



## Trans & Nonbinary Inclusive Remote Learning Practices

### Introduction

The switch to remote learning has been an unprecedented change in how university classes are run. While every student has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in different ways, trans and nonbinary students are [disproportionately struggling](#) with remote learning along with higher rates of poverty, homelessness, food insecurity, unemployment, mental illness, and much more.

This Trans & Nonbinary Inclusive Remote Learning Resource Guide was developed in response to the Fall 2020 UCSB Trans Task Force Trans & Nonbinary Town Hall. We hope that by putting this resource guide together through the personal experiences and recommendations of trans and nonbinary students, faculty and teaching assistants will have the tools to be more inclusive and mindful of trans and nonbinary students in and out of the classroom. If you have any questions about this guide or would like to schedule a one-on-one consultation, please email [rcsgd@sa.ucsb.edu](mailto:rcsgd@sa.ucsb.edu).

Throughout this resource guide, we may use terms that pertain to the trans and nonbinary community with which you might be unfamiliar. If you are interested in learning more about LGBTQIA+ terminology, you can visit the RCSGD's [LGBTQIA+ Glossary](#) or TSER's [Definitions](#) page.

This resource guide will touch on the following topics:

- I. [Incorporating Pronouns into Virtual Classes](#)
- II. [Supporting Nonbinary Students](#)
- III. [Classroom Policies](#)
- IV. [Synchronous Zoom Classes](#)
- V. [Inclusive Course Content](#)
- VI. [One-on-One Student Support](#)
- VII. [Resources for Trans and Nonbinary Students](#)

### Incorporating Pronouns into Virtual Classes

Pronouns take the place of people's names. Common pronouns are she/her/hers, he/him/his, and they/them/theirs, although there are many, many more. We often assume people's pronouns based on their body, clothing, and voice, but this can be very harmful. Referring to someone (especially a trans or nonbinary person) using a pronoun or gendered word that does not correctly reflect their gender is known as **misgendering**. This is extremely harmful for our

students (among other things, it is an invalidation of that individual), so it is very important to eliminate misgendering through mindful use of pronouns. Luckily, online spaces allow students to express their pronouns effectively. What follows are general tips for incorporating inclusive pronoun practices into virtual classes. If you are unsure about how to interact with a specific student, it is best to consult them in private about what language they are comfortable with.

- View pronouns as an extension of someone's name - place as much importance on learning students' pronouns as you do their names.
- Do not assume students' pronouns based on their name, appearance, voice, clothing, etc.
- Do not assume that all students are cisgender or that you can tell who is transgender. Instead, learn each student's pronouns along with their name.
- Use they/them when referring to a student unless you already know that student's pronouns or they have them indicated in their Zoom display name.
- If a student has their pronouns in their Zoom display name, make sure you are always using those correct pronouns.
- Include your pronouns in your course syllabus and in your Zoom display name if applicable. Encourage students to do the same.
- Encourage students to put their pronouns in their Zoom display names and to indicate them in GOLD, and remind them to be respectful of other students' pronouns.
  - Especially if you use breakout rooms or Gauchospace discussion forums in your class - these are the areas where misgendering is most likely to happen.
  - Example introduction: "My name is Dr./Professor \_\_\_\_\_, and I use he/him pronouns. I encourage you all to put your pronouns in your Zoom display name and indicate them in GOLD as well, and be mindful of other students' pronouns."
- Additional Resources on Pronouns
  - [Mypronouns.org](#) - provides a brief overview of what pronouns are and how to ask someone's pronouns and share your own
  - [Dr. Lal Zimman's Pronouns FAQ](#) - a FAQ addressing common misconceptions about pronouns, their use, and the linguistics and grammar of gender-inclusive language. Dr. Lal Zimman is a faculty member of the Department of Linguistics at UCSB.
  - [RCSGD Pronouns 101](#) - provides an overview of what pronouns are, how to use them and ask about them, and how to implement them within your role at UCSB
    - [RCSGD Pronoun Poster](#) - a visual representation of the RCSGD's Pronouns 101 page
    - [RCSGD French Pronoun Poster](#) - how to incorporate pronouns and gender inclusive language in the French language
  - [Neopronouns — MyPronouns.org](#) - provides an overview of neopronouns and how to respectfully interact with people who use neopronouns

