INTRODUCING YOURSELF

- Share some information about yourself beyond the basics. How did you get into this field? What do you like about teaching this course? What do you research?
- Share your credentials orally as well as in the syllabus.

TECHNIQUE:

- Two Truths and a Lie: Share three statements about yourself. Two should be true, and one is a lie. Have students vote on which statements they believe to be true or false. Reveal the answers and consider having students do the same with a neighbor.

GETTING TO KNOW STUDENTS

Getting to know students helps you build rapport and gain a sense of the classroom dynamics.

TECHNIQUES:

- Classroom Inventory: Have students stand up or raise their hands in response to questions, such as: Who is taking this course as an elective? Who is a major in the field? Who is a senior? Questions can address experience with and opinions related to course content.
- Student Info Index Cards: Have each student answer a few questions about themselves such as their experience with the subject and expectations of the course. Save this information and refer to it as needed whenever you interact with individual students.

HELPING STUDENTS GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER

Provide time in class for students to get to know one another; this reduces anonymity and builds community.

TECHNIQUES:

- Interviews: Have students turn to a partner and ask some prepared questions, such as: Where are you from? What year are you in? What is your major? What do you hope to get out of this course (besides a good grade)?
- Bingo: Create a Bingo sheet (a 5x5 grid). Fill in each box with information, such as: has a pet cat; has studied abroad; has done an internship in the field; is graduating this year; etc. Students find others who match the information in the box. These categories can be aligned with experiences related to the course content.

Getting Started with Course Content

Stimulate students’ interest in the course at the onset while also uncovering students’ knowledge base of course content.

TECHNIQUES:

- Common Sense Inventory: Make a list of 10-15 statements related to course content; include commonly held misconceptions. Have students mark ‘true’ or ‘false’ next to each statement. Students can compare their answers in pairs or small groups. Take things further by requiring students to reach a consensus. Debrief by providing the answers.
- Classroom Assessment Techniques: Prepare two to three brief open-ended questions about course content. Include a question you expect students can answer, and questions students might be able to answer. Ask students to respond on index cards anonymously. Collect answers to get a sense of what students know.

Getting Familiar with Course Expectations

A syllabus often details course expectations, but students may not read through carefully, comprehend, or remember these expectations. It also might not be worth going into the details of your syllabus on the first day since many students will drop or add the course in the first few weeks of a semester.

TECHNIQUES:

- Jigsaw: Break up your syllabus into major sections. Assign different groups a different section of the syllabus. Groups work together to make sure they understand their section of the syllabus (experts). Reform groups so that each new group includes a member from each of the previous expert groups. Have each person teach their section of the syllabus to the new group.
- Syllabus Quiz: Create a list of questions about your syllabus (or commonly asked questions if you have previous experience with the course.) Have students turn to a partner and quiz them on the contents of the syllabus. Alternatively, have students create their own questions about the syllabus to try and stump their partner.


For further information on these resources and more, please contact the CTE at:
cornellcte@cornell.edu 607-255-3990 http://www.cte.cornell.edu
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Icebreakers that highlight diversity in classrooms:

### The Circles of **___________**
- Give students a blank page with a big circle in the middle and many smaller circles branched from it.
- Have students write their name in the big circle. In the smaller circles surrounding their name, have students write names of social groups with which they identify (gender, nationality, ethnicity, age, ability, linguistic background, political, social, athletic, etc.).
- Be sure to let students write in their own groups, as they may only feel comfortable sharing some aspects of their identity. Do not provide the categories.
- After a few minutes, ask students to find 3 others to whom they are most alike and introduce themselves to each other.
- Then have students do the opposite. Find 3 others to whom they are least alike and introduce themselves.

### Different From Me
- Ask students to find someone in the group who they do not know and who is different from them in some way (for example, different gender, age, ethnicity, etc.).
- Make sure everyone has found someone. Ask students to raise their hands to make sure all have partners. Help those who do not yet have one.
- In pairs, have students introduce themselves and explain the origin of their names.
- Indicate that the partner with the shortest or longest hair goes first.
- After a couple of minutes, signal for the second partner to share the origin of their name.
- Debrief by asking a couple of pairs to summarize what they learned about their partner.

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### References and Resources:


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### Ideas for my course:

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2 Adapted from an activity at a workshop/film screening of “If These Walls Could Talk” led by Lee Mun Wah of *Stirfry Seminars and Consulting* held at Cornell on April 3rd, 2012.

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