

University of Rochester
INTR 220 Inside the State: Subnational Politics in Comparative Perspective
Spring 2022 — TR 12.30-1.15
Location: Morey Hall, Room 205
Zoom link: <https://rochester.zoom.us/j/97145395500>

- **Instructor name and contact information**

Guzel Garifullina

Email: ggariful@ur.rochester.edu

- **Office hours and location**

Office hours: Tuesday 10-11.30 am

Thursday 3-4.30 pm and by appointment

Use the same Zoom link as for the class meetings

Office location: Harkness Hall 101

- **Course description and objectives**

Most of the politics happen at the subnational level - between governors, mayors, and regions' resistance to centralization, we can observe a variety of political behaviors and institutions without ever leaving a country. In this course, we will zoom in at the subnational level to better understand the daily functioning of different political regimes outside of the developed Western democracies.

The course will consist of two major modules. In the first half of the semester, we will talk about the general issues of federalism and decentralization. Here, we will discuss such questions as: What is a federation? How do federations function – in the West and in other contexts? What is decentralization? What do decentralized countries do better and why?

In the second half of the semester, we will focus on a series of case studies to look closer at the way politics works below the national level in Russia, Ukraine, China, Argentina, and Mexico. This will help us reexamine the topics covered in the first part of the course in a much more applied manner. Between the two modules (each of them lasting for 5 weeks), we will dedicate a couple of weeks to review and reflection, with discussions based on the material covered so far as well as your paper projects (more on that in the assignments section).

By the end of the semester, the students will:

- obtain theoretical competence in the issues of comparative federalism and comparative decentralization
- be able to apply this knowledge to analyze domestic politics in the selected non-Western countries
- become experts in subnational politics of a country of their choice, by independently building a portfolio of short analytical reviews and writing a short final paper

- develop their critical reading skills through engaging in collaborative analysis and discussion of academic articles written by political scientists and economists

- **Spring 2022 course delivery**

Right now, we are planning for remote learning in January and a return to in-person instruction in February. If the situation changes, and we need to pivot to online learning, I will make corresponding changes and inform you about it immediately.

More importantly, if you test positive for COVID-19, don't feel well, need to care for a family member, or face any other unexpected situation that prevents you from coming to class or affects your ability to participate – please reach out to me right away. We will discuss options for making up work, possible additional office hours, or personal catch-up session for you. In any situation, make sure to prioritize your physical and mental health, safety of others, and keep me updated.

Finally, if for some reason I can't come to class or teach (same reasons as you, essentially) – I will inform you and decide on the appropriate changes in the course. Most likely, I will have alternative materials (videos or podcasts) and activities for you to provide comparable learning experience.

- **Deadlines in time of uncertainty**

In this course, you all get a *free extension* on any written assignment (elements of the country portfolio or the final paper), no questions asked. As long as you submit your assignment within **48 hours** of the deadline as it is written in the syllabus – you get full credit. There is no need to ask for permission.

If you need a longer extension – contact me, I will grant extra time on a case-by-case basis.

After the free extension period and if you haven't contacted me beforehand and discussed necessary accommodations, standard late submission policies apply (see in course policies).

- **Class meetings and expectations**

Per current guidelines, we start the semester remotely. Here is how this will work.

Everything you need for a specific week will be on the course Blackboard site. On the left, you will see the “Learning modules” tab. Each module covers 2-3 weeks and will have all necessary class materials (including lecture PowerPoints or, if applicable, videos to watch), reminders about the deadlines, links to readings and reading assignments, etc.

There will be two weekly class meetings in Zoom – at the regular scheduled class times. I will start Zoom meetings with a brief 20-30 minute lecture, followed by in-class activities, discussion connecting the lecture material with the day's readings, and me answering your questions.

Because so much work is done in class, participating in Zoom meetings is a requirement, missing too many class sessions will affect your grade. Please reach out to me if you think you will miss multiple sessions.