- [Interactive Pronoun Game](#) - allows you to pick a set of pronouns to practice using in a variety of basic sentences to get comfortable with using less familiar pronouns
- [Example Email Signature](#) - this is an example of how you can incorporate your pronouns into your email signature in an effective way
- [How to Add Pronouns to GOLD and Zoom](#) - this provides an overview of how to change your name and pronouns on GOLD and Zoom, as well as in other UCSB campus systems

### **Supporting Nonbinary Students**

Nonbinary is an umbrella term encompassing those who identify beyond the gender binary of woman and man. Not all trans people are nonbinary and not all nonbinary people are trans, but there is significant overlap with these communities. There is no right or wrong way to be nonbinary, and this gender encompasses a wide variety of experiences. Some, but not all, nonbinary people present androgynously. Additionally, nonbinary people can use any combination of pronouns (even he/him and she/her), regardless of gender expression. Consequently, it is important not to assume people's gender based on their appearance, and always make sure you are using inclusive language.

- Avoid phrases such as “boys and girls”/“ladies and gentlemen” or “you guys” as this excludes nonbinary people.
  - Alternatives: class, students, everybody, people of all genders
- When referring to specific students, avoid using gendered terms (sir, ma'am, dude, girl, woman in red, etc.).
- Also, avoid using “he or she”/“him or her” when you are referring to students; instead use they/them pronouns (unless you know that person's pronouns).
- Do not ask nonbinary students to explain why they are using “they/them” pronouns or to justify the grammatical correctness of their pronouns.
- Additional Resources on Supporting Nonbinary Students
  - [Intro to NonBinary](#) - provides an introduction to the nonbinary identity, gender neutral language and pronouns, and how to support nonbinary youth.
  - [Understanding NonBinary: How to Be Respectful and Supportive](#) - more information on how to be inclusive and respectful of nonbinary people.
  - [Singular “They”: Oxford English Dictionary](#) - a brief history of the singular “they” pronoun and its grammatical legitimacy.

### **Classroom Policies**

Many remote classroom practices have been designed to replicate in-person instruction, but we see virtual learning as an opportunity to improve on the many flaws of in-person education and make it more accessible to all students. While everybody has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in different ways, trans students are [disproportionately struggling](#) with poverty,

homelessness, food insecurity, unemployment, mental illness, and other challenges, in comparison to their cisgender peers. Having lenient classroom policies regarding deadlines and attendance, such as the ones suggested below, will accommodate for such difficulties that all students (trans or not) may be facing during these unprecedented times.

In the beginning of the term, we recommend that the instructor dedicate a few minutes of class time to explicitly inform students about policies regarding deadlines, attendance, illness, and extensions, particularly if a student becomes ill with COVID or if other similar emergencies arise. Double check that the course syllabus contains this information as well. Students will be very appreciative, and this will help set them up for success!

- If you hold live lectures, consider recording and posting them so students can view them on their own time, instead of requiring students to be present during a synchronous period.
  - This will benefit students with inconsistent work schedules, family responsibilities, students who are facing emergencies and have to miss a lecture, and students who might be in different time zones, particularly international students who might be outside the United States.
- Consider having flexible deadlines for submitting assignments since things often come up that prevent students from completing an assignment on time (such as physical illness, family emergencies, and mental health).
- If you do have deadlines, consider offering students leniency when they request extensions. Do not require that students provide documentation of their situations to receive accommodations (such as notes from doctors); there are many reasons where a student might be unable to provide this documentation and still require an extension.
  - An example of why someone might not have a doctor's note: Due to institutionalized transphobia in the medical system, trans students may not have access to a doctor or mental healthcare. Requiring a doctor's note for illness potentially exposes trans students to a violent system that misgenders them, outs them, and misdiagnoses them. This is often the case for cisgender students as well: classism, ableism, racism, sexism, homophobia, and fatphobia all can be obstacles to a person's access to medical and mental healthcare.
- Additional Resources on the Impact of COVID-19 on the Trans and Nonbinary Community
  - [Trans Community and COVID-19](#) - provides information on how the COVID-19 pandemic is impacting transgender and nonbinary people's access to health care (April 3, 2020).
  - [Medical Transphobia \(Personal Narrative\)](#) - a personal narrative about how the medical system in general can pose barriers for transgender patients.

