University College Guidelines for Inclusivity in Tutorials

Tutorials provide an opportunity for the deep and sustained academic discussion that is central to teaching at Oxford. Academic freedom entails that participants in discussion feel able to explore ideas, even those that are controversial or unpopular, but also that they feel treated with dignity and respect. In the spirit of this idea – that intellectual discussion will be most open and productive when all participants in the discussion feel welcomed and valued – the following guidelines offer a non-prescriptive starting point for tutors and students to reflect on how they approach tutorials.

- Respect others' rights to hold opinions and beliefs that differ from your own. Challenge or criticize the idea, not the person.

    o Be respectful. Don't be incredulous, roll your eyes, make faces, laugh at a participant, or have side conversations.
    o Don't present objections as flat dismissals. Constructively consider potential responses or amendments in light of your objection.
    o Don't make assumptions about what others think or know.
    o Extend this respect to participants in the discussion who are not present in the tutorial. This might include colleagues elsewhere in the University, and also authors both present and past.

- Respect others' rights to contribute to the discussion.

    o Don't dominate, interrupt or speak over others. Remember that some people take more time than others to gather their thoughts; if you simply fill the space they might not speak at all.
    o Be a good listener. When you're not speaking, don't just think about what you are going to say. Instead, really *attend* to what others are saying. If the point you want to make will change the direction of the discussion, consider whether others are ready to move on.
    o Speak to your fellow students, and not just to the instructor.

- Actively uphold the principles of respectful academic discussion.

    o If you are offended by something or think someone else might be, speak up but try to do so in a way that does not put people on the defensive. One useful way to insert a pause in a discussion is to say 'I feel uncomfortable about what was just said'. This may then allow the class to go on to discuss the difficult topic in a respectful way.
    o If you find yourself dissatisfied with student participation in the tutorial, approach the tutor and offer your input as to how student participation could be improved.