

Phil 302: Teaching Seminar for First-time GSI's

First meeting M3–4pm in 234 Moses, from then on F 2–4pm in 234 Moses

Website: <http://sophos.berkeley.edu/kolodny/F07Phil302.htm>

Participants:

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Erin Beeghly, ebeeghly@berkeley.edu, teaching Phil 107 with Wallace

Lindsay Crawford, ljcrawfo@berkeley.edu, teaching Phil 2 with Niko

Melissa Fusco, msfusco@berkeley.edu, teaching Phil 3 with Campbell

Markus Kohl, mkohl@berkeley.edu, teaching Phil 178 with Warren

Ethan Nowak, enowak@berkeley.edu, teaching Phil 3 with Campbell

Adam Pringle, alpringle@berkeley.edu, teaching Phil 185 with Dreyfus

Stephen Schmall, swschmall@berkeley.edu, teaching Phil 25A with MacFarlane

Description:

The Graduate Council Policy on Appointments and Mentoring of Graduate Student Instructors (revised March 7, 2005) states:

First-time GSIs must either have completed or be enrolled in a 300-level semester-long pedagogy seminar on teaching in the discipline offered by the department. In those departments in which a low number of GSIs makes it infeasible to offer such a course, the pedagogy seminar should be taken in another department, with the advice and approval of the GSI's department and with the consent of the course instructor. First-time GSIs who fail to pass the 300-level course must retake and pass the course before they are eligible to teach again.

The course would normally:

- be taught by a faculty member;
- address the practical and theoretical knowledge needed by new GSIs in the specific discipline;
- have a syllabus that specifies topics week by week, identifies readings, and describes the basis for evaluation
- have a meaningful number of units and student contact hours (2-4 units);
- have a course reader or textbooks;
- have specific assignments for which GSIs are accountable and on which GSIs will be graded.

The 300-level course requirement must be stated in letters of appointment for first-time GSIs.

The main aims of our seminar will be:

- To become aware of certain resources.
- To reflect on the aims of leading section and commenting on student work.
- To identify common pitfalls of GSI-ing.
- To share “best practices.”
- To begin to think about the teaching portfolio that you will include in your job applications.
- To see that many concerns about teaching are widely shared.

Requirements:

1. Attendance
2. Completion of assignments, including comments on sample papers, observation of other sections, mid-term evaluations, etc.

This course will be graded S/U (“satisfactory”/“unsatisfactory”).

Readings:

1. Teaching Guide for GSI’s, which you should have been given at the Teaching Conference.
2. Envelope of readings left in your box, which includes all readings marked with a *.

Syllabus:

1. August 26: Introductory meeting

Assignments for next time:

- Read Teaching Guide, “Getting Started” and “Resource Information”
- Read the Philosophy Department’s GSI Workload Agreement* (which is also available at: <http://philosophy.berkeley.edu/internal>) and the excerpt from the UC-UAW Collective Bargaining Agreement* (which is also available, its entirety, at: http://atyourservice.ucop.edu/employees/policies_employee_labor_relations/collective_bargaining_units/academicstudentemployees_bx/agreement.html).
- Write a section syllabus.
- Find out what policies the Instructor of Record has on such matters as: extensions, late papers, make-up exams, re-grading, and academic dishonesty. What, to your mind, are the pros and cons of these policies? If the instructor has left it up to you, what policies will you announce on your syllabus?
- Ask the Instructor of Record for access to your course on (i) <http://courseweb.berkeley.edu> and (ii) <http://bearfacts.berkeley.edu>. If the instructor prefers to keep access restricted, I can give you temporary access to mine.
- Make a grading spreadsheet for your course. Follow steps 1 and 2 from: <http://registrar.berkeley.edu/Acad/egradeexcel.html>. Include a formula for calculating final grades, using the weights that the Instructor of Record has announced. You may wish to include, for the time being, all of the students in the course and on the waitlist, since there are bound to be some changes. If you have a laptop, please bring it to class.

- View your students' photos on courseweb. (This can be very helpful for learning names.)
- By visiting the following sites, find answers to the questions below.

L&S Faculty Help Desk: <http://ls.berkeley.edu/?q=faq>

Registrar: <http://registrar.berkeley.edu/>

- What is the fall 2007 deadline for changing the grading option from letter to P/NP?
- How many grade points is a B+?
- What is the minimum grade that a student must earn in order to get a P? If the student is obviously above that minimum, is it necessary to calculate a precise grade?
- Under what circumstances can a student take an incomplete? By when must he or she complete the work for the course?
- By when must final course grades be reported to the registrar?

2. August 31: Course policies; Resources not covered in the online course

Assignments for next time:

- Read Tim Scanlon, "Teaching Sections in Philosophy"*
- Read GSI Teaching Guide, "Facilitating Sections and Labs" (skipping the labs bit).
- Prepare a lesson plan for your sections this week and bring it to seminar. What worked and what didn't?

3. September 14: Leading discussion sections

Guest speakers: Arpy Khatchirian and Joel Yurdin

Assignments for next time:

- Re-read Scanlon on grading*
- Read Jim Pryor's Guidelines.*
- Read GSI Teaching Guide, "Working with Student Writing," "Assessing and Evaluating Student Learning," esp. the sample explanation of grades (written by former philosophy GSI Diana Fleming), and "Preventing Academic Dishonesty"
- Take a look at grade statistics.*

4. October 5: Commenting, grading, and advising

Assignments for next time:

- Lindsay, Melissa, Ethan, and Skip: please choose two unmarked sample papers from your courses, make copies for the rest of us, and put them in our boxes.
- Everyone: please grade and comment on these papers, as though for an actual course.

5. October 19: Sample lower-division papers

Assignments for next time:

- Erin, Adam, and Markus: please choose two unmarked sample papers from your courses, make copies for the rest of us, and put them in our boxes.
- Everyone: please grade and comment on the papers, as though for an actual course.

6. October 26: Sample upper-division papers

Assignment for next time:

- Please ask your students to write mid-term evaluations. You may use the sample in the Teaching Guide. After reviewing them, please put them in my box.

7. November 2: 15-min. one-on-one meetings to discuss mid-term evaluations

2:15: Erin, 2:30 Lindsay, 2:45 Melissa, 3:00 Markus, 3:15 Ethan, 3:30 Adam, 3:45 Skip

Assignments for next time:

- Observe two other sections led by your classmates.
- Write down your general impressions. In particular, what did you learn from visiting other sections that you might apply in your own sections?

8. November 16: Discuss section visits

Assignments for next time:

- Read GSI Teaching Guide, “Improving your teaching and fostering your professional development”
- Give some thought to how you will evaluate this teaching seminar. If you were to design it, what would you change? What, if anything, would you keep?

9. November 30: Creating a teaching portfolio

Guest speaker: Daniel Warren