Lehigh University 2019-2020 TA Guide to Gender, Sex, & Sexuality in the Classroom

gender, sex, & sexuality - what's the difference?
➔ **sex:** a biological category determined by a combination of chromosomes, hormones, secondary sex characteristics, and internal/external sex organs
➔ **gender identity:** an individual's emotional and psychological sense of gender
➔ **gender expression:** the way in which someone presents their gender and is perceived by society
➔ **sexual orientation:** level & type of attraction to others

note: these categories are distinct from one another & not necessarily deterministic
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how do I talk about gender, sex, & sexuality categories?
➔ **sex:** sex categories are usually designated as <u>male</u> & <u>female</u>; an individual's sex can also fall outside these categories based on a difference of sex development (DSD) or <u>intersex</u> trait
➔ **gender identity:** gender identity categories are commonly just called gender categories, and are most appropriately described with words such as <u>man/men</u> & <u>woman/women</u>; some individuals may identify with another gender category, such as being <u>transgender</u> or <u>non-binary</u>
➔ **gender expression:** the ways that individuals express their gender are usually referred to using words like <u>masculine</u>, <u>feminine</u>, <u>androgynous</u>, & <u>gender non-conforming</u>
➔ **sexual orientation:** there are a multitude of categories that individuals may use to identify their sexual orientation; examples may include <u>lesbian</u>, <u>gay</u>, <u>bisexual</u>, <u>heterosexual</u>, & <u>asexual</u> (& many others)

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some helpful terms
➔ **LGBTQ+:** a term that refers to a broad spectrum of gender identities and sexual orientations, including those who are <u>lesbian</u>, <u>gay</u>, <u>bisexual</u>, <u>transgender</u>, <u>queer</u>, <u>questioning</u>, <u>intersex</u>, <u>asexual</u>, & <u>pansexual</u>; self-identification and self-definition are paramount, as preferred terms may vary
➔ **cisgender:** describes someone whose gender identity aligns with societal expectations based on their assigned sex at birth (i.e., an individual assigned a female sex who identifies as a woman)
➔ **transgender:** a general term to describe a group of people whose gender identity differs from societal expectations based on their assigned sex at birth; examples may include a **transgender man** (an individual assigned a female sex who identifies as a man), a **transgender woman** (an individual assigned a male sex who identifies as a woman), or someone who is **non-binary** (does not identify as a man or a woman)

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why are these distinctions important for my classroom?
➔ **commitment to inclusion:** Lehigh University is committed to the inclusion of and respect for all individuals regardless of sexuality, gender identity, and/or gender expression; as a member of this community, you have a responsibility to uphold that commitment
➔ **maximizing student learning:** students learn best when their environment is free of barriers; by using inclusive language and respectful practices, you are creating an environment where learning can occur more effectively for everyone
➔ **content clarity & precision:** for any disciplines that discuss trends & data having to do with humans, it is especially critical that the concepts of gender, sex, & sexuality are discussed with clarity & precision to avoid confusion & to maximize understanding
➔ **eliminating disparities:** LGBTQ+ people are one of many groups underrepresented in several disciplines, including STEM & business; by becoming more inclusive practitioners, we can begin to explore ways to improve the pipeline and eliminate these disparities

tips for creating an inclusive classroom environment
➔ **set a tone of respect** on the very first day of class
◆ the **Principles of our Equitable Community** and the **VISIONS Guidelines for Effective Dialogue** are great tools to assist with this
➔ **assume** that you have LGBTQ+-identified students in your classroom, and work to create an inclusive environment for them
◆ about **12%** of Lehigh's student population identifies as LGBTQ+
➔ **don't assume** that a student identifies as a man or a woman based on their appearance, or that your students identify as straight; it's especially important to guard against language that makes assumptions ("this man said __," "she just told us that __," "if she was married, her husband would __," etc.)
◆ only **25%** of Lehigh's LGBTQ+ population are widely open/out about their identities
➔ **take attendance / call roll** only after you have given students a chance to state what they prefer to be called, and **allow students to self-identify** their chosen name & pronouns before the first day of your course
◆ **a note on pronouns:** individuals may go by she/her/hers, he/him/his, gender-neutral pronouns such as they/them/theirs, or an additional set of pronouns; if you are unsure of someone's pronouns, ask
➔ **avoid gendered groupings** ("men on this side, women on this side") as these may alienate transgender & non-binary students
◆ the number of non-binary students on Lehigh's campus **grows increasingly** each year
➔ **hold other students accountable** if they use exclusive language or refer to another student using incorrect pronouns
◆ LGBTQ+ Lehigh students frequently experience **harassment & marginalization from their peers**, and this often occurs within the classroom setting
➔ **incorporate content** from LGBTQ+ individuals in your discipline and **highlight the contributions** of LGBTQ+ people to your discipline
◆ if your discipline also uses word problems or case studies/scenarios, you might also consider incorporating **representation of LGBTQ+ people** into these elements
➔ **admit when you've made a mistake**, apologize, correct yourself, and move on
◆ **perfection is not an expectation**, but a commitment to the process of inclusivity is
adapted from Some Very Basic Tips for Making Higher Education More Accessible to Trans Students by Dean Spade (Radical Teacher, Number 92, Winter 2011

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opportunities through the Pride Center
➔ **learn**
◆ attend an **LUally training** or request one for your department (visit **go.lehigh.edu/LUally** to see upcoming sessions)
◆ invite an **LGBTQ+-identified guest speaker** into your classroom to lecture or screen an **LGBTQ+-themed film** in your classroom
➔ **engage**
◆ **be present** at LGBTQ+-related events on campus (find out about these from our newsletter at **go.lehigh.edu/pridenews**)
◆ join **Prism**, the Pride Center's student organization for LGBTQ+ and allied graduate students
➔ **act**
◆ **prominently display** inclusive images, like the LUally sticker, in your office
◆ **refer** students to the Pride Center as needed