

## Honor and Respect in the Classroom

Westmont's [Community Life Statement](#) states that we will treat each other according to two commands from Jesus: "Love one another as I have loved you," and "Love your neighbor as yourself." Further, our [Diversity Matters](#) document indicates that as we abide by these commandments, we learn to honor and respect one another in the ways that Scripture teaches. Therefore as we try to live out what it means to be part of the kingdom of God and take care of others in the community, we seek to:

- engage in discussion openly, demonstrating humility toward our own perspectives, and respectfully examining views that are unfamiliar;
- affirm every person as created in God's image and reject stereotypical notions that demean, mock, or oversimplify;
- honor what is distinct in each other's experience as well as what we share in common;
- make choices that convey respect for our neighbors' experiences; and
- acknowledge the significance of context and its influence on our words and actions.

Therefore, in this class, as your instructor, I encourage you to:

- Examine your own language. Guard yourself from using derogatory or degrading terms in describing others.
- Speak out against jokes or comments that demean others. Silence implies consent; when we don't speak out against injustice we share some of the blame.
- Check in with your neighbor. Remarks that strike some as just a joke may not feel like that to others, depending on their background and life experiences.. Have the courage to ask about it; and have the courage to answer honestly. Genuine interactions and friendship are founded on honesty. Pointing out how things hurt us or offend us contribute to building these kinds of authentic relationships.

Please communicate with me as the instructor if you experience comments or discussions that concern you. I understand speaking up about these kinds of incidents can be difficult. You may not want to make trouble or you may not think the incident warrants a conversation with me. However, to make this class the kind of experience we want for all students, it's important that we discuss issues related to it, no matter how trivial you think it may be. Further, Westmont is committed to creating a work and learning environment that is free from harassment, discrimination, and bias-related incidents in all our programs, practices or policies. If you experience incidents of this more serious nature and wish to report them to the college, please access the college's policies on [Bias, Harassment and Discrimination](#) to learn how to proceed.