

One of my favorite poems by Malawian poet and activist Upile Chisala has been on my mind a lot as I begin this semester. In her second collection of poetry (2019), Chisala writes that "There is danger in letting people misname you. **If you are a fire**, do not answer when they call you a spark" (*Nectar 2*). I used to think it was silly of me to want to correct people if they pronounced or spelled my name incorrectly; I internally bristled at being called Mrs. Booth but never wanted to unsettle a speaker by asking them to call me Dr. Booth instead.

I no longer allow others to choose my name because I, too, believe that allowing others to "misname" me is dangerous. Identity--personal, chosen identity--is important and I value each of your own demands that outsiders recognize the identity that you live by. There are, of course, many way to respectfully insist on receiving what we need.

**To that effect, here is some important information about names and naming:**

- **Pronouns on Canvas:** Canvas now has the option for students to identify their preferred pronouns on Canvas. This is a handy tool because if you do not directly ask students to divulge their pronouns in class (which would also be a good idea), it allows you (and other students in class) to address them in the way they want to be addressed. [Here is the link with more info.](#)
- **Official and/or Preferred Name Changes:** you can change record your preferred name via the district website. An ID is **not** required to change one's preferred name. [Here is a link with more info.](#)
- **Additional Resources for Students:** [<http://%20https://www.lambdalegal.org/know-your-rights/article/trans-changing-your-documents-resources>] **check out this website**, which offers resources for students to get help with changing gender markers or names on identity documents.