

# COMM 2596

## Communicating Science, Health, Environment & Risk

Autumn 2025



THE OHIO STATE  
UNIVERSITY

### General information

<b>Instructor</b> Dominik Stecula, PhD	<b>Meeting times</b> W & F – 12.45-2.05pm	<b>Office location</b> 3105 Derby Hall
<b>Classroom</b> Baker Systems Engineering Room 144	<b>Email</b> stecula.3@osu.edu	<b>Office hours</b> Wednesdays 2.30-4.30pm or by appointment (in person or on zoom)

### Description

This course is an **in-person lecture-based** class designed to provide a general introduction to the fields of science, risk, environmental and health communication from multiple perspectives including psychological, political, social, cultural, and behavioral sciences. Students will apply theories and research covered in class to address real-world challenges of communicating science, health, environment, and risk to wide audiences.

As a GE sustainability-themed course, instruction will focus on the fundamental dependence of humans on earth and environmental systems and address aspects of the interdependence of human and natural systems. This includes exploring the role of communication in the formation of people's attitudes and beliefs toward several dimensions of sustainability, including environmental and earth systems; economy and governance; society and culture; engineering, technology and design; and health and well-being. As such, this course examines the continually evolving information environment and how it impacts our conceptualization of and approach toward sustainability within the context of the environment, scientific technology, health, and risk.

More specifically, this course involves deep engagement-with issues central to sustainability dimensions such as climate change (e.g., environmental and earth systems), vaccination (e.g., health and wellbeing), genetically modified foods (e.g., society and culture), and transportation technology (e.g., engineering, technology, and design). While many of the topics we discuss are controversial and polarizing, the purpose of the course is to understand the communication processes and effects behind these topics. For example, we address why so many sustainability topics become controversial; what role do cultural and

political values play in polarizing people's views; and how do communication interventions impact people's views on various dimensions of sustainability. Rather than advocate for a particular position, the goal is to explore these topics through an objective lens as academic observers.

Content from this course benefits students with an interest in a variety of careers, including public policy, public health, communication research, not-for-profit, advertising, education, consulting, politics, civil service, and public relations, to name a few.

### **General Education Sustainability Theme Goals and Expected Learning Outcomes (ELOs)**

This course is part of the Sustainability Theme.

#### **Sustainability Theme Goals**

1. Successful students will analyze an important topic or idea at a more advanced and in-depth level than the foundations.
2. Successful students will integrate approaches to sustainability by making connections to out-of-classroom experiences with academic knowledge or across disciplines and/or to work they have done in previous classes and that they anticipate doing in the future.
3. Students will analyze and explain how social and natural systems function, interact, and evolve over time; how human wellbeing depends on these interactions; how actions have impacts on subsequent generations and societies globally; and how human values, behaviors, and institutions impact multi-faceted, potential solutions across time.

#### **Sustainability Theme Expected Learning Outcomes**

1. Students will engage in critical and logical thinking about sustainability.
  - a. Readings, lectures, and in-class activities provide opportunities for critical thinking towards sustainability dimension, including how actions have impacts on subsequent generations and societies globally; and how human values, behaviors, and institutions impact multi-faceted, potential solutions across time.
2. Students will engage in an advanced, in-depth, scholarly exploration of sustainability.
  - a. In-class discussion and activities provide opportunity for in-depth, scholarly exploration of sustainability dimensions
3. Students will identify, describe, and synthesize approaches or experiences as they apply to sustainability.
  - a. In-class discussion with an emphasis on real-world application will be used to identify, describe, and synthesize approaches/experiences to sustainability (e.g., climate change adaptation).
4. Students will demonstrate a developing sense of self as a learner through reflection, self-assessment, and creative work, building on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts.

