Oberlin Style Guide Cheat Sheet

Words to use/Usage to avoid

As best we can, we try to:

- Use gender-neutral terms
- Lowercase when possible
- Use closed co-compound words (co-, multi-, pre- post-, -wide)
  - coauthor, multiethnic, precollege, postdoctorate, citywide, campuswide, etc.
- Hyphenate sparingly; close up prefixes unless they would otherwise confuse readers
- No periods in academic degrees (BA, MA, PhD, BMus, MME, ...)
- Capitalize course titles
- Do not capitalize name of college, institution, program, etc., unless using the official formal name; lower case on second and subsequent references, informal usage, if standing alone

Generic academic
advisor not adviser
catalog
cocurricular
coursework
don’t use e-mail as a verb; can stand alone in tabular format
no courtesy titles (other than obituaries)
  - no Mr. Mrs. Miss Ms.; Dr. is for medical doctors
  - use person’s last name on second reference

Alumni
Alumni Association
alum/alums – not on first reference; informal usage
Class of 1950, Class of 2016
May Smith ’16 (not Mary Smith OC ’16)

College
Oberlin College, college — if referring to both divisions
- Conservatory of Music (official/formal); Oberlin Conservatory, conservatory
- College of Arts and Sciences (official/formal), arts and sciences
  - not College of Arts & Sciences or Arts & Sciences
- Double Degree Program — capitalize title, in headline, on first reference
  - Lowercase on second and subsequent reference in running text: double-degree program, double-degree student

Ethnic and Racial References
If necessary to use a racial distinction, don’t hyphenate ethnic groups, even when used as an adjective
- African American, black
- African American businessman
- Japanese American, Asian American
- Latino/Latina, Latin@ but at Oberlin: Latinx, not Hispanic (except for the major/department name)
- American Indian (or name of tribe if known)
- People of color (if referring to underrepresented groups), people of color, POC
- white (if used as a racial designation)
- underrepresented, not minority, if referring to people

**Students**
first year (not freshman, freshmen), first-year student
second year or sophomore, second-year student
third year or junior, third-year student
fourth year or senior, fourth-year
double-degree student
fifth year, fifth-year student (*although rarely used*)

**Avoid gender-based word choices:**

*Avoid*                                         *Prefer*
chairman, chairmen                                chair, chairs
congressman, congresswoman                        representative, congressperson
policeman                                         officer
foreman                                           supervisor
fireman                                           firefighter
coad                                              female student
stewardess                                        flight attendant
manmade                                           artificial
manned                                            staffed
manhunt                                           search
mankind                                           people
freshman                                          first-year student
minority                                          underrepresented

**Oberlinese** (see more in the Oberlin list of acronyms)
Latinx
Obie
Commencement/Reunion Weekend
Convocation, Convocation Series
Office of Winter Term, winter term, winter-term program
First Year Seminar Program, First-Year Seminar, FYSP
Experimental College, ExCo
Oberlin Students Cooperative Association, OSCA, co-op
fall semester
spring semester

**Department/Program** (style samples)
Department of Africana Studies or Africana studies department
Department of Art, art department
Cinema Studies Program, cinema studies
Creativity & Leadership Project, Creativity & Leadership program
Creative Writing Program, creative writing
Gender, Sexuality and Feminist Studies Program; gender, sexuality and feminist studies; GSFS
Peace and Conflict Studies Concentration, peace and conflict studies
Jewish Studies Program, Jewish studies
Contemporary Chamber Music
Division of Strings, strings division