- **Required course materials**

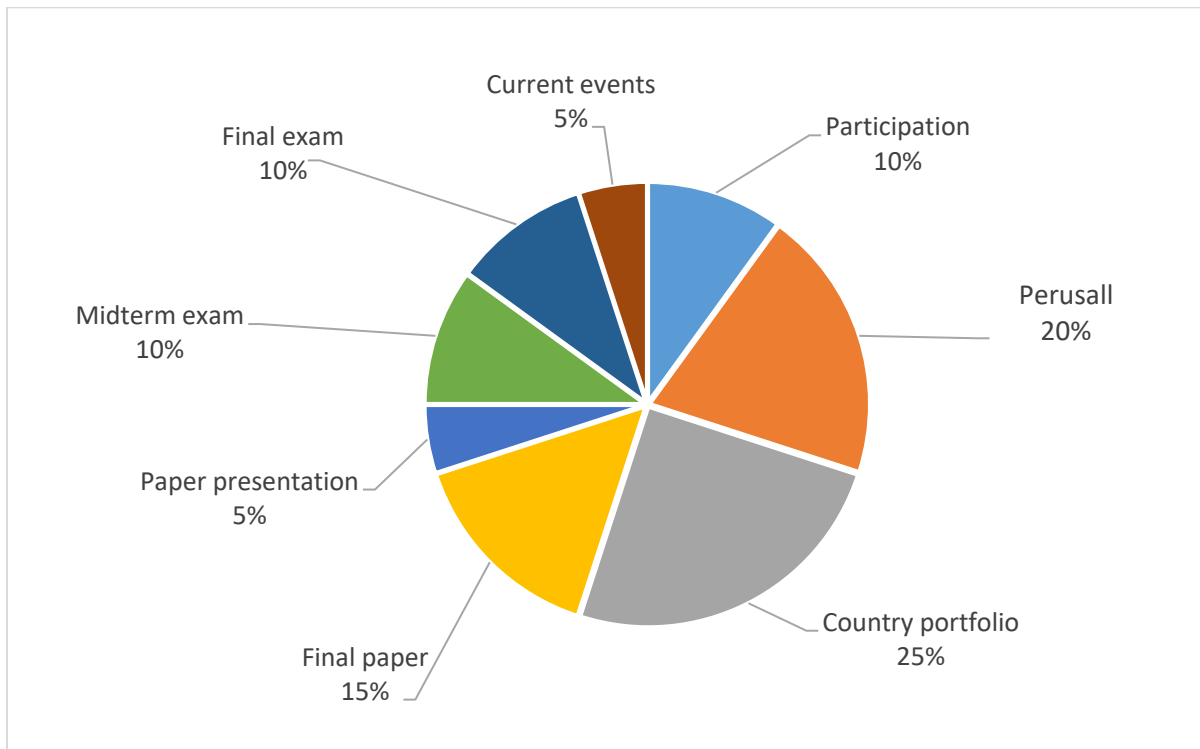
There is no course textbook. All readings will be made available online, on the course website in Blackboard.

- **Prerequisites**

No prior coursework is required to take this course.

- **Grade structure**

As you will see, consistent performance and participation throughout the semester are key to success in this course. All students are expected to do the assigned readings and reading assignments before the class meeting and be prepared for in-class discussion.



I will use the standard scale in assessing grades.

A	94+	C+	77-79	E(F)	59 and below
A-	90-93	C	74-76		
B+	87-89	C-	70-73		
B	84-86	D+	67-69		
B-	80-83	D-	60-66		

- **Grade elements and assignments**

- Participation 10%

Your active participation is a key to this class being interesting and useful. I expect you to come prepared, having done the required readings and ready to discuss them (reading assignments will help you with that). I understand that everyone has different styles of learning and participation. A lot of things therefore count as participation. Asking questions (out loud or in the chat in Zoom), agreeing and disagreeing with other opinions, participating in small group tasks and working with your partners on specific assignments. Quality matters just as much (and probably even more) than quantity – rare, but insightful and thoughtful comments contribute more to the discussion and everyone’s learning.

Overall, if you rarely miss class, and speak up every time (even once) – it should be very easy to get a full credit for that portion of the grade.