- a. In-class discussion and activities, as well as assignments, provide opportunities for students to demonstrate their creative work and generating a sense of self as a learner.
5. Students will describe elements of the fundamental dependence of humans on Earth and environmental systems and on the resilience of these systems.
  - a. In-class discussion and assignments will provide opportunities for students to assess elements of fundamental dependence of humans on environmental systems.
6. Students will describe, analyze and critique the roles and impacts of human activity and technology on both human society and the natural world, in the past, currently, and in the future.
  - a. Instruction includes assessing the communication of topics related to human activity and technology on society and the natural world, including climate change, GMO foods, autonomous vehicles, and vaccination.
7. Students will devise informed and meaningful responses to problems and arguments in the area of sustainability based on the interpretation of appropriate evidence and an explicit statement of values.
  - a. Assignments and in-class discussion regarding problems and arguments around the communication of sustainability dimensions are used heavily in this course.

## **Legacy General Education Goals and ELOs**

### **Goals**

Students demonstrate an understanding of a topic of interest through scholarly activities that draw upon multiple disciplines and through their interactions with students from different majors.

### **Expected Learning Outcomes**

- Students understand the benefits and limitations of different disciplinary perspectives.
- Students understand the benefits of synthesizing multiple disciplinary perspectives.
- Students synthesize and apply knowledge from diverse disciplines to a topic of interest

## Class schedule

---

### Week 1.

Day	Date	Topic	Readings and Assignments
Wednesday	August 27	Introductions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <a href="#">How to read an academic article</a></li><li>- <a href="#">Re-reading is inefficient. Here are 8 tips for studying smarter.</a></li></ul>
Friday	August 29	What is science? What is science communication?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <a href="#">Burns, T. W., O'Connor, D. J., &amp; Stocklmayer, S. M. (2003). Science communication: a contemporary definition. Public understanding of science, 12(2), 183-202.</a></li><li>- Listen to this podcast episode: <a href="#">Science talk – how do we know anything?</a></li><li>- Syllabus quiz due by the end of the day on Friday, Aug 29, 2025 on CarmenCanvas</li></ul>

### Week 2.

Day	Date	Topic	Readings and Assignments
Wednesday	September 3	Public understanding of science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <a href="#">Suldovsky, B., Landrum, A., &amp; Stroud, N. J. (2019). Public perceptions of who counts as a scientist for controversial science. Public Understanding of</a></li></ul>

[Science, 28\(7\), 797-811.](#)

Friday	September 5	Public understanding of science	- <a href="#"><u>Rogers, T., &amp; Shulman, H. (2025). Scientific jargon can be 'satisfying'—but misleading. <i>Nature</i></u></a>
--------	-------------	---------------------------------	--

**Week 3.**

Day	Date	Topic	Readings and Assignments
Wednesday	September 10	Media effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <a href="#"><u>Robertson, K., &amp; Williams, A. (2024). Mass media: Agenda-setting theory and the propaganda model. In <i>Insights into Communication Studies: Understanding Foundational Theories for Media Literacy</i>. Open Education Alberta.</u></a></li><li>- <a href="#"><u>von Sikorski, C., &amp; Matthes, J. (2020). Framing and journalism. In <i>Oxford research encyclopedia of communication</i>.</u></a></li></ul>
Friday	September 12	Science journalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <a href="#"><u>Oransky, I. (2020). Covering science at dangerous speeds. <i>Columbia Journalism Review</i>.</u></a></li><li>- <a href="#"><u>Zimmer, C. Science Writing: Guidelines And Guidance</u></a></li></ul>

**Week 4.**

Day	Date	Topic	Readings and Assignments
Wednesday	September 17	Science in digital media and popular culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Kirby, D. (2011). Scientific Expertise in Hollywood. In <i>Lab Coats in Hollywood: Science, Scientists, and Cinema</i>. MIT Press.</li></ul>
Friday	September 19	Politics and trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Listen to podcast: <a href="#">Nature - "A brief history of politics and science"</a></li><li>- Short Assignment #1 due by the end of the day on Friday, Sep 19, 2025 on CarmenCanvas</li></ul>

