**Sample Syllabus Statement to Encourage Respectful Discussions**

An essential aspect of learning is being able to verbalize your understanding of the class material, therefore this course places a strong emphasis on class participation.  My goal is to create an encouraging atmosphere where all students feel able to voice their thoughts and opinions.  Opinions are never “right” or “wrong,” but rather “supported” and “unsupported.”  Students are reminded to maintain an academic tone and respect for their classmates.  Discussion of current events will focus on facts and their relation to the course material.