- Current events 5%

In addition to regular participation, in the second half of the semester each of you will be responsible for leading a discussion on current politics in the country we study. Most likely, you will need to do it only once (or a maximum of two times) during the semester. I will provide a link to sign up for specific weeks before the Spring break.

- Daily reading assignments/Perusall 20%

These assignments will make you work with the required readings more engaging and allow you to collaborate with each other as you are doing so. You will answer the reading questions I provide for each reading and note your own reactions and comments. Links to Perusall assignments will be located in the corresponding Learning modules on the Blackboard and clearly labeled. I will explain how to work with Perusall in the beginning of the semester.

Perusall automatically grades your work on annotating the readings. I will explain the criteria for grading in our first meeting.

- Country portfolio 35%

Throughout the entire semester, you will be working on a country portfolio. That is, I will ask you to select a country from a list and write a series of notes or reports on this country.

List of countries to choose from (one person per country, sign up by January 20th):

- Brazil
- Colombia
- Nigeria
- Indonesia
- Vietnam
- India
- Kazakhstan
- Turkey

Let me know if you have another country in mind – I’ll be happy to discuss the possibility of writing about it instead.

Here are the elements of the country portfolio:

Element	Paper length	What's the point of this part of the portfolio?	What should I write about?		Which sources should I use?	Due date	% of the final grade
			Part 1 (about half of your paper) – some questions you may choose to address	Part 2 (the second half) – address these questions specifically			
National agenda	500 words	Understand the national political context. Practice your ability to recognize what is important and what is not, and to identify political conflicts	What are the main political debates and events going on right now in this country? Is it something new or something that was going on for a while? What are the main issues people are concerned about?	What are some significant ethnic, religious, or other divisions that shape national political debates? Why do you think they persist?	Minimum 3 sources: News articles (double check for reliability), survey data, etc. + at least one peer-reviewed scholarly source	February 1 st	5%
The level and instruments of (de)centralization	800 words	Use conceptual knowledge acquired in class to analyze a real-life case of your choice.	How many levels of government can you identify ¹ ? What kinds of powers and resources do different levels of government have? Are regions represented in the	How decentralized is this country? Use the fiscal-political-administrative dimensions to talk about that.	Minimum 3 sources: News articles (double check for reliability), legislation (e.g. the country's	February 15 th	5%

¹ That's one of those cases where you can successfully start at Wikipedia, but then follow the sources from there to check the facts and use as references

			national legislature (e.g. through the second legislative chamber)? Are there regional parties, or do national parties have local organizations?		constitution) + at least one peer-reviewed scholarly source		
Regional background [pick a region/state within your country]	800 words	Understand the place of the region within the country and how that influences the relationship between the levels of government	Where is that region located in the country? What is its economy like? What is its population like? How important is its economy and population on the national scale? Is its population different in terms of religion or ethnicity? How does this region compare to others in terms of its importance for the country (in terms of economy, population, or strategic geographic position)?	What is the relationship between the central authorities and the region like? Do you observe signs of a conflict, competition, or is there mutual support? How do you think (1) the region's importance and (2) the country's level of decentralization affect the relationship between the regional and	Minimum 3 sources: News articles (double check for reliability), legislation (e.g. the country's constitution), statistics yearbooks and surveys etc. + at least one peer-reviewed scholarly source	March 22 nd	5%

				the central authorities?			
Regional agenda [the region/state you picked before]	800 words	Understand the local political context. Use local sources to find relevant information. Practice your ability to recognize what is important and what is not.	What are the major political debates and events going on right now in this region? Is it something new or something that was going on for a while? Which of those are part of global or national debates and challenges and which – local? What are the main issues people are concerned about?	Can you find news about this region in English? Are they the same or different than the ones you found in the national language of that country or the regional language? Reflect on the similarities and differences.	[this one has a challenge – search in the national language] Minimum 3 sources in the national language and as many as you want in English: News articles (double check for reliability), survey data, etc. + at least one peer-reviewed scholarly source	April 5 th	10%

- Final paper 15% (due April 19th)

In the final paper, discuss ONE of the following question:

- How does decentralization in this country make resolving regional/local issues easier (or harder)? You can use the region you examined earlier as a starting point for your exploration and bring it up as an illustration as you are developing your answer. Use specific examples of regional/local issues and elements of (de)centralization in the country.
- How does decentralization in this country make addressing specific challenges associated with COVID-19 pandemic easier (or harder)?