**Week 5.**

Day	Date	Topic	Readings and Assignments
Wednesday	September 24	Politics and trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <a href="#">Suhay, E. (2017). The politics of scientific knowledge. In Oxford research encyclopedia of communication.</a></li><li>- <a href="#">Nisbet, E. C., Cooper, K. E., &amp; Garrett, R. K. (2015). The partisan brain: How dissonant science messages lead conservatives and liberals to (dis) trust science. The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social</a></li></ul>

[Science, 658\(1\), 36-66.](#)

Friday                      September 26              Exam I

**Week 6.**

Day	Date	Topic	Readings and Assignments
Wednesday	October 1	Introduction to health communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Listen to podcast episode: <a href="#"><u>Health communication: why getting it right impacts us all</u></a></li><li>- <a href="#"><u>Fierce article "Lost in translation: When parents and pediatricians don't speak the same language"</u></a></li></ul>
Friday	October 3	Health campaigns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <a href="#"><u>Drope, J., &amp; Chapman, S. (2001). Tobacco industry efforts at discrediting scientific knowledge of environmental tobacco smoke: a review of internal industry documents. Journal of Epidemiology &amp; Community Health, 55(8), 588-594.</u></a></li><li>- Watch the movie <a href="#"><u>Thank you for smoking</u></a> (2005)</li></ul>

**Week 7.**

Day	Date	Topic	Readings and Assignments
Wednesday	October 8	Health campaigns	- <a href="#">Byrne, S., Greiner Safi, A., Kemp, D., Skurka, C., Davydova, J., Scolere, L., ... &amp; Niederdeppe, J. (2019). Effects of varying color, imagery, and text of cigarette package warning labels among socioeconomically disadvantaged middle school youth and adult</a>
Friday	October 10	Alternative health and social media health influencers	- <a href="#">Watch (I can't believe I'm saying it) Papa Meat's The Insane World of Alternative Medicine</a>

**Week 8.**

Day	Date	Topic	Readings and Assignments
Wednesday	October 15	Alternative health and social media health influencers	- <a href="#">Motta, M., Liu, Y., &amp; Yarnell, A. (2024). "Influencing the influencers:" a field experimental approach to promoting effective mental health communication on TikTok. <i>Scientific Reports</i>, 14(1), 5864.</a>
Friday	October 17	Autumn break, no class	



**Week 9.**

Day	Date	Topic	Readings and Assignments
Wednesday	October 22	Introduction to environmental communication	- <a href="#">Feinberg, M., &amp; Willer, R. (2013). The moral roots of environmental attitudes. Psychological science, 24(1), 56-62.</a>
Friday	October 24	Green marketing	- <a href="#">Schuldt, J. P. (2013). Does green mean healthy? Nutrition label color affects perceptions of healthfulness. Health communication, 28(8), 814-821.</a>  - Short Assignment #2 due by the end of the day on Friday, Oct 24, 2025 on CarmenCanvas

**Week 10.**

Day	Date	Topic	Readings and Assignments
Wednesday	October 29	Green marketing	- <a href="#">Listen to podcast episode: Drilled – The Father of Public Relations</a>
Friday	October 31	Exam II	

**Week 11.**

Day	Date	Topic	Readings and Assignments
Wednesday	November 5	Introduction to risk communication	- <a href="#">Slovic, P. Perception of risk, 1987. Science, 236, 208-285.</a> - <a href="#">Lindenfeld, L., Smith, H. M., Norton, T., &amp; Grecu, N. C. (2014). Risk communication and sustainability</a>

[science: lessons from the field. \*Sustainability science\*, 9\(2\), 119-127.](#)

Friday	November 7	Introduction to risk communication	- <a href="#">Listen to podcast episode: Hidden Brain – The Transformative Ideas of Daniel Kahneman</a>
--------	------------	------------------------------------	---

