Ground Rules for Taste and Bias Discussion © The Andy Warhol Museum, one of the four Carnegie Museums of Pittsburgh. All rights reserved.

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Teachers can work with students to generate ground rules, or they can present a set of rules and then work with students to accept or modify them. Referring to these community agreements can be very helpful if classroom discussions becomes tense.

It is important to review the definitions for **taste, bias** and **implicit bias** with students before the class discussion. Remind students that by becoming more aware of unconscious biases & perceptual filters, we can minimize the negative impact we may of have on others. Some suggestions for ground rules include the following:

* **Celebrate individuality.** Agree to recognize everyone has different likes and dislikes. Different tastes in music, fashion, food, and art are what make people unique and interesting.
* **Listen carefully and respectfully** when people are sharing their tastes and biases.
* **Be honest with yourself**. Stress that self-knowledge is the most valued trait in this exercise. It is not about being “correct”; there are no correct answers.
* **Notice your defensiveness** and accept the discomfort of unlearning and relearning.
* **No one is required to share.** Sharing ideas is encouraged, because personal insights can be very helpful to the rest of the class; however, if someone is uncomfortable sharing he or she may prefer to write down insights instead.
* **Not everything is a profound insight.** Being able to share that you hate something as simple as the color red can be helpful.
* **No one will be judged** on the basis of his or her tastes and biases.
* **Negative language** used within a given identity group about itself and its own members is very different from the same language used by people outside the group.
* **Avoid assumptions** about any member of the class or generalizations about social groups. Do not ask individuals to speak for their (perceived) social group.
* **Tastes and biases change** over the years. While we work hard to get rid of our biases, new ones can appear.