EDUC T580
Teaching Assistant Orientation and Preparation Course

— Fall 2017 —

Course Description
This is a special, free, one-credit course required for all incoming teaching assistants/teaching fellows. The course consists of **1.5 days of workshops and assignments before the fall term begins and workshops and assignments throughout the Fall term**. In addition, Teaching Assistants (and all graduate students) are invited to attend the Graduate College’s monthly teaching and professional development workshops held throughout the year.

Instructor
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Associate Teaching Professor, English
109 Language and Communication Center
fingerag@drexel.edu
215.895.6818

Office Hours: By Appointment

Course Policy
Attendance at this orientation and the four sessions during the Fall term are required for all new/incoming TAs. It is important that you sign in at each session. Individuals that cannot attend any of the training sessions (a) will be requested to review the videos of the session and (b) may be required to attend some or all of a subsequent orientation/course.

Information regarding incoming TAs required to attend this orientation and preparation course is provided by your home departments. If you have questions or concerns about participation in this course, please speak with one of your instructors or your academic advisor. We welcome all thoughts and feedback regarding the course and the experience.
Student Learning Objectives
At the end of TA Orientation and Graduate T580, TA’s should be able to do the following:

1. **The TA**: Identify the roles and value of the TA in the Drexel undergraduate academic experience
   (Observed- Final Reflection Paper)

2. **Diverse Student Body**: Recognize the expectations and needs of a diverse student population and identify instructional teaching techniques and strategies for meeting the expectations and needs of a diverse student population.
   (Observed- Final Reflection Paper)

3. **Teaching Preparation**: Designing Objectives and Assessments
   - Demonstrate an awareness of clear and measured objectives for lessons, tutoring and other activities and the ability to assess them.
   - Demonstrate an awareness of the importance of designing assessments-formative and summative that provide evidence of the achievement of lesson goals.

4. **Teaching Skills**: Demonstrate an awareness of effective teaching skills and to some degree the development of these skills:
   - Introduce a course on the first day and fulfill the needs and expectations of students-recitation or lab (personal introduction, introduction of the content of the course, attendance, homework and testing policies)
   - Create an interactive learning environment
   - Maintain students’ interest
   - Recognize/ accommodate diverse backgrounds, learning styles, personal & academic challenges
   - Manage challenging classrooms
   - Conduct productive office hours
   - Recognize the importance of intelligent” questioning” and be able to distinguish between, hook, lead and guide questions and the hierarchy of questions (Bloom’s Taxonomy)

   (Observed: Classroom observation reports, Midterm Evaluations)
5. **Grading & Assessment**: Recognize and apply effective grading/assessing instruments and methods for assignments and tests. (Observed: analysis of rubrics, grading, final reflection paper.)

(Observed: Final Reflection Paper)

6. **Working Together**: Recognize (& demonstrate) effective styles of communication and interactions with instructors, students and peers.
   - Providing effective feedback to colleagues
   - Getting the help you need from supervisors, peers, and department.

(Observed: Peer observation report; Practice teaching sessions, Final Reflection Paper)

7. **Know Thyself**: Reflect and self-evaluate acquisition of knowledge and skills relevant to the course.

(Observed: Final Reflection Paper)

8. **Resources and Services**: Identify student needs and problems that university support services/resources handle and identify and recommend the appropriate services/resources.

TA’s Should be able to do the following after the introductions to the following Drexel Service and Resource Offices: (* If not do, know where to go to find the information/procedures)

**Instructional Resources and Technology**

- Identify the parts of the course in Drexel Learn: Course Menu, Control Panel, Edit Mode, Student Preview.
- Use their TA access to a course to upload content, communicate with students, and utilize the Grade Center.
- Identify the support groups for Drexel Learn and its related technologies.

