

# Seminar for Graduate Teaching Assistants

POLS 7770, Fall 2018

Friday 2:30-4:25

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## Course Description and Goals

This course serves as an introduction to teaching political science as a graduate assistant at the University of Georgia. It is a discipline-specific equivalent to the GRSC 7770–Level 3 course required for all new graduate teaching assistants by the University. The class is designed to prepare teaching assistants for their new role at the University of Georgia as well as for potential careers involving instruction at other institutions or in other professional capacities.

The course is front-loaded so as to ensure that students will have maximum exposure to important topics before they encounter them in the classroom. This format will also allow the class to better meet your needs as a developing teacher throughout the semester.

## Readings

There is one text for this course:

- UGA Teaching Assistant Handbook, drawn from *McKeachie's Teaching Tips: Strategies, Research, and Theory for College and University Teachers*.
  - Available online at: <http://www.ctl.uga.edu/teachingassistant/handbook>
- I will post any other readings on my website.

## Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities that have been certified by the UGA Disabilities Services office will be accommodated according to university policy. If you have documentation for accommodations from Disabilities Services, please present it to me as soon as possible. For more information, contact Disabilities Services at **706-542-8719**. If you cannot reach the classroom or my office, please notify me as soon as possible so that alternative arrangements can be made.

## Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a core value of institutions of higher learning. All students, upon enrolling, must pledge: "I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others." It is your responsibility to avoid plagiarism, cheating, and dishonesty. Tests and written assignments should be your own work, while studying and class preparation can (and should) be done with others. The university policy on academic integrity is posted at: <http://www.uga.edu/honesty/>.

## **Course Requirements and Evaluations**

The course is graded on a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory basis. If you have more than two absences, you will receive an Unsatisfactory grade. In addition, because the grading criteria are quite broad, your written work will receive comments rather than a conventional letter grade, as my main concern is that you complete the work. Failure to complete assignments in a timely fashion will result in a grade of Unsatisfactory.

*Attendance & Participation:* Attendance for this class is required, but you will be allowed two absences; any more will result in an Unsatisfactory grade for the class. Furthermore, it is expected that you will participate in all in-class assignments, discussions, and group activities. Just as you expect your own students to participate fully, so will I expect the same of you.

*Lesson Plan:* You will design a lesson plan for one class, with direction toward incorporating an innovative or creative approach to teaching political science. Bring enough copies for your classmates, as well as a copy to turn in to me. We will revisit the lesson plans later in the semester. These will be due (electronically) October 12.

*Midterm Evaluation Exercise:* You a midterm evaluation form for your class and implement it. Summarize the responses in a 2-page report, detailing the overall response from your class and how you plan to address your students concerns for the remainder of the semester. This assignment is due (as a hard copy) at the November 9 class meeting.

*Revised Teaching Philosophy Statement:* I expect you to provide a preliminary draft of your teaching philosophy, a document in which you will outline your approach to teaching political science, as well as the principles that will guide you in your instruction. Near the end of the semester you should have sufficient teaching experience to revise and update this teaching philosophy. Revisit your first draft and make changes that reflect your growth as an instructor over the semester. The revised teaching philosophy statement will be due (as a hard copy) November 16.

*Peer Observations:* An important part of learning how to teach is responding to constructive criticism. You will observe two of your peers teaching their discussion sections and provide a short written review based on an evaluation form that I will provide to you. You may not observe on a test day or on a day reserved for returning and covering graded tests. These will be due to me in electronic format by December 7.

## How to Succeed in this Course

- Be respectful of your own and others' ideas.
- Attend class consistently.
- Keep up with the readings.
- If something is not clear, ask a question.
- Clarify expectations with the instructor.
- Utilize all resources available to you.

## Course Schedule (Subject to change as events warrant):

<b>Date</b>	<b>Description</b>
Aug. 17	Introductions
Aug. 24	Graduate TA/Instruction Information Session
Aug. 31	<b>No Class – APSA Conference</b>
Sept. 7	Institutional Diversity – Speaker Dominique Quarles <i>Handbook IV.B</i>
Sept. 14	Preparing for Your Own Course – Speaker Gary Green <i>Handbook II.A-II.D</i>
Sept. 21	Student Behavior – Speaker Rebecca Scarbro <i>Handbook IV.C</i>
Sept. 28	Security and Emergency Preparedness – Speaker John Newton
Oct. 5	Teaching Portfolios – Speaker Judy Milton <i>Teaching Handbook: V.I</i>
Oct. 12	Group Based Learning
Oct. 19	Discussion
Oct. 26	<b>No Class – Fall Break</b>
Nov. 2	Work/Life Balance While in Grad School – Speaker Kiz Adams <b>3:30 Baldwin 302</b>
Nov. 9	Midterm Evaluations
Nov. 16	Teaching Philosophies Revisited
Nov. 23	<b>No Class – Thanksgiving Break</b>
Nov. 30	Discussion
Dec. 7	Peer Observations