### Week 12.

Day	Date	Topic	Readings and Assignments
Wednesday	November 12	Crisis communication	- <a href="#">Listen to podcast episode: Risky talk – Communicating in a Crisis</a> - <a href="#">CDC Crisis and Emergency Risk Communications (CERC) Introduction</a>
Friday	November 14	Misinformation and conspiracy theories	- <a href="#">Wardle and Derakhshan (2017). Information Disorder. Council of Europe.</a>

### Week 13.

Day	Date	Topic	Readings and Assignments
Wednesday	November 19	Misinformation and conspiracy theories	- <a href="#">Douglas, K. M., Sutton, R. M., &amp; Cichocka, A. (2017). The psychology of conspiracy theories. <i>Current directions in psychological science</i>, 26(6), 538-542.</a>

Friday	November 21	Combating misinformation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">The Debunking Handbook (2020).</a></li> <li>- Short Assignment #3 due by the end of the day on Friday, Nov 21, 2025 on CarmenCanvas</li> </ul>
--------	-------------	--------------------------	---

#### Week 14. Thanksgiving break

Day	Date	Topic	Readings and Assignments
Wednesday	November 26	Thanksgiving break, no class	
Friday	November 28	Thanksgiving break, no class	

#### Week 15.

Day	Date	Topic	Readings and Assignments
Wednesday	December 3	Combating misinformation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="#">Listen to podcast episode: Speaking of Psychology - Stopping the spread of misinformation</a></li> </ul>
Friday	December 5	Future of SHER Comm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Medeiros, J. (2021). How tech is changing healthcare. <i>Wired</i>.</li> <li>- <a href="#">Alvarez, A., Caliskan, A., Crockett, M. J., Ho, S. S., Messeri, L., &amp; West, J. (2024). Science communication with generative AI. <i>Nature Human Behaviour</i>, 8(4), 625-627.</a></li> <li>- Group projects due by the end of the day on</li> </ul>

**Week 16.**

Day	Date	Topic	Readings and Assignments
Wednesday	December 10	Exam III	

**Class schedule**

---

**Important dates**

Day	Date	Time	Assignment or Exam
Friday	August 29	Due by 11.59pm	Complete a brief syllabus quiz on CarmenCanvas
Friday	September 19	Due by 11.59pm	Short assignment #1 due on CarmenCanvas
Friday	September 26	Class time	Exam I, in person, in class, bring a pen
Friday	October 24	Due by 11.59pm	Short assignment #2 due on CarmenCanvas
Friday	October 31	Class time	Exam II, in person, in class, bring a pen
Friday	November 21	Due by 11.59pm	Short assignment #3 due on CarmenCanvas
Friday	December 5	Due by 11.59pm	Group Project due on CarmenCanvas
Wednesday	December 10	Class time	Exam III, in person, in class, bring a pen

**Course policies**

---

**Participation**

Your attendance and participation are not just important for your learning and understanding of the course material. It is also important to generate a positive classroom environment conducive to learning. I expect you to show up prepared and ready for class. At the same time, I won't take attendance. You paid a lot of money to be here! Instead of taking attendance, some in-class activities that we will complete will be graded. There will be 10 activities for which you will get points, and they will take place in random classes over

the duration of the semester. These will not be announced. If you miss one, you will miss on the points for that day. In total, 50 points will be allocated that way (10% of your total grade in this course).

### Class decorum

Remember that this is an academic environment. Therefore, I ask that you minimize unnecessary disruptions (this includes, but it is not limited to, side conversations, web surfing, email and social media use, shopping, texting, and similar disruptive activities). Students are expected to always be respectful of their classmates. Debate about the ideas and theories presented in this class is encouraged. Disagreement is a healthy part of a democratic society. However, please remember to challenge the *idea* and not the *person*.

### Course materials

There is **no textbook** in this course. Textbooks are expensive and I would rather have you spend your money on other stuff. Instead, you will be asked to read a combination of peer reviewed academic articles, magazine and newspaper articles, as well as watch videos and listen to podcasts. Hopefully, the variety of assigned types of content will make learning a more enjoyable experience.