**Counseling Center**

- Identify the Counseling and Health services available at Drexel for students.
- Identify the reasons for referring a student to Counseling and the procedure.
- Describe the consultation services for faculty/staff, and off campus referral resources.
- Identify the appropriate resources on campus in the event of a medical

**Office of Equality and Diversity**

- Describe the primary functions of the Office of Equality and Diversity
• Identify the conduct prohibited by OED-1 and OED-3
• Describe what they should do if they experience discrimination, harassment, or sexual misconduct, and what they should do if someone reports having experienced such conduct to them

Office of Disability Resources

• Explain the laws that govern the Office of Disability Resources
• Describe the accommodations and the process for receiving accommodations
• Describe the Disability Office Referral Process

Library

• Identify the locations of specific sections/materials in the library.
• Identify the liaison librarians for each discipline
• Locate the online databases
• Locate the online chat service
• Locate online lib guides (tipsheets) for each discipline
• Describe the process for an inter-library loan
• Identify citation management tools

Student Conduct and Community Standards

• Describe/list Drexel University Policies and Procedures regarding Academic Integrity.
• Submit a report of an Academic Integrity infraction.
• Describe where to go for help for questions about Academic Integrity.

(Observed: Final Reflection Paper)
**Required Course Materials**

There are no required texts; all necessary materials will be provided.

**Grading**

Your grade in this course will be based on attendance at all course activities and successful completion of all assignments. Your grade will be based on the following distribution:

- Attendance and Participation in Pre-Term Workshop (1.5 days) 30%
- Attendance in required course sessions (see calendar) 30%
- Completion of Assignments 40%
# COURSE OVERVIEW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pre-Term Workshop (see details in Course Outline)</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Monday, September 18th (8:30am – 12:00pm)</strong></td>
<td>• Review the TA Handbook.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Graduate Student Lounge</strong></td>
<td>• Come ready to discuss questions.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>(Main 010A – Basement of Main Building)</strong></td>
<td>• Prepare for practice teaching session on Tuesday. See Assignment #1 Mini-lesson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit department for tour, syllabus, materials for mini lessons. (1:00 pm)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tuesday, September 19th (8:30- 12:00)</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Graduate Student Lounge</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mini Lessons &amp; Role Plays (1:00 – 3:00)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assigned Breakout Rooms</td>
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## Fall Term

*Note: Required sessions are Friday, 1-3PM, during weeks 2, 3, 4 and 5.*

**PLEASE be sure to sign in at each session!**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wk</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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| 1  | No Meeting  
Get to know your TA assignment. | |
| 2  | **Workshop #1** (Friday, 1-3PM)  
Backwards Design and Instruction  
(Mary Jo Grdina, PhD) | |
| 3  | **Workshop #2** (Friday, 1-3PM)  
Teaching Across Cultures (Alexis Finger) | Assignment #2: Prepare for Practice Teaching Session Week Five. |
| 4  | **Workshop: #3** (Friday, 1-3PM)  
Assessment  
(Dr. Joseph M. Hawk)  
Director of Operations for University Assessment, Accreditation & Effectiveness | Assignment #3 Conduct Observations – weeks 4 – 6 |
| 5  | **Workshop #4**: Practice Teaching Session  
(Friday, 1-3 PM) | Assignment #4  
Submit Midterm Evaluations or Grading Procedure |
| 6  | No Meeting | Assignment #5  
Peer Observation or Scenario Response |
| 7  | No Meeting | Assignment #6: Final Reflection |
| 8  | No Meeting | |
| 9  | No Meeting  
Finish the term strong. | |
| 10 | No Activities/No Assignments | |
Hope you had a great term. 
Please consider attending the Graduate College Professional Development activities throughout the Winter and Spring Terms...

Assignments

All assignments are due Sunday at Midnight and should be submitted via Blackboard.

Assignment #1: Friday’s “Mini-Lesson”

Prepare to give a brief (5-10 minute) presentation practicing your first day in class. Your presentation should include:

- Introductions and welcome
- Brief discussion about you
  - Where you are from
  - Your experience
  - Your research interests/foci (in layman’s terms)
- Attempts to connecting with the audience (remember, audience is first- and second-year undergraduates)
- Brief discussion of course, your role and expectations (if you do not have a specific teaching assignment, assume you will be a recitation leader and grader for an introductory course in your area).

Your lessons should be video-recorded for you to review, so please have your cell phone or other recording device available and make arrangements with a colleague to record.

Assignment #2: Practice Teaching Session (Due Week 5)

Each TA will present a short “mini-lesson” (10-15 minutes in length) to a small group of peers, experienced TAs and Faculty. Audience members will complete an evaluation form and provide written and verbal comments, feedback and advice.