- [Trans and Nonbinary Mental Health During COVID-19](#) - abstract of a research study on the mental health of transgender and gender diverse youth during the COVID-19 pandemic, which concludes that the pandemic has caused substantial mental health impacts on trans and nonbinary youth (Feb 4, 2021).
- [Economic Impact of COVID-19 on Transgender POC](#) - HRC and PBS analysis of the economic impact of COVID-19 on transgender people of color, which demonstrates that transgender people of color are facing disproportionate economic hardships compared to white transgender people and the general population.

### **Synchronous Zoom Classes**

When classes are conducted synchronously, instructors can consider the following actions to make a classroom more welcoming:

- As the host, make sure that participants can rename themselves. This option can be found under the Security tab.
- Do not require that students use their name as depicted on the class roster and/or legal name for attendance purposes. Deadnaming, which is referring to a trans person by a name they no longer use, can lead to misgendering and outing (revealing that someone is trans or nonbinary without their consent).
- Do not require students to keep their cameras on during Zoom classes.
- Allow space for students who do not feel comfortable using breakout rooms to indicate their concerns.
  - Instructors can pre-assign breakout groups so students can be partnered with students they feel comfortable with, or they could participate in an alternative self-reflection activity instead.
- Do not require that students turn their microphone on to ask their questions out loud.
  - A good alternative is to have a TA monitor the chat during question periods so students can type their questions if they are not comfortable speaking.

### **Inclusive Course Content**

- If you are teaching a class about gender, evaluate how trans and nonbinary identities fit into the content of your course.
- Include trans perspectives as much as possible. A list of trans contributors to your field on the syllabus or on the class Gauchospace homepage is a good start.
  - Engage with trans and nonbinary identities in the content of your course when applicable (i.e., if you are teaching Kimberlé Crenshaw's framework of intersectionality, you can highlight how transgender and nonbinary communities navigate intersectional identities).

- Highlight LGBTQ scholars in your field (especially if the course does naturally allow for integrating LGBTQ themes).
- Use LGBTQ people in examples (i.e., Use Marsha P. Johnson in a statistics example and encourage students to learn more about her).
- However, avoid using content that promotes transphobia. If you must use foundational text that may be homophobic or transphobic, frame the text and provide content warnings before students start to engage in the text. If you are unsure about something, the RCSGD is available for consultation, as well as the Curriculum Subcommittee of the Trans Task Force.
- If a student reaches out to you to indicate their concerns that something covered in class was transphobic, acknowledge that mistake and use it as an opportunity to change your understanding of trans and nonbinary identities and experiences to be more inclusive. Trans students are experts of their own identities, experiences, and marginalization, and it is important to be respectful of this.

### **One-on-One Student Support**

- Make sure you are using the correct pronouns for all students, even if you think you are able to assume those pronouns correctly. The best way to do this is by sharing your pronouns and asking theirs.
- Avoid asking students personal questions about their identities. They will share everything they are comfortable with.
- Use gender inclusive language when referring to people whose pronouns and gender you do not know.

### **Resources for Trans and Nonbinary Students**

- It is a good idea to have resources handy that you can refer students to. [Here](#) is a list of resources that the RCSGD and Santa Barbara community can offer. You can always refer students to the RCSGD by emailing [r CSGD@sa.ucsb.edu](mailto:r CSGD@sa.ucsb.edu).

### **Conclusion**

As a reminder, this resource guide was developed in response to student concerns voiced during the Fall 2020 Trans Task Force Trans and Nonbinary Town Hall. By being mindful of the unique challenges that trans and nonbinary students face, instructors can help eliminate barriers to success and create a more inclusive campus culture. Thank you for your dedication to supporting trans and nonbinary communities on campus! If you have any questions about this guide or would like to schedule a one-on-one consultation, please email [r CSGD@sa.ucsb.edu](mailto:r CSGD@sa.ucsb.edu).