



UMassAmherst
The Commonwealth's Flagship Campus

UMass Pronoun Policies and Practices for Instructors

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(they/them)

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UMass Amherst



Why Pronouns Are Important

- As a society, we commonly assume the gender of others by their appearance and indicate these assumptions by using gendered language, such as she/he, ma'am/sir, Ms./Mr., and ladies/gentlemen.
- This practice results in many individuals, especially trans and gender-nonconforming individuals, being misgendered, which makes them feel marginalized and invisible.
- As an institution that is committed to the inclusion of historically underrepresented groups and ensuring a respectful, safe, and inclusive campus for all members of the community, UMass is working to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to indicate their pronouns and to have their pronouns be respected.

Pronouns in SPIRE

- UMass was one of the first colleges in the country to enable students to indicate their pronouns on campus records. Since 2018, students have been able to go into SPIRE and add their pronouns.
- The UMass undergraduate and graduate applications give students the ability to indicate their pronouns, and these pronouns will be uploaded to SPIRE.



UMass Amherst Pronoun Options (can choose two options)

Subjective	Objective	Possessive	Reflexive	Examples
He	Him	His	Himself	The book is his. He identifies outside a gender binary.
She	Her	Hers	Herself	The book is hers. She identifies outside a gender binary.
They	Them	Theirs	Themselves	The book is theirs. They identify outside a gender binary.
Xe (pronounced "zee")	Xem (pronounced "zem")	Xyrs (pronounced "zers")	Xyrsel (pronounced "zersel")	The book is xirs. Xe identifies outside a gender binary.
Ze (pronounced "zee")	Zir (pronounced "zer")	Zirs (pronounced "zers")	Zirsel (pronounced "zersel")	The book is zirs. Ze identifies outside a gender binary.

Any Pronouns: Individuals who do not care which pronouns others use for them or want others to vary their pronoun use for them. It is best to ask which option the person desires.

Name Only: Individuals who do not use pronouns and want to be known by their name only.

Choose Not to Disclose

Where Pronouns Appear

- Class Rosters
 - Advisee Lists
 - Student Services Center
 - Other administrative pages in SPIRE
- Pronouns are thus available to instructors, advisors, academic deans and department administrators, and the staffs of administrative offices, including, but not limited to, the Registrar's Office, the Bursar's Office, Financial Aid, Residential Life, and UMPD.

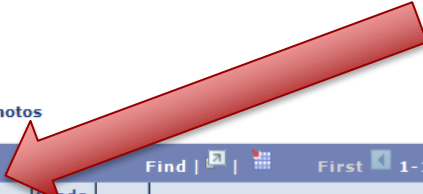
Pronouns on Class Rosters

Days and Times	Room	Instructor	Dates
We 4:00PM-6:30PM	South College Room E480	Laura Furlan	01/22/2018 - 05/01/2018

*Enrollment Status

Enrollment Capacity 15 Enrolled 12

Select display option: Hide Photos Show Photos



Enrolled Students									
	Notify	Photo	ID	Name	Pronouns	Grade Basis	Units	Program and Plan	Level
1	<input type="checkbox"/>		21000000	Amanda...		GR Letter	3.00	Anthropology - Anthropology (PhD)	Master/Doc
2	<input type="checkbox"/>		31000009	Caitlin...	She/Her	GR Letter	3.00	English - English (PhD)/English (MA)	Master/Doc
3	<input type="checkbox"/>		14000036	Caitlin...		GR Letter	3.00	Sustainability Science - Sustainability Science (MS)	Masters
4	<input type="checkbox"/>		30000003	Caitlin...	Name only	GR Letter	3.00	Communication - Communication (PhD)	Doctorate
5	<input type="checkbox"/>		31000000	Amanda...		GR Letter	3.00	English - English (PhD)	Doctorate
6	<input type="checkbox"/>		31000001	Amanda...		GR Letter	3.00	English - English (PhD)/English (MA)	Master/Doc
7	<input type="checkbox"/>		30000004	Amanda...		GR Letter	3.00	English - English (PhD)/English (MA)	Master/Doc
8	<input type="checkbox"/>		31000003	Amanda...	Name only	GR Letter	3.00	English - English (PhD)/English (MA)	Master/Doc
9	<input type="checkbox"/>		23000001	Amanda...	They/Them	GR Letter	3.00	Afro-American Studies - Afro-American Studies (PhD)	Doctorate
10	<input type="checkbox"/>		21000001	Amanda...		GR Letter	3.00	English - English (MA)	Masters
	<input type="checkbox"/>					GR		English -	

Where pronouns appear on class rosters in SPIRE

- ❖ If a student has indicated their pronouns on a class roster, respect these pronouns and ask students in the class to respect each other's pronouns.
- ❖ You could have a syllabus policy that asks students to respect each other's pronouns, as well as the names that students use for themselves. A sample policy:
 - **Names and Pronouns:** Everyone has the right to be addressed by the name and pronouns that they use for themselves. Students can indicate their preferred/chosen first name and pronouns on SPIRE, which appear on class rosters. Please let me know what name and pronouns I should use for you if they are not on the roster. A student's chosen name and pronouns are to be respected at all times in the classroom.

Pronouns on Class Rosters

- ❖ Do not assume that students who do not indicate their pronouns on class rosters use “she/her” or “he/him” for themselves.
- ❖ Recognize that the pronouns that someone uses for themselves may change over time, and that students may forget to update them on SPIRE. If a student indicates that their pronouns are different than what is on the roster, simply correct your roster manually and remind students of the option to let you know of their pronouns in SPIRE.