### Late submissions

Deadlines are meant to keep you on track. Deadlines make the world go round. Without deadlines, there would be chaos. Please submit your work on time. All the deadlines are in the syllabus on Day 1 of class. Short assignments submitted up to 48 hours past the due date will receive maximum of half credit. Any late submissions beyond 48 hours will result in a 0. There will be no late submissions on the final project or the syllabus quiz.

### Missing exams

The exams together make up 48% of your grade. Do not miss them. **Rescheduled exams are not allowed except in truly extraordinary circumstances beyond the student's control.** Your friend is visiting Columbus? That's not a reason to miss an exam. Family trip? Cryptocurrency seminar at the Ramada Inn by the airport? Zach Werenski signing jerseys at the Easton Town Center? These situations do not constitute an emergency. If you have a true emergency, please notify me as soon as possible, and provide the necessary documentation, such as a doctor's note.

### Plagiarism

All work in this course is to be individually developed. Plagiarism includes using another person's writing without giving them credit, using large verbatim sections of the work of another person or online source (even a public source) or submitting something you have written for another class. If you unsure, please give credit to your source or talk to me about it. Students who plagiarize will be penalized and reported to university officials. You will also receive a grade of zero for the assignment where plagiarism occurred.

## Academic integrity

Academic integrity is essential to maintaining an environment that fosters excellence in teaching, research, and other educational and scholarly activities. Thus, The Ohio State University and the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) expect that all students have read and understand the University's Code of Student Conduct, and that all students will complete all academic and scholarly assignments with fairness and honesty. Students must recognize that failure to follow the rules and guidelines established in the University's Code of Student Conduct and this syllabus may constitute Academic Misconduct.

The Ohio State University's Code of Student Conduct (Section 3335-23-04) defines academic misconduct as: Any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University or subvert the educational process. Examples of academic misconduct include (but are not limited to) plagiarism, collusion (unauthorized collaboration), copying the work of another student, and possession of unauthorized materials during an examination. Ignorance of the University's Code of Student Conduct is never considered an excuse for academic misconduct, so please review the Code of Student Conduct and, specifically, the sections dealing with academic misconduct.

If an instructor suspects that a student has committed academic misconduct in this course, the instructor is obligated by University Rules to report those suspicions to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. If COAM determines that a student violated the University's Code of Student Conduct (i.e., committed academic misconduct), the sanctions for the misconduct could include a failing grade in the course and suspension or dismissal from the University.

If students have questions about the above policy or what constitutes academic misconduct in this course, they should contact the instructor.

## AI and Academic integrity

There has been a significant increase in the popularity and availability of a variety of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools, including ChatGPT, Sudowrite, and others. These tools will help shape the future of work, research and technology, but when used in the wrong way, they can stand in conflict with academic integrity at Ohio State.

All students have important obligations under the Code of Student Conduct to complete all academic and scholarly activities with fairness and honesty. Our professional students also have the responsibility to uphold the professional and ethical standards found in their respective academic honor codes. Specifically, students are not to use unauthorized assistance in the laboratory, on field work, in scholarship, or on a course assignment unless such assistance has been authorized specifically by the course instructor. In addition, students are not to submit their work without acknowledging any word-for-word use and/or paraphrasing of writing, ideas or other work that is not your own. These requirements apply to all students undergraduate, graduate, and professional.

To maintain a culture of integrity and respect, these generative AI tools should not be used in the completion of course assignments unless an instructor for a given course specifically authorizes their use. Some instructors may approve of using generative AI tools in the academic setting for specific goals. However, these tools should be used only with the explicit and clear permission of each individual instructor, and then only in the ways allowed by the instructor.

