GRS 097 – Fundamentals for Teaching Assistants
Fall, 2018

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Meeting Dates
All Fridays, 12:00-1:30PM
Aug 31 | Sep 7 | Sep 14 | Sep 21 | Sep 28 | Oct 12 | Oct 26 | Nov 9 | Nov 16 | Nov 30

Please attend this seminar in the classroom noted below for the site where you are located, and we will all participate in class synchronously by using video conferencing.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Classroom</th>
<th>Staff Contact</th>
<th>Email</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>UT Austin</td>
<td>PHR 2.208</td>
<td>Char Burke</td>
<td><a href="mailto:char.burke@austin.utexas.edu">char.burke@austin.utexas.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>UTHSA</td>
<td>MCD 3.516</td>
<td>Elisa Fischer</td>
<td><a href="mailto:fischere@uthscsa.edu">fischere@uthscsa.edu</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>DPRI</td>
<td>DPI 2.102</td>
<td>Stephanie Scott</td>
<td><a href="mailto:steph.scott@austin.utexas.edu">steph.scott@austin.utexas.edu</a></td>
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Description
“Fundamentals for Teaching Assistants” is a seminar designed to help prepare first-time Teaching Assistants (TAs) in the College of Pharmacy to effectively lead lab and discussion sections in a college setting. Topics we will explore include how to establish a productive classroom environment from day one, how to design lesson plans, how to develop and grade assessments, how to use active learning strategies, and how to lead engaging lab sessions that promote student learning. The seminar will provide TAs with a community for interested teachers to brainstorm and troubleshoot with each other. TAs will also receive personalized support for and feedback on their teaching to become more confident and effective instructors.

Objectives
Upon completion of this seminar, you will be able to:
1. Use principles of how people learn to inform your teaching.
2. Select from a variety of teaching methods those that are most appropriate for your discipline and your students’ level of interest and prior knowledge, including but not limited to:
   a. Facilitating classroom discussions, asking good questions, and encouraging good questions from students to promote active learning;
   b. Providing appropriate feedback to students that furthers motivation and learning; and
   c. Effectively incorporating and evaluating group work.
3. Assess student learning efficiently and effectively to align student learning with course goals.
4. Teach the “whole” student, paying attention to diversity, demographics, and the inclusion of multiple perspectives so that every student has the opportunity to learn in a positive climate.
5. Critique and improve your own teaching performance through personal reflection and feedback from a community of mentors and peers.
Materials

This seminar will rely on the University’s Canvas learning management system at https://canvas.utexas.edu/. You will use Canvas to submit assignments and access any required reading materials and other activities. In addition, the email feature in Canvas will be our primary way to communicate course-related information.

Assignments

Pre- and Post-Seminar Knowledge Checks
You will complete a brief survey at the beginning of the semester to assess your prior knowledge about teaching (pre-seminar knowledge check) as well as towards the end of the semester to assess your growth (post-seminar knowledge check).

Pre-Seminar Knowledge Check due: 5:00 PM on August 31
Post-Seminar Knowledge Check due: TBA, prior to when grades are due

TA Idea Share
You will sign up for one class day and spend about 3 minutes sharing an approach/activity that you have tried in class this semester. It can be an approach/activity that was really successful that you would like to share with your classmates who may want to try it, or it can be an unsuccessful one that you would like to brainstorm with the group about how it could be improved. In your description, make sure to:
1. Describe the approach/activity;
2. Share why you tried it (how did you expect this approach/activity would help your students achieve a course goal?); and
3. Explain why the approach/activity did or did not work.

TA Idea Share due: Ongoing (September 14-November 30)

Reflection on Mini-Assessment Method
There are a variety of mini-assessment methods you can use to engage students during class. Try out a new method that was introduced during this seminar or in the readings with your students. After trying your mini-assessment method, reflect upon that experience and respond to the following questions:
1. What went well during the mini-assessment? What can be improved?
2. How did it affect your students’ engagement?
3. How did it affect your students’ learning?
4. How comfortable did you feel trying this new method?
Based on your responses, plan a new mini-assessment for an upcoming class session. Integrate what you learned from your reflection into your lesson plan.

Mini-Assessment Method Worksheet due: 5:00 PM on September 21

Reflection on Mid-Semester Feedback
You will analyze your mid-semester feedback results by reviewing the Analyzing Mid-Semester Feedback: Seven Areas for Improvement handout, and then responding to a guided series of questions on the Mid-Semester Feedback Processing worksheet.

Mid-Semester Feedback Processing Worksheet due: 5:00 PM on November 2
Teaching Self-Evaluation
Arrangements will be made for the instructor (or another individual with pedagogy training, designated by the instructor) to observe one session or a portion of a class session that you lead. The session will be video recorded, and the instructor or a designee will be present in class to observe you and provide you with feedback. For this assignment, watch the full recording and consider the areas identified on the Classroom Observation Rubric handout as you watch. Write a one-page reflection on your teaching addressing at least three of the areas identified on the rubric. Organize your reflection around the following questions:

1. What went well in the session? Why? How might you build on this?
2. What could be improved or developed? How might this be achieved?
3. What was it like observing yourself teach? Why?
4. What other observations, comments, questions, or suggestions do you have?