The paper should be between 1200-1500 words. It should use evidence from at least 5 sources, including 2 (two) peer-reviewed scholarly sources. In addition to those, I encourage you to use any relevant sources you found for the portfolio assignments earlier. I expect that most of the paper will be your original analysis (if there already exists a paper that says everything you are saying, your paper won't be original). This is an argumentative paper², meaning that you need to:

- Clearly formulate your main idea (argument) in the beginning of the paper – for example: “In Country X, A makes addressing ethnic conflicts easier by providing representation to ethnic groups. At the same time, B leads to intensification of those conflicts as the resources to the regions are not distributed impartially”.
- Use the body of the paper to expand on the argument and provide proof that would persuade the reader that your claims are actually correct

General requirements and recommendations for the paper

I strongly encourage you to use the resources of the Writing Center – they offer consultations that will help you to evaluate your outline/draft and learn useful techniques for better writing.

Pay attention to the structure of your paper, sections and paragraphs – make sure there is a clear logical flow from one paragraph to another, from one sentence to another. Don't forget to use connection phrases and other devices that ensure the flow of your writing (the Writing Center has resources that will be helpful for that as well). The paragraphs should help structure your writing (avoid page-length paragraphs). It is helpful for the reader when every paragraph starts with a clear topic sentence that introduces the main idea of this paragraph. While language use won't be the main focus for evaluating your papers, style and grammar are important to ensure your arguments are clear and understandable. It's easy: if I don't understand your reasoning – I probably won't give it the credit it deserves.

I will evaluate these papers based on the following criteria:

- You answer the question stated in the paper prompt/topic (40%)
- You have the main thesis/argument stated clearly in the introduction (10%)
- You use the remaining body of the paper to support this argument/thesis, so that every part of your paper is linked back to the argument. There are no statements that are not

² Check these handouts on [argumentative](#) writing

- supported by evidence (evidence such as citations from a paper or data) and no statements that are not relevant for the main argument (40%)
- You use appropriate style, phrasing and grammar (10%)

- Paper presentations 5%

In one of the last classes of the semester, you will present your papers

- Midterm exam 10% (March 3rd)

The midterm exam will assess your theoretical competence – that is, how well you have mastered the concepts and theories we discuss in the first half of the semester. It will include multiple choice and short answer questions.

- Final exam 10%

The final exam will be cumulative and will cover the material of the entire semester. It will assess both your mastery of the concepts and the ability to apply them in a country-specific context. The final exam will include essay questions and mostly ask you to critically compare elements of decentralization across the countries we discussed in class.

Topics (and required readings) by week

1. *Week 1: Introduction*

Getting to know each other. Course structure and expectations.

2. *Weeks 2-3: Federalism and decentralization*

- a. Week 2: Federalism.
 - i. Federal and unitary states: theory

Bednar, Jenna. "The political science of federalism." *Annual Review of Law and Social Science* 7 (2011): 269-288.

- ii. Federal and unitary states: the West and the rest.

Parikh, Sunita, and Barry R. Weingast. "Comparative Theory of Federalism: India, A." *Va. L. Rev.* 83 (1997): 1593.

- b. Week 3: Decentralization
 - i. Moving along the scale: political, administrative, and fiscal decentralization

Rodden, Jonathan. "Comparative federalism and decentralization: On meaning and measurement." *Comparative politics* (2004): 481-500.

