Inclusive language is not code for cumbersome, dull or vague language; it simply refers to wording that has been carefully considered to treat all people with respect and impartiality. Inclusive language is key for creating a learning environment that fosters a sense of belonging for students and allows the latter to bring their unique outlooks, abilities, and background to the classroom.

**PEOPLE-FIRST LANGUAGE**

Use language that emphasizes one’s personhood, not their condition. For example:

- Wheelchair bound person → **Person who uses a wheelchair**
- Handicapped parking → **Accessible parking**
- Mental Retardation → **Individual with an intellectual disability**
- Stricken with/Victim of Depression → **Person living with Depression**
- Total hearing loss → **deaf/Deaf**
- Partial hearing loss → **hard of hearing**

Do not use the word “normal” to describe people without disabilities. Do not use terms that reference clinical conditions (e.g. Bipolar, Schizo, OCD) as derogatory terms.

**RACE AND ETHNICITY**

Ask for a person’s preference, such as Native American or American Indian.

- **Latino/a & LatinX** → someone of Latin American origin
- **Hispanic** → someone of Spanish-speaking origin
- **Spanish** → someone from Spain
- **African American** → someone of African origin
- **Black** → people with generations of American ancestors prefer this term
- **Asian American** → someone from Asian origin

*Minorities are defined as historically underrepresented groups or people of color.*
GENDER, SEX, AND SEXUALITY

Respect people’s chosen personal pronouns.

**Sex:** a person’s biological and physiological characteristics

**Gender:** an individual’s internal sense of feeling (woman, man, both, neither).

- Homosexual and homosexual relationship ➔ Gay and Lesbian

Use gender-inclusive language unless the gender is relevant.

**FOR EXAMPLE:** Each student must email me his paper.

**INSTEAD, USE:** Students must email their paper.

- Businessman ➔ Business executive
- Guys (if the group is not all men) ➔ people, you all, folks, y’all, teammates
- Girls (always if they are over 18) ➔ Women

**REFERENCE**

https://www.emerson.edu/creative-services/editorial-style-guide/guidelines-inclusive-language