



## Grad T580 Teaching Assistant Orientation and Preparation Course

— Fall 2018 —

### 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

Alexis Finger  
Associate Teaching Professor, English  
109 Language and Communication Center  
[fingerag@drexel.edu](mailto: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. TA's who **cannot attend** a training session are required to review the video of the missed session and **submit a summary** of the main points that were covered.

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 Outcomes

1. **The TA:** Identify the roles and value of the TA in the Drexel undergraduate and graduate 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. **Resources and Services:** Identify student needs and problems that university support services/ resources handle and identify and recommend the appropriate services/ resources. ( See TA Handbook Quiz on *The Art of Teaching: A Handbook to Discovery- Teaching and Learning* )

- Office of Equality and Diversity/ Disability Services
- Counseling Center
- The Office of Residential Living and Student Conduct
- Information Technology (IT) (Blackboard) & IMS (audio-visual services)

(Observed: TA Handbook Quiz on *The Art of Teaching: A Handbook to Discovery* and Final Reflection Paper)

4. **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

(Observed: Classroom observation reports, Midterm Evaluations)

5. **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)

**6. 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)

**7. 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 session; Final Reflection Paper)

**8. Know Thyself:** Reflect and self- evaluate acquisition of knowledge and skills relevant to the course. (Observed: Final Reflection Paper)

## **Required Course Materials**

---

TA Handbook and forms found in Blackboard Learn.

## **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

	<p><b>Assignment #1</b> Watch the video on <b>Information Technology</b> ( IT) Michael Shelmet, Associate Director</p>
	<p><b>Assignment #2 The Art of Teaching: A Handbook to Discovery</b> ( Teaching and Learning) for all new TAs at Drexel University. <b>Submit by Sept. 28<sup>th</sup></b></p> <p>Respond to questions in a document found in Blackboard.</p>
	<p><b>Assignment #3</b></p> <p><b>“Mini-Lesson” Due: Sept. 21st</b></p> <p>Prepare to give a brief (5-10 minute) presentation practicing your first day in class. Your presentation should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Introductions and welcome</li><li>• Brief discussion about you<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Where you are from</li><li>○ Your experience</li><li>○ Your research interests/foci (in layman’s terms)</li></ul></li><li>• Attempts to connecting with the audience (remember, audience is first- and second-year undergraduates)</li><li>• 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).</li></ul> <p><b>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.</b></p> <p><i>Note:</i> 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.</p>

---

## Detailed Schedule for Pre-Term Workshops

---

**Thursday, September 20<sup>th</sup>**

*Location: Graduate Student Lounge (Main 010A - Basement of Main Building)*

<b>Morning Session</b>	
8:30	<b>Continental Breakfast</b>
9:00	<b>Ice Breaker</b> – Speed Meeting
9:30	<b>Welcome:</b> <i>Dr. Elisabeth Van Bockstaele, Dean of Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences and Professional Studies and Vice Provost for Graduate Education</i>
9:45	<p><b>Overview and the Role of the Teaching Assistant</b>  <i>Presenter Dr. Teck-Kah Lim, Emeritus Professor of Physics</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Academic Structure of the University</li> <li>• Teaching Assistants at Drexel University</li> <li>• Teaching Assistant Program               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Undergraduate Curriculum</li> <li>• Why we need TAs</li> <li>• How TAs fit into the undergraduate academic experience</li> <li>• How the TA’s role fits into the graduate experience</li> <li>• Interacting with Faculty/Department/Course Lead</li> </ul> </li> <li>• TA Excellence Award</li> </ul>
10:15-11:15	<p><b>Experienced Teaching Assistant Panel:</b>            What do Students Want? What do Students Need?  <i>Moderator: Alexis Finger, Ph.D., Associate Teaching Professor of English</i>            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 &amp; A, 10-minute sharing.</p>
11:15-12:15	<p><b>Workshops</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office of Equality and Diversity/ Disability Resources  <i>Jesse Krohn, Associate Director, Education and Prevention</i></li> <li>• The Office of Residential Living and Student Conduct  <i>Tynika Williams, Associate Director</i></li> </ul>

<b><i>Afternoon Session</i></b>	
12:15- 1:00	<b>Lunch with Department Representatives</b> ( Assign Practice Teaching Group & Room for Friday)
1:00	<b>Visit your department : tour, teaching assignments, buddy</b>