- ii. Fiscal decentralization

John Loughlin, John Kincaid, and Wilfried Swenden. *Routledge Handbook of Regionalism & Federalism*. Taylor and Francis, 2013. Chapter 7

3. *Weeks 4-6: What does decentralization lead to?*

- a. Week 4: Decentralization and domestic politics
 - i. Political parties and party politics in the regions

John Loughlin, John Kincaid, and Wilfried Swenden. *Routledge Handbook of Regionalism & Federalism*. Taylor and Francis, 2013. Chapter 6

- ii. Regional and local political regimes

Gervasoni, Carlos. "Measuring variance in subnational regimes: results from an expert-based operationalization of democracy in the Argentine provinces." *Journal of Politics in Latin America* 2, no. 2 (2010): 13-52.

- b. Week 5
 - i. Decentralization and democracy

Stepan, Alfred. "Federalism and Democracy: Beyond the US Model." *Journal of Democracy* 10, no. 4 (1999): 19-34.

- ii. Decentralization and conflict

Brancati, Dawn. "Decentralization: Fueling the fire or dampening the flames of ethnic conflict and secessionism?" *International organization* 60, no. 3 (2006): 651-685.

- c. Week 6

- i. Decentralization, accountability, and public goods provision

Azfar, Omar, Satu Kahkonen, Anthony Lanyi, Patrick Meagher, and Diana Rutherford.

"Decentralization, governance and public services: The impact of institutional arrangements." In *Devolution and development*, pp. 45-88. Routledge, 2018 (selected pages).

- ii. Decentralization, innovation, and economic growth

Strumpf, Koleman. 2002. "Does Government Decentralization Increase Policy Innovation?" *Journal of Public Economic Theory*, vol.4, pp.207-41

4. Weeks 7-9: Summing up and moving forward

- a. Week 7: Summing up

- i. Debate: when/who should decentralize? Benefits and pitfalls of decentralization

- ii. Portfolios and paper ideas presentations

- b. Week 8:

- i. Midterm review

- ii. Midterm exam

- c. Week 9: Spring break

5. Weeks 10-14: Case studies

- a. Week 10: Russia

- i. Federalism Russian style: post-Soviet transformation

Konitzer, Andrew, and Stephen K. Wegren. "Federalism and political recentralization in the Russian Federation: United Russia as the party of power." *Publius: The journal of federalism* 36, no. 4 (2006): 503-522.

- ii. Subnational politics in Russia

Saikkonen, Inga A-L. "Variation in subnational electoral authoritarianism: evidence from the Russian Federation." *Democratization* 23, no. 3 (2016): 437-458.

- b. Week 11: Ukraine

- i. Ukraine: nationalism and regionalism

Sasse, Gwendolyn. "Ukraine: The role of regionalism." *Journal of Democracy* 21, no. 3 (2010): 99-106.

ii. Decentralization in the shadow of conflicts

“Ukraine’s Decentralization Will Empower the Center, but Not in Ways You Think | Wilson Center.” Accessed January 9, 2022. <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/ukraines-decentralization-will-empower-center-not-ways-you-think>.

Yesmukhanova, Balázs Jarábik, Yulia. “Ukraine’s Slow Struggle for Decentralization.” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Accessed January 9, 2022. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2017/03/08/ukraine-s-slow-struggle-for-decentralization-pub-68219>.

c. Week 12: China

i. Federalism in China?

Davis, Michael C. "The case for Chinese federalism." *Journal of Democracy* 10, no. 2 (1999): 124-137.

ii. Decentralization and economic growth in China

Hongbin Cai; Daniel Treisman, "Did Government Decentralization Cause China's Economic Miracle," *World Politics* 58, no. 4 (July 2006): 505-535

d. Week 13: Argentina

i. Decentralization in Argentina

Gelineau, Francois, and Karen L. Remmer (2006) “Political Decentralization and Electoral Accountability: The Argentine Experience, 1983-2001,” *British Journal of Political Science* 36 (1): 133-157.

ii. Fiscal federalism and subnational regimes

Gervasoni, Carlos. "A rentier theory of subnational regimes: Fiscal federalism, democracy, and authoritarianism in the Argentine provinces." *World politics* 62, no. 2 (2010): 302-340.

e. Week 14: Mexico

i. Decentralization in Mexico and regime transformations

John Loughlin, John Kincaid, and Wilfried Swenden. *Routledge Handbook of Regionalism & Federalism*. Taylor and Francis, 2013. Chapter 13

ii. Governance of indigenous communities: Oaxaca

Magaloni, Beatriz, Alberto Díaz-Cayeros, and Alexander Ruiz Euler. "Public good provision and traditional governance in indigenous communities in Oaxaca, Mexico." *Comparative Political Studies* 52, no. 12 (2019): 1841-1880.