Mini-lessons can consist of any relevant activity from your TA assignment, including lab safety, leading recitation, problem-solving sessions, etc. and may be designed for whole class or small groups. If you are not actively working with students in small groups or whole-class environments, please feel free to present on a topic from an introductory course in your discipline.

Note: the purpose of this activity is to practice preparing for and leading instructional interactions with students and to get feedback. In addition to teaching, this activity and the subsequent feedback will be beneficial for all TAs – even those that are not “teaching” this term will be required to present to a class or group at some point this year.
Assignment #3: Observations
Observations should be conducted during Weeks 4 - 6
Observation forms scanned and submitted via Blackboard by the end of Week 6

Using the observation forms provided, conduct two observations:
1. One observation should be of an experienced Teaching Assistant with an assignment similar to yours and/or in your department.
2. The second observation should be of a regular class session, taught by a faculty member from your department. Ideally, this should be for a class related to your current TA assignment.

Assignment #4
Due by the end of Week 5

FOR TAs with Current Teaching Assignments
Assignment 5a: Mid-term evaluations
Distribute and collect midterm evaluations by the end of Week 5. Submit scanned copies of the mid-term evaluations by the end of Week 5.

Using the forms provided, conduct a mid-term evaluation of your setting (tutor, class or lab). You may feel free to modify the questionnaire, as needed, to be more relevant and/or appropriate for your instructional setting or environment.

FOR TAs without Current Teaching Assignments
Assignment 5b: Review a Grading Procedure
Due by the end of Week 5

For a class you are working in (or, if not possible, a class you are taking), prepare a brief reflection on the grading procedure is used (for the class) and grading procedures or rubrics that are used for a specific assignment. Discuss your satisfaction with the grading and/or rubric or your recommendations for improvement.

Assignment #5
Due by the end of Week 6

FOR TAs with Current Teaching Assignments
Assignment 6a: Peer Evaluation of your Teaching

Arrange for a fellow TA or graduate student to conduct an observation of your practice using the forms provided. This maybe the done in conjunction with #1 above (i.e., do reciprocal observations, where you observe a fellow TA and they observe you). In addition to completing the observation form, please discuss your teaching with your observer and make note of any verbal feedback and comments not included on the observation form. Submit the observation form and any notes/comments you have by the end of Week 6.
FOR TAs without Current Teaching Assignments
Assignment 6b: Scenario Responses

Choose two scenarios from the list provided. Discuss how you would handle the situation and give your rationale. Your response should be approximately one page in length.

Assignment #6: Final Reflection
*Due by the end of Week 7*

Prepare two – three page reflection on what you have learned and what you have experienced during this term. Please refer to the following topics and questions listed below and try to incorporate answers to as many of the questions as possible.

*For those TAs currently teaching,* be sure to include
- summary of your students’ positive and negative feedback from the midterm evaluations and how you would address them;
- the feedback your received when you were observed and how you might utilize it to improve your work with students.

1. For what reason would you make use of or recommend these resources/services?

   a. Office of Disability Services
   b. Office of Equality & Diversity
   c. Counseling Center
   d. Student Conduct and Community Standards
   e. Instructional Resources and Technology (IRT) / IMS
   f. Library

2. What is unique about the role of the TA? How can you uniquely benefit your students, supervisor, the department, university?

3. What have you learned about the importance of having clear objectives for a class, student learning outcomes, and effective assessment instruments (formative and summative)?

4. What techniques or strategies have you observed or implemented to create an interactive learning environment? What were the results?
5. What strategies or techniques have you learned that can help satisfy the various needs of students with different backgrounds and learning styles? How can you help students succeed in a traditional classroom in the United States? Which if any of these teaching techniques or strategies have you tried or witnessed in the classroom or during office hour? What were the results?