Teaching Self-Evaluation due: 5:00 PM on November 16

Final Reflection
Write a personal reflection on your growth this semester and if/how this seminar has helped you develop as a Teaching Assistant (TA). Your response should be roughly one page in length (12-pt font, single-spaced) and should address the following questions:

Your growth:
- How do you think you have grown this semester as a TA? What have been the most important developments in your knowledge or beliefs about teaching, your confidence as a teacher, and/or your teaching practices from the beginning of the semester until now?
- What did you learn in this seminar that was most valuable to you?
- How has this seminar influenced your teaching?

Seminar Design:
- What worked well in this seminar to help you learn and feel supported?
- What suggestions do you have for improving this seminar for students in the future?

Final Reflection due: 5:00 PM on November 30

Class Participation
Much of the success of this seminar will be dependent upon the amount of interaction that takes place during our class discussions, so your attendance and active participation is required.

Evaluation
All work will be graded on a credit/no credit basis. Efforts will be made to provide ample verbal and written feedback to you about your performance in this seminar and as a TA, but at any time, you are welcome to schedule an appointment with the instructor to discuss any concerns or questions you have.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments and Other Activities Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aug 31</td>
<td>Orientation – Preparing for your 1st day as a TA</td>
<td><strong>Survey:</strong> Pre-Seminar Knowledge Check</td>
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| Sep 7    | Pedagogy – What it is and why it’s important       | **Reading:** “Asking Questions” by Davis  
**Other:** Schedule TA Idea Share |
| Sep 14   | Grading and Feedback – How and why we assess       | **Readings:** “Grading Practices” by Davis and “Three Step Process of Commenting on Student Work and Assigning a Grade” by Bellows  
**Activity:** TA Idea Share (2 students)  
**Other:** Schedule your mid-semester evaluation |
| Sep 21   | How We Learn, Part 1 – Information processing     | **Assignment:** Reflection on Mini-Assessment  
**Readings:** “How Does Students’ Prior Knowledge Affect Their Learning?” by Ambrose et al. and “How People Learn” by Nilson  
**Activity:** TA Idea Share (2 students)  
**Survey:** GRS 097 Mid-Semester Evaluation |
| Sep 28   | How We Learn, Part 2 – Active learning            | **Readings:** “Reforming Cookbook Labs” by Peters and “An Inquiry Primer” by Colburn  
**Activity:** TA Idea Share (2 students)  
**Other:** Schedule your classroom observation (week of Oct. 5 or 19) |
| Oct 5    | Classroom observations with video recordings (no class) |                                                                                                        |
| Oct 12   | How We Learn, Part 3 – Bloom’s Taxonomy           | **Reading:** “Strategies for Effective Lesson Planning” by Milkova  
**Other:** Bring a lesson plan (past or future) to have critiqued  
**Activity:** TA Idea Share (2 students) |
| Oct 19   | Classroom observations with video recordings (no class) |                                                                                                        |
| Oct 26   | How We Learn, Part 4 – Metacognition and motivation| **Reading:** “Strategies for Motivating Students” by Nilson  
**Activity:** TA Idea Share (2 students) |
| Nov 2    | Assignment due (no class)                         | **Assignment:** Mid-Semester Feedback Processing Worksheet                                               |
| Nov 9    | Inclusive Teaching and Teaching Identity          | **Activity:** TA Idea Share (2 students)                                                              |
| Nov 16   | Additional Teaching Issues and Opportunities       | **Assignment:** Teaching Self-Evaluation  
**Activity:** TA Idea Share (2 students)                                                              |
| Nov 23   | Thanksgiving Holiday (no class)                   |                                                                                                        |
| Nov 30   | Final Seminar – Wrapping Up                       | **Assignment:** Final Reflection  
**Survey:** Post-Seminar Knowledge Check  
**Activity:** TA Idea Share (2 students)                                                              |
University Policies

In case of an emergency evacuation, please be aware of the following recommendations the Office of Campus Safety and Security has outlined to keep you and others safe:

In the event of an emergency, determine the nearest exit to your location and the best route to follow. If time permits during the evacuation, secure your workplace and take personal items. In most emergencies, complete evacuation of the campus is not necessary. If however, there is a hazardous materials release, flooding, or other major incident, it may be necessary to relocate all university students, faculty, and staff to a safer location.

Evacuating from a Building
1. Begin evacuation immediately upon hearing the alarm or official announcement (many forms of communication are used for official announcements including: pagers, text alerts, AtHoc computer pop-up warnings, and others)
2. Close office doors and turn off lights and computers.
3. Use designated corridors and fire exit stairs that lead to ground level. Leave the building in an orderly manner. Do not use elevators.
4. Assemble in designated areas per the Building Emergency Plan. Upon reaching the ground level, stay at least 300 feet (1 block) from the building.
5. Follow instructions of emergency personnel. Report any individuals left in the building to them.
6. Do not re-enter the building until an "all clear" announcement is given by emergency personnel.