6. Week 15: TBD

7. Week 16: Final review

Course and university policies

Succeeding in this course

General advice

Do the readings and watch the lectures as they are due because: (1) things accumulate quickly and (2) all in-class experience will be built on that.

Attend the class and ask questions. If anything is unclear during the meeting – please let me know, raise your hand or use the chat in Zoom, and I will be happy to answer. Chances are, there are a few other people in the room who would also like to ask that question.

When working on your papers, make sure you read the prompt carefully and don't miss any essential parts. The same is true for the exam questions.

Keep in touch. Whether you have to miss a class, or need advice on assignments, or feel like you're falling behind for whatever reason – reach out to me as soon as you can. Together we can figure out the best course of action, and if a certain issue is out of my area of expertise or responsibility, I will be happy to direct you to other people and resources.

How to skim and read academic articles

Throughout the course, you will be reading scholarly articles written by social scientists. These are a little more challenging than textbooks, but there are certain techniques that will make the work of reading and understanding such pieces easier. This practice will also give you a feel of the kinds of questions political science and economics try to answer and how the researchers are approaching them.

Academic articles normally follow a predictable structure. In the introduction, you will see the discussion of the main findings and the importance of the study for the understanding of some set of political phenomena. In the main body of the article, the authors will first review existing literature on a topic and demonstrate how their contribution fits within this literature. They will then build their theory – that is, a systematic explanation of something, which they think is true and which they will then test using some evidence. After that, if that is an empirical article (that is, reporting the results of a study based on collecting and analyzing evidence from the real world), they will explain how exactly they collected and analyzed that evidence. That would be the section on methodology. After that, you will see a section describing the actual study and its results, followed by a discussion and a conclusion.

This predictable structure means that the main point the authors want to formulate, their main argument, will likely appear in the text multiple times. It will be very clearly formulated in the abstract, then in the introduction, reiterated in theory section and again in the discussion and/or conclusion. Based on that, below are the guidelines that should help you find your way around an academic article.

- Skimming the article

Read the abstract if there is one. Read the introduction if there is one or the first page of the article if there is no specified introduction. Go through the entire article and note the section headings. Read the first sentence of each paragraph.

- Reading the article

If you are interested in a particular article (for example, for your paper), skim it first. It will allow you to dismiss irrelevant sources based on the abstract or the intro.

Proceed to reading the entire article, noticing relevant graphs and tables. Pay special attention to the conclusion/discussion section.

Some articles use advanced methods of data analysis, which you may not be familiar with. It's absolutely fine, the argument and the discussion of their findings will still make sense. Feel free to skip the methodology section – just make sure you understand what kind of evidence the authors used and what was the general logic they applied to it. You should be able to answer the question: why did the authors use this specific type of evidence (economic statistics, opinion survey data, experiments with human subjects etc.)?

Late submissions policy

For term papers, submitting your paper after the deadline will decrease your paper grade by 5% per day. If you talk to me early and provide proper documentation or other evidence of a serious reason you can't meet the deadline, extensions can be arranged on a case-by-case basis. Exams need to be taken on the dates indicated in the syllabus. Reach out to me if you need another arrangement or have an emergency preventing you from taking the exam on time.

Attendance policy

Class attendance is required as participation in class discussions is an integral part of the course. I will not formally grade attendance as being present in class while not actively engaging with the material does little to help you learn. Missing a substantial portion of class sessions will be reflected in your participation grade and will therefore have consequences for your ability to pass the course. Special arrangements can be made for students who cannot attend a portion of class meetings due to COVID-19 or other serious reasons. These arrangements will be made on case-by-case basis, taking into account university regulations and your specific situation.

