

## **TA Preparation Course: EDUC T580** NBL 16375

**General Description:** This is a special, free, one-credit course that is mandatory for all incoming teaching assistants. It consists of **four days of workshops and assignments and one workshop during the Fall Term.**

**Objectives:** This course is designed to provide teaching assistants with the following:

1. Understanding of the role and value of the TA in the Drexel undergraduate academic experience
2. Awareness of the expectations and needs of a diverse student population
3. Awareness of support services, instructional resources and technology: audio visual and online,
4. Understanding of teaching tasks and opportunities to practice doing them:
  - Prepare for a class
  - Create a lesson plan
  - Introduce yourself to a class
  - Create an interactive learning environment
  - Present material in different ways to accommodate different backgrounds and styles of learning
  - Field student questions
  - Give feedback
  - Grade
  - Evaluate good teaching practices
  - Manage challenging classroom and office hour situations

### **Wednesday, September 16, 2015 (9:00 – 12:00)**

[Graduate Student Lounge \(Main 010A\)](#)  
[Basement of Main Building](#)

**8:30 - 9:00 am Continental Breakfast**

**9:00 - 9:25 Ice Breaker: Speed Meeting**

**9:30 – 9:35 Welcome from Dr. James Herbert, Executive Vice Provost & Dean of the new Graduate College**

**9:40 - 10:15 Overview of Drexel; Value of Being a TA; TAs' Interaction with Dept. & Course Director. Dr. Teck Lim, Former Associate Vice Provost and Director of Graduate Studies**

The Academic Structure of the University:

- Our mission: Provost's Office, Colleges, Faculty, Teaching Assistants

Background to the 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
- Working with a Professor

**10:15- 10:40 Campus Safety** Chief Eileen Behr / Officer Kim McClay & Communications Supervisor Colin Quinn

**10:45– 11:00** Susan Harmon, our Assistant Director, Office of Disability Resources (ODR)

**11:05 –12:00 What Do Students Want?**

**Professor Alexis Finger (Chair, TA Excellence Sub-Committee)**

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. (20-minute -panel, 30-minute -group Q & A, 10-minute -sharing.)

### **Assignments for this week:**

1. Look over the TA Handbook
2. Visit your department. Get a copy of the syllabus for a course you will/might teach or a basic course offered in your department.
3. Prepare for "first day class": introduce yourself, your class and your syllabus during Friday morning's workshop. (10-minute mini lesson)
3. Prepare for Friday afternoon's: mini- lesson on topic in your major and fielding questions (10 minutes)

### **Alternative for Non- teaching TA if desired:**

Give a 10-15-minute presentation on one of the following topics:

- why you chose your field,
- hot topic in your field; your research,
- life as a PhD student / what you've learned so far as a PhD student.

Your lessons should be video- taped. Bring your phone.

### **Lunch: Advice From Faculty**

Topics include: Differences in preparing for a class, lecture, recitation, and lab in different disciplines. Dr. Mira Olson (engineering); Dr. Jason Cross (chemistry); Dr. Karen Kabnick (Biology); Dr. Stella Volpe (nutrition sciences)

### **Afternoon Workshop: (1:00 – 3:00)**

#### **Instructional Resources and Technology (IRT)**

**Michael Shelmet, Asst. Director – Online learning, (IRT)**

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Using Blackboard and using media to enhance your classes

## Thursday, September 17<sup>th</sup>

**Morning:** Time available to visit your department and get a syllabus of a course taught in your department and start preparing for Friday's mini- lessons.

### Afternoon Workshop: (1:30 – 3:30)

#### Good Teaching Practices Across Disciplines, Part One

**Dr. Joel Oestreich, Director of International Area Studies, Associate Professor (History and Politics)**

**Dr. Laura Duwel, Assistant Department Head, Teaching Professor (Biology)**

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- a. Introducing yourself,
- b. Introducing your course and creating interest in your subject;
- c. Reviewing your syllabus, including grading, attendance, homework and exam policies;
- d. Creating rapport and an interactive learning environment
- e. Fielding questions

### Late Afternoon Workshop: ( 3:45 – 5:30)

**Preparing to Teach Dr. Mary Jo Grdina, Associate Clinical Professor (Education)**

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- a. creating Lessons Backwards
- b. aiming for higher order thinking skills

## Friday, September 18<sup>th</sup>

### Morning Practice Teaching Session (9:00 – 12:00)

Rooms:

- First day mini lessons (introduce yourself, your course & syllabus (10 minutes)
- Office hour role-plays.

### Afternoon Practice Teaching Session (1:30 – 3:30)

Mini- Lesson on topic in your major and fielding questions (10 minutes)

**Non- teaching TA:** Present a lesson on a topic that is common in your field (or)  
Give a 10-15-minute presentation on one of the following topics:

- why you chose your field,
- hot topic in your field; your research,
- life as a PhD student / what you've learned so far as a PhD student.

## **Workshops and Assignments During the Term**

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Week of the Term (Friday, October 2<sup>nd</sup> 1:00 – 3:00)**

#### **Workshop: Good Teaching Practices, Part Two: Evaluation and Feedback Dr. Yoto Yotov (Economics)**

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- a. Grading,
- b. Giving feedback
- c. Making the most of office hours

### **3<sup>rd</sup> Week of the Term (Friday, October 9<sup>th</sup> 1:00 – 3:00)**

#### **Workshop: Teaching Across Cultures Professor Alexis Finger (English & Philosophy/ ELC)**

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- a. Interviewing domestic/ international students;
- b. Reflecting on the implications for teaching a diverse class.
- c. Recommendations for teaching international students and utilizing university resources available.

### **4<sup>th</sup> week of the Term (Friday, October 16<sup>th</sup> 1:00 – 3:00)**

#### **Practice Teaching Session**

**TA assigned to teach** gives a lesson (10-15 minutes). Feedback (5 minutes)

**Or**

**Non- teaching TA:** Presents a lesson on a topic that is common in his/her field (or)

Give a 10-15-minute presentation on one of the following topics:

- why you chose your field,
- hot topic in your field; your research,
- life as a PhD student / what you've learned so far as a PhD student.

#### **Assignments For Teaching TA's (labs, recitations, tutoring in office hours).**

**Submit all assignments to Alexis Finger: [fingerag@drexel.edu](mailto:fingerag@drexel.edu)**

**5<sup>th</sup> week:** Submit two observations by the end of the week: one of an experienced TA and one of a professor in your department.

**6<sup>th</sup> week:** Submit peer evaluation of your teaching. (Have an experienced TA observe your teaching. Ask the TA to give you verbal feedback and fill out an observation form (found on website ) that indicates s/he observed you.

**7<sup>th</sup> week: Beginning of the week:** **Have your students fill out midterm evaluations.** (Midterm class evaluations for those who have classes and midterm tutoring evaluations for those who are tutoring)

**End of the week:** Submit a reflection paper that includes a response to your students' positive and negative feedback. Discuss what you have gained from your teaching experience, as well as your goals for the future.

**Assignments for NON- Teaching TA's.**

**Submit all assignments to Alexis Finger:** [fingerag@drexel.edu](mailto:fingerag@drexel.edu)

**5<sup>th</sup> week:** Observations (two): one of an experienced TA and one of a professor in your dept.

**6<sup>th</sup> week:** Reflection on the grading procedure that you are following and the rubric you are using. Discuss your satisfaction with the grading and rubric or your recommendations for improvement.

**7<sup>th</sup> week:** Solving Scenarios: choose two scenarios that are provided. Discuss how you would handle the situation and give your rationale.