HIST 595: Practicum in Teaching the Liberal Arts
Wednesdays 12:00-1:50, VKC 153

This two-unit course is designed for first-semester Teaching Assistants for graduate students teaching in the humanities. The course will be focused on advice, practical principles for effective teaching, and practice in a low-risk setting. Students will be encouraged to bring practical issues that come up during the semester to our discussions. One of the main goals of the course is to make students into thoughtful teachers. To do this, we will address syllabus and course design, methods of assessment, technology in the classroom, student expectations and classroom dynamics, academic integrity and plagiarism, the construction of a teaching portfolio, and professionalization.

Course Goals:
1. Learn how to become comfortable in the classroom
2. Achieve comfort with basic techniques for relating successfully to undergraduate students
3. Learn basic principles of lesson plan design and execution
4. Acquire basic principles of assignment design and grading techniques – with special focus on helping students with writing
5. Develop a repertoire of techniques for leading and advancing classroom discussion
6. Formulate and adopt a strategy for further development as a teacher
7. Begin to assemble a portfolio of teaching materials.
8. Develop your professionalization as teachers.

Practice

Over the course of the semester,

1) Each of you will chose a short reading (about 1 page) from your field and lead a discussion of that reading.
2) Each of you will give a short (about 5 questions) quiz on that reading
3) Practice giving feedback to a student about a rough draft of a paper (either papers from your classes, or papers I will provide)
4) Design an essay question from your field appropriate for a midterm or final exam
5) Design a course proposal (something shorter than a full-scale syllabus) which will include the title, purpose/themes, learning outcomes, suggested reading, and your statement of the thesis of the syllabus.
Required reading:


**Additional Readings:** *(Thanks to Professor Elinor Accampo for compiling this list)*


This is a textbook-style resource for beginning teaching assistants.


Specifically addresses the issues pertaining to teaching courses of 100 students or more.


This 11-chapter introduction covers the most important issues raised in researching, designing, and planning one’s own course. It has chapters on course planning, the psychological basis for working memory, learning, and long-term memory, selecting textbooks, constructing tests, grading, and other topics


This textbook-style volume is divided into 49 bite-size treatments of practically any issue related to teaching, each including bullet-point general strategies and its own list of further references. It’s a great reference, with ideas and warnings about virtually every topic.


A collection of seven essays, with an introduction, on some of the most important practical issues raised in teaching.

Lang, James, *On Course*


This is an up-to-date but well-tested highly general resource on college teaching, covering a wide range of topics with brief and helpful treatments that can be taken one-by-one and found by consulting the table of contents.


This book consists of about 500 bullet-point ideas, reminders, and warnings, classified hierarchically into about 50 groups split up into six chapters. Helpful groups of topics
include “What not to do with Powerpoint!”, “Helping students to make notes – not just take notes”, and others on a wide range of topics.


A collection of essays – 25 contributions in all from different authors – covering all aspects of teaching, including preparation of a teaching portfolio and dealing with nontraditional students.
SCHEDULE
(subject to change)

August 20
Introduction:
Grab your lunch and come to SOS 250 – we will plan to start about 11:45 and try to be finished by 2:00 pm.
What to do on the first day of class – ice breakers, music and setting the tone, training your students to talk
Professionalization: Dress, performative presence
Assignment: Curzan & Damour, Chapters 1 and 2.

August 26
First week experience: Problems? Issues? Questions?
Blackboard and how to make the most of it.
Teaching writing: advice and grading
Professionalization: Meeting with students
Assignment: Curzan & Damour, Chapters 3 & 4

September 2
How to encourage class discussion—successes, failures so far?
Professionalization: Responsiveness with boundaries
Assignment: Curzan & Damour, Chapters 5 & 6

September 9
Time management
Professionalization: DSP
Curzan & Damour, Chapter 11

September 16
Grading, Plagiarism, Academic Integrity; submitting assignments through Turnitin; how to keep good records
Professionalization: dealing with problem students
Assignment: Curzan & Damour, Chapters 7 & 8

September 23
Mid-semester evaluations
Professionalization: Transparency and grading
Assignment: Curzan & Damour, Chapter 9
Assignment: What are your strengths and weaknesses as a teacher?

September 30
Teaching with Technology when and when not to use it, how to use it.
Professionalization: Social media while staying professional
Offer demonstrations of your own use of technology.
October 7 
Putting together a Teaching Portfolio  
Assignment: Curzan & Damour, Chapter 10.  
Professionalization: Writing Assignment: What is your teaching philosophy? (Max 1 page, single spaced)

October 14  
Main Topic: Looking Forward to Constructing Your Own Course: How to construct a syllabus  
Assignment: Course Proposal

October 21  
Main Topic: Best Practices So Far. Review the topics we have gone over. What has worked in your discussion sections, what has not? What problems have you encountered and resolved? What problems remain unresolved? Go back over the readings and evaluate whether they have been helpful.  

October 28  
No Class

December 4  
Ending the Semester Sanely and Smoothly  
Professionalization: How to write a letter of recommendation.  
Writing Assignment: What went well, and what didn’t? What are your strengths and weaknesses as a teacher?