### More on AI

Large Language Model tools like ChatGPT exist and will continue to exist. Banning it now is like banning the internet in 2002 or the printing press in 1450s as far as I'm concerned. But blindly using these tools without attribution constitutes plagiarism. If you put in a question or a prompt, and then just copy and paste the generated response, that is cheating. If you use these technologies in this class, I expect you to harness these tools in a way that makes your work better, I expect you to double check things to ensure the content you submit is accurate (ChatGPT makes stuff up! A LOT!) and that you cite the exact tool you have used and provide a statement on how you used it. Using these tools appropriately takes time and effort, and it needs to be double checked and edited. If you want to use these tools, I expect you to do all these things.

In sum, if you use LLMs like ChatGPT to assist you with any assignment in the class, you have to submit an **AI statement**, outlining what tool you used, and how you used it. You will not be penalized simply for using ChatGPT, though, so please be honest.

## Assignments and Assessment

---

There are a total of **500 points** to earn in this class.

### Syllabus quiz (10 pts)

Read the syllabus and answer a few questions about it. It's that simple. You have to complete it on CarmenCanvas by the due data indicated above. The goal of this assignment is to ensure you know and understand course policies before we delve into substantive content. You take the quiz online, on CarmenCanvas. It is five questions. You have 10 minutes to answer them.

### Participation (50 pts)

You can't participate if you don't attend the class. And if you don't participate, the class will simply not be as good. I need all of you to come prepared and ask questions and engage with me and your fellow students. Learning is a social endeavor, after all. But at the same time, I won't take attendance every time. Instead of taking attendance, some in-class activities that we will complete will be graded. There will be 10 activities for which you will get points, and they will take place in random classes over the duration of the semester. These will not be announced ahead of time. If you miss one, you will miss on the points for that day. In total, 50 points will be allocated that way (10% of your total grade in this course).

### Exams (240 pts)

We will have three exams in this course. See above for more details about the date, time, and the location of the exams. Each is worth 80 points and they are not cumulative, meaning that Exam III, for example, only covers the material we have covered since Exam II. Exams will be held in person, on paper, in class. There will be no make ups if you miss it.

The exams will feature multiple choice, true or false, and short answer questions. Nothing revolutionary, just questions testing your knowledge and application of course content, from both lectures and assigned readings, podcasts, and videos.

### Short assignments (80 pts)

You will be asked to complete three (3) brief assignments throughout the semester. Each is worth 40 points. I will drop your lowest score (that means that if you are satisfied with how the first two short assignments went, you don't have to submit anything for the third one). Because of this policy, there will be no make ups. And no, you cannot do all three for extra credit.

Some assignments will be memes. Others will be brief reflections. More detail will be posted on Carmen.

**Memes** are [units of culture](#). That sounds weird, right? What we mean by that is memes are entities such as "tunes, ideas, catch-phrases, clothes fashions, ways of making pots or building arches." Although we associate that term with social media these days, it was actually coined by Richard Dawkins in his 1976 book "The Selfish Gene." In modern (circa 2025) internet culture, memes typically take the form of:

1. Images or photos with superimposed text (for example ones circulating on Instagram)
2. Short video clips that get remixed or repurposed (like those on TikTok)
3. Phrases or catchphrases that become widely repeated (such as "Sir, this is a Wendy's" which is used to respond when someone goes on an inappropriate or overly serious rant)
4. Specific formats or templates that people adapt for different situations (like the "Woman Yelling at Cat" or "Galaxy Brain" formats)

Memes can be consumed quickly, have the potential to spread virally on social media, are adaptable so that people can easily modify it for different contexts, and rest on cultural relevance, so that it resonates with others. I will ask you to make make me memes related to course content. These need to be your original creations that apply course content to the real world in a creative way.

**Reflections** will be more traditional responses to a specific prompt, usually capped at 300 words.

### Group project (120 pts)

You will complete a group project in this class. More details about the assignment will be provided later in the term and will be available on Carmen. I will randomly assign you to a



group of 4-6 students. I will provide you with a detailed description of the assignment later in the semester.