Asking Pronouns in Classes

If few students have their pronouns on the roster, you can ask them to provide their pronouns, if they wish.

In **small-sized classes**, you can:

- Have the students introduce themselves, including their pronouns.
- Pass out cardstock and have the students write down their names and, if desired, their pronouns to place on the desk or table in front of them. You could also use name tags for the first few class sessions.
- Ask the students to write down their names and pronouns on an index card for you to collect (this is a less useful strategy because you learn students' pronouns, but the students do not learn each other's pronouns).

In **large-sized classes**, you should avoid gendering students unless you know how they identify their gender.

Suggestions for how to call on students without gendering them:

- Gesture to the person you are calling on and say something like, “as you pointed out” or “as they pointed out.”
- Instead of saying something like, “the gentleman in the back, what is your question?” you can say, “the person in the back in the purple sweater, what is your question?”

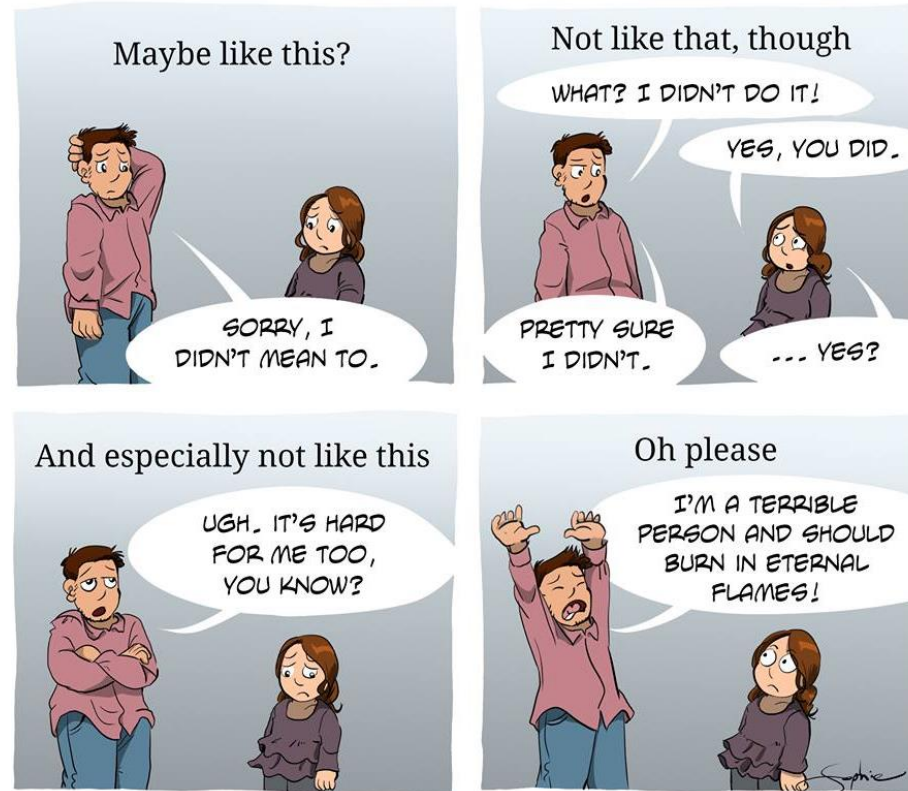
What If I Mistakenly Use the Wrong Pronouns for Someone?

- ❑ The best thing to do if you realize you just used the wrong pronoun for someone in a conversation with them is to say something right away, such as “**Sorry, I meant they.**” Fix it, but do not call special attention to the error. If you realize your mistake after the fact, apologize to the person at your next opportunity.
- Do not go on and on to the misgendered person about how bad you feel that you messed up or how hard it is for you to get it right. It is inappropriate and makes the person who was misgendered feel awkward and responsible for comforting you, which is not their job. It is your job to remember people’s pronouns.

What If I Mistakenly Use the Wrong Pronouns for Someone?

How to react
when you misgender a trans person

- If someone indicates to you that you have misgendered another person, thank them for letting you know, as correcting someone is an act of care and can be risk-taking.



What If Someone Else Mistakenly Uses the Wrong Pronouns for a Person?

- ❑ In most cases, the best thing to do if you hear someone misgender another person is to gently correct them without further embarrassing the individual who has been misgendered. You can say something, such as “**Actually, Xena uses she/her pronouns for herself,**” and then move on. If a person refuses to use the appropriate pronouns for someone, **do not ignore it**. It is important that the harassment of others not be tolerated. It may be appropriate to speak to the person in private to correct the misgendering behavior.
- ❑ It may also be appropriate to check-in with the person who has been misgendered and say something, such as “**I noticed that you were being referred to by the wrong pronouns earlier, and I know that this can be really hurtful. Would you be okay with me taking the person aside and reminding them about your appropriate pronouns? I want to make sure that this space is safe for you.**” Take your cues from the comfort level of the person who has been misgendered.

Keep in Mind

- ❖ Say “the pronouns someone uses” or “their personal pronouns,” rather than “their preferred pronouns,” because the pronouns someone uses are not a preference.
- ❖ Not everyone feels comfortable indicating their pronouns in every setting and they should not feel forced to do so. If you ask students to indicate their pronouns when they indicate their names, say something like, “please say your name and, if you want, please provide the pronouns you use for yourself.” You can set an example by stating your pronouns first or including your pronouns on your syllabus.
- ❖ There is more information about pronouns on the UMass Amherst Pronoun FAQ on the front page of the Stonewall Center’s website under the icon at right.



Questions?

Feel free to email me:

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