Why should we confront problematic remarks in the classroom?
Why should we confront problematic remarks in the classroom?

1. To model behavior to students
2. To reflect the class curriculum and ideologies
3. To avoid the responsibility falling on minoritized students’ shoulders
Calling out:
publicly pointing out that another person is doing something oppressive

Calling in:
deliberately compassionate practice
pulling folks back in who have strayed from us
“loving each other enough to allow each other to make mistakes”

Sian Ferguson, Everyday Feminism
Ngọc Loan Trân, Black Girl Dangerous
Calling Out vs. Calling In

Remember:
It doesn’t matter who’s present to hear the comment
You don’t need to be an expert!

Sian Ferguson, Everyday Feminism
Ngọc Loan Trần, Black Girl Dangerous
Proactive vs. Reactive

The most important work happens BEFORE the interaction
Practice one or two go-to responses
Document concerns and interactions
Before class discussions

- Classroom contract
- Make boundaries clear to students
  - Putting a statement in the syllabus
- Build up to difficult conversations by clarifying language and etiquette
Redirecting Comments

- Don’t just shut comments down, if they seem well intentioned
  - Pull the positive intentions out of comments
  - “What do you mean?”
- Help to rephrase
  - “I think I might know what you’re saying, correct me if I’m wrong…”
- “Make it about community learning; avoid targeting individuals
  - “We should be careful about using certain terms.”
- Agreeing to return to the topic
  - Maybe with more information and preparation
And what if THAT doesn’t resolve it?

- Communicating hurt and insult
  - A lot of people don’t think of themselves as facing consequences until they are confronted
  - Explain why the statement is hurtful and inconsiderate

- Refer to the community
  - “Speaking like this breaks our classroom contract”
  - “I think you should consider how your words impact your classmates”

- Asking someone to leave class
Be clear with your students:

**Disagreement** is not wrong.

Making comments which are **insensitive** or **rude** is.

Students must appreciate each others’ humanity.

Conversations should remain **productive**.
Debrief with commenters
Debrief with entire class
Consider reviewing or adapting the class contract
It’s okay to acknowledge that you **should** have addressed a comment
Our limits as instructors

What do we want students to ‘leave’ our courses with?
What is the minimum we ask of students?
What is our limit of how students can behave?
Our limits as instructors

What do we want students to ‘leave’ our courses with?

What is the minimum we ask of students?

What is our limit of how students can behave?

Shed Siliman, the Drake Institute for Teaching and Learning
siliman.1@osu.edu, uitl@osu.edu