

Civil Discourse Lab

The Civil Discourse Lab strengthens the ability of our students and community members to conduct meaningful conversations, collaborate, and weigh decisions around sometimes difficult but important topics to a civil society through research, engaged teaching, and praxis.

Value Statements

- **Gracious Conflict:** We believe in a civility that invites constructive conflict, and gracious contestation—a civility that sincerely seeks to understand and learn from one another in creating a just world.
- **Ground Rules:** We do not seek to inflict pain on others when we approach them in the spirit of civil discourse. We seek safe spaces to communicate and acknowledge they are not always comfortable spaces.
- **Diverse Knowledge:** Civil discourse acknowledges many different sources, types of knowledge, and expertise. Civil discourse promotes equality in the expression of different perspectives, but that does not mean that all perspectives are equally valid. Through dialogic deliberation we are committed to negotiating this tension.
- **Respect:** We believe that being civil and politically correct are not one in the same. To be civil in conversations demands that we grant respect to the perspectives and interpretations of others, even if we cannot possibly agree with them.
- **An Acknowledgement of Resistance:** We acknowledge a space for adversarial discourse in the context of a democratic society, especially as it has the power to give voice to the marginalized. That said, we seek equity for marginalized perspectives through our commitment to civil discourse that is not driven by resistance but by understanding and learning.