6. What techniques or strategies have you observed or implemented to maintain students’ interest in the subject/lesson?
# APPENDIX: Detailed Schedule for Pre-Term Workshop

Monday, September 18  
*Location: Graduate Student Lounge (Main 010A - Basement of Main Building)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Morning Session</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>8:30</strong></td>
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<td><strong>9:00</strong></td>
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| **9:30** | Welcome  
*Dr. Donna Murasko  
Dean of the College of Arts & Sciences* |
| **9:45** | Overview and the Role of the Teaching Assistant  
*Presenter: Dr. Jason Silverman  
Associate Professor of Math Education and Provost Fellow* |
| | • The Academic Structure of the University  
• Teaching Assistants at Drexel University  
• Teaching Assistant Program  
  • The Undergraduate Curriculum  
  • Why we need TAs  
  • How TAs fit into the undergraduate academic experience  
  • How the TA’s role fits into the graduate experience  
  • Interacting with Faculty/Department/Course Lead  
• TA Excellence Award |
| **10:15-11:15PM** | Drexel Offices and Services I  
Representatives will share information about the services available and provide additional training opportunities, resources and contact information for further information.  
| | • Office of Equality and Diversity  
  Michele Rovinsky-Mayer, Associate Vice President of Office of Equality & Diversity  
• Office of Disability Resources  
  Susan Harmon, Assistant Director  
• Instructional Resources and Technology (IRT)  
  Michael Shelmet, Associate Director |
| **11:15-12:15PM** | Experienced Teaching Assistant Panel:  
What do Students Want? What do Students Need?  
*Moderator: Alexis Finger, Ph.D., Associate Teaching Professor of English* |
| | • Current experienced teaching assistants, including past nominees and winners of Drexel’s TA Excellence Awards, and undergraduate students provide useful advice on topics related to teaching and studying at Drexel. Session will include a 20-minute panel presentation, 30-minute group Q & A, 10-minute sharing. |
(Monday’s schedule continued on next page)
Monday, September 18 (cont’d)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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| 12:15-1:00 | CIRTL - Graduate Student Professional Development  
Marisa Dietrich, Program Coordinator |
|        | Lunch                                           |
| 1:00   | Visit your department                           |
**Tuesday, September 19th**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Morning Session</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>8:30 – 9:00</strong></td>
<td><strong>Continental Breakfast</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>9:00 – 10:00</strong></td>
<td><strong>Welcome:</strong> Dr. Elizabeth Van Bockstaele, Dean of Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences and Professional Studies and Interim Vice Provost for Graduate Education</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Faculty Panel: Effective Practices for Teaching Assistants</strong></td>
<td><strong>Presenters:</strong></td>
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<td>Dr. Jamie Dougherty (BioMedical Engineering)</td>
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<td>Dr. Alisa Morse Clyne (Mechanical Engineering)</td>
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<td>Dr. Julia May (Communication)</td>
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<td>Dr. Jason Cross (Chemistry)</td>
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<td>Dr. Daniel Korschun (Business/Marketing)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• The Roles of TAs in Different Department/Disciplines (recitation, grading, tutoring, assisting in labs, faculty support, etc.)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Preparing for your TA assignment</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• First Day Practices; Introducing yourself and course/syllabus, including grading, attendance, homework and exam policies, academic honestly, etc.;</td>
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<td>• Creating rapport, interest in your subject and an interactive learning environment</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Effective questioning</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>10:05 – 12:00</strong></td>
<td><strong>Drexel Offices and Services II</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<td>Representatives will share information about the services their offices offer and provide additional training opportunities, resources and contact information for further information. Presenters will be available during break for additional follow-up questions.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Student Conduct and Community Standards</td>
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<td>Tynika Williams, Associate Director</td>
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<td>Library</td>
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<td>Tim Siftar, Liaison Librarian</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Counseling Center</td>
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<td>Annette Molyneux, Director of Counseling and Health</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>12:00-12:15</strong></td>
<td><strong>Overview of Remainder of TA Course</strong></td>
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<td>• Grading</td>
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</table>
- Assignments
- Observation Forms

**Afternoon Session**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12:00PM</td>
<td><strong>Lunch</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Graduate Student Lounge (Main 010A -- Basement of Main Building)</td>
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</table>
| 1:00-3:00| **Practice Teaching**: Today’s sessions will be in small groups and facilitated by an experienced Teaching Assistant. Group assignments and locations for morning will be communicated Thursday.  
  - First day mini lessons (See Assignment 1 below) with feedback  
  - Role Plays |