## Friday, September 21st

<b><i>Morning Session</i></b>	
8:30 – 9:00	<b>Continental Breakfast</b> <b>Overview of Remainder of TA Course</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grading</li> <li>• Assignments</li> <li>• Observation Forms</li> </ul>
9:00 – 10:00	<b>Faculty Panel: Effective Practices for Teaching Assistants</b> <i>Presenters:</i> <i>Dr. Jamie Dougherty (BioMedical Engineering)</i> <i>Dr. Jason Cross (Chemistry)</i> <i>Dr. Rachel Reynolds ( Communication, Culture &amp; Media)</i> <i>Dr. Oksana Odintsova (Mathematics)</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Roles of TAs in Different Department/Disciplines (recitation, grading, tutoring, assisting in labs, faculty support, etc.)</li> <li>• Preparing for your TA assignment</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First Day Practices; Introducing yourself and course/syllabus, including grading, attendance, homework and exam policies, academic honesty, etc.;</li> <li>• Creating rapport, interest in your subject and an interactive learning environment</li> <li>• Effective questioning</li> </ul>
10:05 – 12:00	<b>Practice Teaching:</b> <i>Today's sessions will be in small groups and facilitated by an experienced Teaching Assistant. Group assignments and locations for this morning will be communicated on Thursday.</i>

### ***Afternoon Session***

12:00	<b>Lunch</b> <b>CIRTL - Graduate Student Professional Development</b> <b>Marisa Dietrich, Program Coordinator</b>  <i>Graduate Student Lounge (Main 010A -- Basement of Main Building)</i>
1:00 – 1:30 1:30 – 3:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Counseling Center, Annette Molyneux, Director of Counseling &amp; Health</li> <li>• Workshop on Scenarios &amp; Roleplaying</li> </ul>

### **Fall Term**

*Note: Required sessions are Friday, 1-3PM, during weeks 1, 2 and 4*  
**PLEASE be sure to sign in at each session!**

<b>Wk</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Assignments</b>
1	<b>Workshop #1</b> (Friday, 1-3PM)  <i>Backwards Design and Instruction</i>	

	<i>(Mary Jo Grdina, PhD)</i>	
2	<b>Workshop #2</b> (Friday, 1-3PM) <b>Teaching Across Cultures</b> (Alexis Finger)	
3	<b>Workshop #3</b> Friday, 1-3PM <b>Online Engagement</b> Alan Hecht, Director, Instructional Tech.	
4	<b>Workshop: #4</b> ( Friday, 1- 3PM ) <b>Assessment</b> (Dr. Joseph M. Hawk) Director of Operations for University Assessment, Accreditation & Effectiveness	<p><b>Assignment #4 Observations</b> <i>Observations should be conducted during Weeks 4 - 6</i> <i>Observation forms scanned and submitted via Blackboard by the end of Week 6</i></p> <p>Using the observation forms provided, conduct two observations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. One observation should be of an experienced Teaching Assistant with an assignment similar to yours and/or in your department.</li> <li>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.</li> </ol>
5	<b>No Meeting</b>	<p><b>Assignment #5</b> <i>Due by the end of Week 5</i></p> <p><b>FOR TAs with Current Teaching Assignments</b> Assignment 5a: Mid-term evaluations <i>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.</i></p> <p>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.</p> <p><b>FOR TAs <u>without</u> Current Teaching Assignments</b> Assignment 5b: Review a Grading Procedure</p>



		<p><i>Due by the end of Week 5</i></p> <p>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.</p>
6	<b>No Meeting</b>	<p><b>Assignment #6</b></p> <p><i>Due by the end of Week 6</i></p> <p><b>FOR TAs with Current Teaching Assignments</b> Peer Evaluation of your Teaching</p> <p>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.</p> <p><b>FOR TAs <u>without</u> Current Teaching Assignments</b></p> <p>Interview a member of your faculty about teaching in your department. Submit a summary of the highlights of your interview.</p>
7	<b>No Meeting</b>	<p><b>Assignment #7 Final Reflection</b> <i>Due by the end of Week 7</i></p> <p>Prepare a reflection on your experiences this term. Please refer to the content of the presentations explicitly whenever possible. In addition, all students should respond to what you noticed and wondered about during your observations and specific areas of improvement and goals for the future.</p>

		<p><i>For those TAs currently teaching</i>, be sure to include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• summary of your students' positive and negative feedback from the midterm evaluations and how you would address them;</li> <li>• the feedback you received when you were observed and how you might utilize it to improve your work with students.</li> </ul> <p>Your final reflection should be about <b>two pages</b> in length.</p>
8	No Meeting	
9	No Meeting <i>Finish the term strong.</i>	
10	No Activities/No Assignments <i>Hope you had a great term. Please consider attending the Graduate College Professional Development activities throughout the Winter and Spring Terms...</i>	

## **Assignments**

---

All assignments should be submitted via Blackboard.