they prefer not to turn on their cameras or aren't able to participate in synchronous discussions?
- Which Educational Development Centre workshops did you complete with respect to teaching online to better prepare you for the current academic year?

Respectful Classrooms: Students and instructors should understand that the classroom and the school are places where students of differing ability, background, racial identification, religion, ways of knowing and being, sexual orientation and gender expression are treated respectfully.

- Did you include the following statement about respectful behaviour in your syllabus?

Discussion and debate play valuable roles in online and in-person classes. Differing views should focus on the content of the material and efforts should be made to understand how a person's lived experience might or ought to shape their perspectives. Racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, and ableist language will not be tolerated.

- Did you include the following statement about the program's Permanent Working Group on Anti-Racism and Inclusion, including the process for proposing programmatic ideas or raising concerns, in your syllabus?

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foster a wider culture of equity and inclusion in newsrooms of the future as they respond to and report on an increasingly diverse society.

The Permanent Working Group was established in order to help keep the journalism school on track with structural changes that aim to make the school a safe and welcoming environment for all students. The group also provides specific direction and advice to the journalism program committee and head on matters pertaining to equity and inclusion. Students wishing to propose programmatic ideas or who have concerns may contact us directly via <https://carleton.ca/sjc/journalism/equity-and-inclusion/permanent-working-group/>

- Did you include the following information about Carleton's Department of Equity and Inclusive Communities, including the process for filing formal complaints, in your syllabus?

The Department of Equity and Inclusive Communities fosters the development of an inclusive and transformational university culture where individual distinctiveness and a sense of belonging for every member drive excellence in research, teaching, learning and working at Carleton. Students with complaints may direct them to the Department of Equity and Inclusive Communities via <https://carleton.ca/equity/>

- Did you include the following information about the student-led Association for Equity and Inclusion in Journalism in your syllabus?

The journalism program has a student-led Association for Equity and Inclusion in Journalism. Its mission is to make the journalism school a safe(r) space for Black, Indigenous, and students of colour, 2SLGBTQ+ students and students with disabilities/disabled students. More information about the association can be found at <https://carleton.ca/sjc/journalism/equity-and-inclusion/student-association/>

- As well as including these statements in your syllabus, have you scheduled time during your first class to read them to your students?
- Did you complete Unconscious Bias training?

Inclusive Course Materials: In the rush to prepare our courses, it can be easy to unintentionally exclude cultural perspectives and contributions that exist in the historic construction of the media and academia.

- How many scholarly readings or examples of great journalism are you planning to incorporate in your lessons plans over the course of the term?
- Of those, to your knowledge, how many were produced by Racialized journalists or academics?
- How many audio or video segments are you planning to assign your students to listen to or watch over the course of the term?
- Of those, to your knowledge, how many were voiced, presented, or produced by Racialized journalists or academics?
- How many of the readings and examples of journalism (including audio and video segments) produced by Racialized journalists or academics explore topics beyond the creator's own lived experience as a Racialized person?
- Have you made an effort to include scholarly readings and examples of journalism (including audio and video segments) that are written, voiced, presented, or produced by people who self-identify as members of other equity-seeking groups, such as women, 2SLGBTQ+, and people with disabilities?

Diversity When Inviting Guests: Review the list of guests you intend to invite to make certain they prioritize diversity and inclusion across the full range of topics addressed in your course.

- How many guests are you inviting to join your class virtually this year?
- Of those, how many are Racialized?
- What issues are the Racialized guests addressing?
- If those guests are expected to make a substantive presentation, have you explored the options available to you through your position at Carleton to offer an honorarium?
- How many of the guests are people who self-identify as members of other equity-seeking groups, such as women, 2SLGBTQ+, and people with disabilities?

Assignments and Story Ideas: Instructors should encourage students to explore story ideas that push boundaries rather than rigidly conform to them. Students with lived experience of underrepresented communities that aren't well understood by others can provide a particularly valuable service in their journalism. Students may sometimes propose stories that focus on such individuals or communities but that fail as story ideas for other reasons. Instructors should view this as an opportunity to help them reshape their approach rather than steering them away from a topic that interests them.

- Did you present differing views on the traditional understanding and role of objectivity as it pertains to reporting in the 21st Century?
- Did you devise reporting assignments that would compel students to explore issues or stories about marginalized communities or individuals that have often been neglected by traditional news values?
- Do reporting assignments include explicit directions to students to approach diverse sources whenever possible?

In dialogue with our students, we have found that many of the situations that discourage them with regard to diversity have to do not with deliberate decisions to exclude them but rather a failure to step outside the traditional boundaries of our profession and consider journalism and journalism education from their point of view. Being conscious of these issues makes a better environment for them and potentially a better journalism culture for the future.