Title IX Reporting
Title IX is a federal law that protects against sex and gender-based discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, sexual misconduct, dating/domestic violence and stalking at federally funded educational institutions. UT Austin is committed to fostering a learning and working environment free from discrimination in all its forms. When sexual misconduct occurs in our community, the university can:
1. Intervene to prevent harmful behavior from continuing or escalating.
2. Provide support and remedies to students and employees who have experienced harm or have become involved in a Title IX investigation.
3. Investigate and discipline violations of the university’s relevant policies.

Faculty members and certain staff members are considered “Responsible Employees” or “Mandatory Reporters,” which means that they are required to report violations of Title IX to the Title IX Coordinator. I am a Responsible Employee and must report any Title IX related incidents that are disclosed in writing, discussion, or one-on-one. Before talking with me, or with any faculty or staff member about a Title IX related incident, be sure to ask whether they are a responsible employee. If you want to speak with someone for support or remedies without making an official report to the university, email advocate@austin.utexas.edu. For more information about reporting options and resources, visit https://titleix.utexas.edu/ or contact the Title IX Office at titleix@austin.utexas.edu.

Electronic Mail Student Notification Policy
Official communication with students in this class will be conducted through e-mail. Course announcements and updates will be posted on the Canvas site. Students are expected to check e-mail on a frequent and regular basis in order to stay current on class activities and assignments. Unless otherwise notified, the instructors will use the e-mail provided to the University as the official address. For more information read: https://cio.utexas.edu/policies/university-electronic-mail-student-notification-policy.
Nondiscrimination Policy
It is the policy of The University of Texas at Austin to provide an educational and working environment that provides equal opportunity to all members of the University community. In accordance with federal and state law, the University prohibits unlawful discrimination, including harassment, on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, including sexual harassment, age, disability, citizenship, and veteran status. Pursuant to University policy, this policy also prohibits discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.

Religious Holy Days/Observances
By UT Austin policy, you must notify instructors of your pending absence at least fourteen days prior to the date of observance of a religious holy day. If you must miss a class, an examination, a work assignment, or a project in order to observe a religious holy day, you will be given an opportunity to complete the missed work within a reasonable time after the absence.

Academic Integrity
Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since such dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. When in doubt, always err on the side of caution – consult the instructor if you have a question about an issue. For further information, please visit the Student Conduct and Academic Integrity website at http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/conduct/.

Campus Carry
Students should familiarize themselves with the information provided by the University regarding the implementation of “Campus Carry” legislation. You will find an information sheet specifically for students (as well as for parents, visitors, faculty, and staff) at http://campuspcurr.utexas.edu/info-sheets.

University Resources
The Behavior Concerns Advice Line is a service that provides UT Austin’s faculty, students, and staff an opportunity to discuss their concerns about another individual’s behavior. Trained staff members will assist the individual in exploring available options and strategies. They will also provide appropriate guidance and resource referrals to address the particular situation. Depending on the situation, individuals may be referred to resources including but not limited to the Office of the Dean of Students/Student Emergency Services, Counseling and Mental Health Center, and the Employee Assistance Program. An individual can either call the line at 512-232-5050 or report their concerns using the online submission form.

Counseling & Mental Health Center (CMHC)—SSB 5th floor, 512-471-3515, http://cmhc.utexas.edu
The UT Counseling & Mental Health Center offers graduate and undergraduate students individual counseling, group classes, 24-hour telephone counseling, and a MindBody Lab.

UT Libraries offer a range of seminars for you and your students each semester, and are available to come to your class and teach about research skills.

Did you know that more than one-third of UT undergraduate students use the Sanger Learning Center each year to improve their academic performance? All students are welcome to take advantage of Sanger
Center’s classes and workshops, private learning specialist appointments, peer academic coaching, and tutoring for more than 70 courses in 15 different subject areas.

**Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD)**
Any student with a documented disability who requires academic accommodations should contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 512-471-6259 (voice) or 512-410-6644 (video phone) as soon as possible to request an official letter outlining authorized accommodations. For additional information, please refer to the Services for Students with Disabilities website at [http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/](http://diversity.utexas.edu/disability/).

Student Emergency Services (SES) in the Office of the Dean of Students serves as a primary point of contact for students and their families and assists with navigating campus and community resources. SES can help students by offering: information regarding course load reductions or full withdrawals, emergency funds, short-term emergency housing, referrals to appropriate campus offices, discrete notifications to professors regarding absences, and coordination with families.

**University Writing Center (UWC)—PCL 2.330, 512-471-6222, [http://uwc.utexas.edu/](http://uwc.utexas.edu/)**
The University Writing Center, a unit of the Department of Rhetoric and Writing, helps UT students become more proficient, more versatile, and more confident in their writing abilities. UWC provides free, one-on-one writing consultations to graduate students. In addition to consultations, UWC offers various writing groups and workshops tailored specifically for graduate students.