### Grading scale

Letter grade	%	Description
A	93-100	The student met the learning objectives of the course in an excellent manner.
A-	90-92	The student met the learning objectives of the course in an excellent manner.
B+	87-89	The student met the learning objectives of the course in an above-average manner.
B	83-86	The student met the learning objectives of the course in an above-average manner.
B-	80-82	The student met the learning objectives of the course in an above-average manner.
C+	77-79	The student met the learning objectives of the course in an average manner.
C	73-76	The student met the learning objectives of the course in an average manner.
C-	70-72	The student met the learning objectives of the course in an average manner.
D+	67-69	The student met the learning objectives of the course in a low but acceptable manner.
D	60-66	The student met the learning objectives of the course in a low but acceptable manner.
F	Below 60	The student failed to meet the learning objectives of the course.

### Other relevant information

#### Intellectual Diversity

Ohio State is committed to fostering a culture of open inquiry and intellectual diversity within the classroom. This course will cover a range of information and may include discussions or debates about controversial issues, beliefs, or policies. Any such discussions and debates are intended to support understanding of the approved curriculum and relevant course objectives rather than promote any specific point of view. Students will be assessed on principles applicable to the field of study and the content covered in the course. Preparing students for citizenship includes helping them develop critical thinking skills that will allow them to reach their own conclusions regarding complex or controversial matters.

## Religious Accommodations

Ohio State has had a longstanding practice of making reasonable academic accommodations for students' religious beliefs and practices in accordance with applicable law. In 2023, Ohio State updated its practice to align with new state legislation. Under this new provision, students must be in early communication with their instructors regarding any known accommodation requests for religious beliefs and practices, providing notice of specific dates for which they request alternative accommodations within 14 days after the first instructional day of the course. Instructors in turn shall not question the sincerity of a student's religious or spiritual belief system in reviewing such requests and shall keep requests for accommodations confidential.

With sufficient notice, instructors will provide students with reasonable alternative accommodations with regard to examinations and other academic requirements with respect to students' sincerely held religious beliefs and practices by allowing up to three absences each semester for the student to attend or participate in religious activities. Examples of religious accommodations can include, but are not limited to, rescheduling an exam, altering the time of a student's presentation, allowing make-up assignments to substitute for missed class work, or flexibility in due dates or research responsibilities. If concerns arise about a requested accommodation, instructors are to consult their tenure initiating unit head for assistance.

A student's request for time off shall be provided if the student's sincerely held religious belief or practice severely affects the student's ability to take an exam or meet an academic requirement **and** the student has notified their instructor, in writing during the first 14 days after the course begins, of the date of each absence. Although students are required to provide notice within the first 14 days after a course begins, instructors are strongly encouraged to work with the student to provide a reasonable accommodation if a request is made outside the notice period. A student may not be penalized for an absence approved under this policy.

If students have questions or disputes related to academic accommodations, they should contact their course instructor, and then their department or college office. For questions or to report discrimination or harassment based on religion, individuals should contact the [Civil Rights Compliance Office](#).

Policy: [Religious Holidays, Holy Days and Observances](#)

## Disability Statement (with Accommodations for Illness)

The university strives to maintain a healthy and accessible environment to support student learning in and out of the classroom. If students anticipate or experience academic barriers based on a disability (including mental health and medical conditions, whether chronic or temporary), they should let their instructor know immediately so that they can privately discuss options. Students do not need to disclose specific information about a disability to faculty. To establish reasonable accommodations, students may be asked to register with Student Life Disability Services (see below for campus-specific contact information). After

registration, students should make arrangements with their instructors as soon as possible to discuss your accommodations so that accommodations may be implemented in a timely fashion.

If students are ill and need to miss class, including if they are staying home and away from others while experiencing symptoms of viral infection or fever, they should let their instructor know immediately. In cases where illness interacts with an underlying medical condition, please consult with Student Life Disability Services to request reasonable accommodations.