Special circumstances

Students participating in organized activities, such as sports, or observing religious holidays, can make up missed work without penalties and should contact me beforehand to make appropriate arrangements.

Communicating with the instructor

Beyond classroom, if you have any questions about the course, the assignments or anything else, and the question is not covered in the syllabus – please, message me through my university email (ggariful@ur.rochester.edu) or the messaging system within Blackboard³. Please allow me 24 hours to reply. Note that if you message me after 6 pm on Friday, it might take until Monday morning. If you haven't received a response within three days or it's urgent, feel free to send me a reminder.

I highly encourage everyone to come see me during my weekly office hours. This is a chance to talk through the questions you may have regarding the readings, your papers, study strategies etc.

³ Suggestions on etiquette: <https://www.wikihow.com/Email-a-Professor>

I will be happy to help. If for some reason you can't make it to the office hours and need to talk in person, reach out through e-mail, we will try and find another suitable time for a one-on-one meeting – in person, on Zoom, or through a phone call.

I will be providing regular feedback on your performance. You can expect your exam grades within a week from submission. If you are concerned about your performance, I will be happy to discuss it during office hours.

In the middle of the semester I will distribute feedback forms that will allow me to hear about your concerns and suggestions regarding the course structure and content, as well as your engagement with the class.

As for all your courses, you will be asked to submit more extensive evaluation forms online at the end of the semester. Please find time to fill them in – your comments are valuable for the future development of this course and evaluation of specific teaching strategies.

Preferred Student Names and Pronouns

Students can update their preferred names and pronouns in [UR Student](#) and [university documentation](#). Early in the course, I will provide an opportunity to indicate your preferred names and pronouns for the class purposes. If you want to talk to me privately, just message me.

Academic honesty

Students and faculty at the University must agree to adhere to high standards of academic honesty in all of the work that we do. First-year students read and sign an academic honesty policy statement to indicate that they understand the general principles upon which our work is based. The College Board on Academic Honesty website gives further information on our policies and procedures: www.rochester.edu/college/honesty.

You are encouraged to discuss course readings and assignments with your fellow students. However, all written work must be done independently and not in collaboration with another. In order to make appropriate help available for your written assignments, I encourage you to consult with me and with the College Writing, Speaking, and Argument Program.

Remember that rewording someone else's ideas still requires proper citation. Feel free to reach out to me and the library staff if you have any questions regarding proper citation and attribution of authorship.

Sexual Misconduct, Discrimination, Harassment and/or Related Retaliation

The University of Rochester is committed to creating a safe and inclusive environment and will not tolerate acts of sexual misconduct, discrimination, or harassment. There are various options for reporting such behaviors (including anonymous reporting), which you can find at <https://www.rochester.edu/sexualmisconduct/>.

Disability resources

The University of Rochester respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds and abilities. In the event you encounter any barrier(s) to full participation in this course due to the impact of a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Resources. The access coordinators in the Office of Disability Resources can meet with you to discuss the barriers you are experiencing and explain the eligibility process for establishing academic accommodations. You can reach the Office of Disability Resources at: disability@rochester.edu; (585) 276-5075; Taylor Hall; www.rochester.edu/college/disability.

Inclusion statement

The University of Rochester, this course, and I are committed to inclusion, and welcome students of all backgrounds and abilities. Services and reasonable accommodations are available to students with temporary and permanent disabilities, to students with DACA or undocumented status, to students facing mental health issues, other personal situations, and to students with other kinds of learning needs. Please feel free to let me know if there are circumstances affecting your ability to participate in class or your full participation in this course.

Some resources that might be of use include:

- Office of Disability Resources. (disability@rochester.edu; (585) 276-5075; Taylor Hall)
- Undocumented/DACA Student Support Contacts
<https://www.rochester.edu/college/ccas/undergraduate/daca/index.html>
- University of Rochester CARE Network <https://www.rochester.edu/care/>
- Office of Equity and Inclusion <https://www.rochester.edu/diversity/>