



Value Neutral Instruction and the Curriculum

Rubric for Curricular Neutrality

Purpose

This rubric is a recommended tool to assist faculty and academic administrators in course reviews and potential modifications, aligning with Texas State University's commitment to value-neutral instruction. This tool ensures that the curriculum is descriptive, evidence-based, and grounded in disciplinary scholarship, while encouraging inquiry rather than prescribing advocacy beliefs. It also includes the “roll-back rule” and recommendations for faculty and academic administrators.

Dimension	Neutral / Acceptable	Needs Revision (Rollback Required)
Course Title	Clear, descriptive, and discipline-based. Uses recognized scholarly or professional language. Neutral in tone and focus.	Uses advocacy, activist, or prescriptive terms (e.g., Dismantling, Decolonizing, Combating, Challenging, Justice-Oriented). Titles that signal ideological conclusions rather than subjects of study.
Course Description	Objective and balanced. Explains scope, content, and methodology using inquiry verbs (examine, analyze, compare, evaluate). Presents multiple perspectives and a disciplinary context.	Prescribes beliefs or moral positions, uses advocacy framing (e.g., commits to social justice, dismantles oppression), or evaluates students’ attitudes rather than understanding.



Learning Outcomes	Cognitive, measurable, and skill-based, aligned with Bloom's taxonomy (analyze, apply, evaluate, create). Focuses on critical thinking and disciplinary methods.	Affective or prescriptive outcomes that measure or require belief, attitude, or activism (e.g., value diversity, embrace activism, commit to change).
Justification / Rationale	Grounded in evidence, disciplinary need, workforce demand, or accreditation standards. Written in a professional, academic tone.	Justification framed primarily around advocacy, ideology, or political activism with limited or no scholarly evidence.

Rollback rule

If, during the curricular peer review, any part of the course change proposal is rated "needs revision," the proposal still requires work. Once in CourseLeaf CIM, if any part of the proposal is rated "needs revision," it must be rolled back for revision before further review (Faculty, Department Chair, Dean). If deemed to need further review by the provost's office (AVPCAP, VPAI, Provost), the course will be rolled back to the College Dean.

Recommendations for Faculty and Academic Administrators:

- Use inquiry-based verbs (analyze, examine, evaluate) instead of prescriptive verbs (commit, embrace, challenge).
- Ensure course titles accurately reflect the subject matter, not a position or outcome.
- Frame course descriptions as explorations of evidence, perspectives, or debates.
- Focus learning outcomes on cognitive and analytical skills rather than affective change.
- Base justifications on discipline's scholarship or demonstrable student/professional needs.

When conducting a curricular peer review:

- Ask: "Could a faculty member with different viewpoints teach this course effectively?"



- Confirm that the proposal allows students to analyze, not endorse, ideas.
- Provide constructive, specific feedback aligned to this rubric.