[slds@osu.edu](mailto:slds@osu.edu)

<https://slds.osu.edu/>

098 Baker Hall, 113 W. 12th Ave

614-292-3307 phone

### **Grievances and Solving Problems**

According to University Policies, if you have a problem with this class, you should seek to resolve the grievance concerning a grade or academic practice by speaking first with the instructor or professor. Then, if necessary, take your case to the department chairperson, college dean or associate dean, and to the provost, in that order. Specific procedures are outlined in Faculty Rule 3335-8-23. Grievances against graduate, research, and teaching assistants should be submitted first to the supervising instructor, then to the chairperson of the assistant's department.

### **Creating an Environment Free from Harassment, Discrimination, and Sexual Misconduct**

The Ohio State University is committed to building and maintaining a welcoming community. All Buckeyes have the right to be free from harassment, discrimination, and sexual misconduct. Ohio State does not discriminate on the basis of age, ancestry, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity or expression, genetic information, HIV/AIDS status, military status, national origin, pregnancy (childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, or recovery therefrom), race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or protected veteran status, or any other bases under the law, in its activities, academic programs, admission, and employment. Members of the university community also have the right to be free from all forms of sexual misconduct: sexual harassment, sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking, and sexual exploitation.

To report harassment, discrimination, sexual misconduct, or retaliation and/or seek confidential and non-confidential resources and supportive measures, contact the Civil Rights Compliance Office (CRCO):

Online reporting form: <http://civilrights.osu.edu/>

Call 614-247-5838 or TTY 614-688-8605

[civilrights@osu.edu](mailto:civilrights@osu.edu)

The university is committed to stopping sexual misconduct, preventing its recurrence, eliminating any hostile environment, and remedying its discriminatory effects. All university employees have reporting responsibilities to the Civil Rights Compliance Office to ensure the university can take appropriate action:

- All university employees, except those exempted by legal privilege of confidentiality or expressly identified as a confidential reporter, have an obligation to report incidents of sexual assault immediately.
- The following employees have an obligation to report all other forms of sexual misconduct as soon as practicable but at most within five workdays of becoming aware of such information: 1. Any human resource professional (HRP); 2. Anyone who supervises faculty, staff, students, or volunteers; 3. Chair/director; and 4. Faculty member.

### **Mental Health Statement**

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance or reduce a student's ability to participate in daily activities. The Ohio State University offers services to assist you with addressing these and other concerns you may be experiencing.

If you or someone you know are suffering from any of the aforementioned conditions, you can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Office of Student Life's Counseling and Consultation Service (CCS) by visiting [ccs.osu.edu](https://ccs.osu.edu) or calling 614-292-5766. CCS is located on the 4th floor of the Younkin Success Center and 10th floor of Lincoln Tower. You can reach an on-call counselor when CCS is closed at 614-292-5766 and 24-hour emergency help is also available through the 24/7 by dialing 988 to reach the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.

### **Military-Connected Students**

The [Military and Veterans Services](#) (MVS) Office offers a wide range of resources for military-connected students. Whether using educational benefits or not, all military-connected students are encouraged to learn more about how the university supports military-connected students (i.e., information about tutoring, transition services, access to the veteran's lounge, etc.). For service members, should you receive military orders during the semester or know of classes that will be missed due to service commitments, please speak with your instructor as soon as possible on possible accommodations. MVS contact information: [milvets@osu.edu](mailto:milvets@osu.edu); 614-247-VETS; [veterans.osu.edu/](https://veterans.osu.edu/); 185 Student Academic Services Building, 281 W. Lane Avenue.

## First-Generation Students

First-generation students are central to the land-grant mission established by the Morrill Act of 1862. If you are the first in your family to attend college, you belong here. I will make expectations clear, explain any jargon, and help you navigate the “hidden curriculum.” Please come to office hours or email me if you need help.