**GRAD 701 – Teaching Assistant Development
Course Syllabus – Fall 2015**

Course Description:
An introduction to instructional skills and strategies for graduate teaching and instructional assistants (GTA/IAs) at the University of South Carolina. In this course, GTA/IAs will have the opportunity to participate in a wide range of professional development activities tailored to their specific interests and GTA/IA responsibilities, develop class and course management skills for use in their GTA/IA role, and experience various approaches to teaching and learning.

Learning Outcomes:
In this course, students will:
1) Participate in professional development activities related to teaching and instructional assistants' duties.
2) Discuss instructional strategies that can be used by TA/IAs in a classroom, laboratory, group or individual learning settings.
3) Reflect on how these new strategies and skills will be implemented into their current TA/IA duties and future instructional responsibilities.

Required Texts: There are no required texts for this course.

Some Recommended Resources and Texts: *(A more in-depth list of resources will be made available on GRAD 701's Blackboard site)*
  ➢ Bain, K. (2004). *What the Best College Teachers Do*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
  ➢ Carey, B. (2014). How We Learn: *The Surprising Truth About When, Where, and Why it Happens.* New York, NY: Random House.
  ➢ Davis, B.G. (2009). *Tools for Teaching*. 2nd Ed. San Francisco, CA: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
  ➢ Davis, J.R. and Arend, B.D. (2013). Facilitating Seven Ways of Learning: *A Resource for More Purposeful, Effective, and Enjoyable College Teaching.* Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, LLC.
  ➢ Doyle, T. (2011). *Learner-Centered Teaching: Putting the Research on Learning Into Practice.* Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing, LLC.
  ➢ Mattuck, A.P. (2009). *The Torch or the Firehose: A Guide to Section Teaching.* 2nd Ed. MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Retrieved from: http://ocw.mit.edu/resources/res-18-004-the-torch-or-the-firehose-a-guide-to-section-teaching-spring-2009/online-publication/
  ➢ National Research Council Series: *How Students Learn*. (2005). Retrieved from: http://search.nap.edu/napsearch.php?term=how+students+learn.
  ➢ Nilson, Linda B. (2010). *Teaching at its Best: A Research-Based Resource for College Instructors.* 3rd Ed. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
  ➢ Royse, D. (2001). *Teaching Tips for College and University Instructors: A Practical Guide*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
  ➢ Svinicki, M. and McKeachie, W. (2011). *McKeachie's Teaching Tips - Strategies, Research, and Theory for College and University Teachers.* 13th Ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning. ISBN 10-495-80929-2. (*12th Ed. is also good*.)

Professional Development Activities

➢ Students will participate in a ***minimum of four*** professional development activities related to being a teaching or instructional assistant, chosen depending on the student's interests, specific instructional responsibility, and/or schedule. Specific activities will be selected from a list provided each semester. This list includes workshops from across campus, specifically from the following general categories:

- GRAD 701-specific sessions
- Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) Teaching Assistant Workshops
- CTE general audience seminars
- Online TA training modules
- Previously recorded CTE presentations available online
- University Technology Services Blackboard training sessions
- Training workshops that originate in academic units and are approved in advance by the GRAD 701 instructor
- Other campus partners workshops (CHDC, OMSA, PACWI, other) that relate to teaching responsibilities or resources

➢ ***At least two*** of the four activities must involve ***in-person, face-to-face*** sessions or workshops. ***No more than two activities can be online***, including online TA Training modules or previously recorded CTE presentations.

Professional Development Activity Topic Selection

A guide to recommended sessions and activities will be provided for the different types of teaching assistantships, or tracks: instructors of record, laboratory assistants, recitation leaders, discussion leaders, and graders. However, students are welcome to attend any session or workshop if it pertains to their interests or best fits their schedule.

Assignments

For ***each*** of the four professional development activities in which the student participates, a **Reflection Activity** must be completed.

➢ All Reflection Activities must be submitted via Blackboard.
➢ Each activity counts 25 points, for a total score of 100 points for the course.
➢ Reflection Activities consist of short essay responses to writing prompts: (1) Summarize the activity; (2) What are two important points, ideas, or aspects of teaching you learned from this activity; and (3) Describe how what you have learned will impact your role as a teaching or instructional assistant.
➢ Reflection activities are assessed using a basic essay grading strategy and provided rubric:
- **Rubric**:
  - Workshop Summary: 6 pts.
  - 2 teaching points learned: 2 pts. each
  - Paragraph discussion of each point: 5 pts. each
    - Inclusion of a topic sentence
    - Minimum of two supporting sentences
  - Instructional Responsibility / Dept. / Title of Session: 3 pts.
  - Rating of event and other comments / feedback   <u>2 pts.</u>
                                                             25 pts.
- Evidence of reflective thought and effort put into the writing:
  - Reflections are a chance to think about the two points or ideas you got from the activity, and then consider and *discuss how* these points can improve your TA responsibilities and future class interactions.

- o Consider: How can you apply this information to your GIA/TA responsibilities now? What aspects of your teaching responsibilities did the activity make you reconsider, and how might you incorporate this into your future TA responsibilities?
  - o Keep in mind that critical reflection goes beyond describing, evaluating, or reacting, to include analyzing, reconsidering, and questioning one's experiences within a broader context of the issues and your knowledge.
- ➢ Each reflection activity must score a *minimum of 20 out of 25 points (>80%) to be considered passing.*
- ➢ Unsatisfactory assignments will be returned to the student. The student will have one opportunity to revise and resubmit an unsatisfactory assignment. Helpful feedback is provided on every reflection activity submitted.

Meeting Times and Course Administration

- ➢ GRAD 701-specific face-to-face sessions will meet in various locations – these locations will be provided with each session in the course schedule and emailed to students via Blackboard the first week of classes.
- ➢ GRAD 701 is administered entirely online. All grades, reflection activity submissions, course information, session and schedule details, and student notifications will be provided through the GRAD 701 Blackboard site. It is your responsibility to check into Blackboard regularly.

Grading Scheme

This course is graded on a **Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory** grading scheme, where a grade of **Satisfactory = >80%.** Students must participate in a minimum of four activities and successfully complete four reflection assignments with a grade of 20/25 or higher to earn a 'Satisfactory' grade.

Time Allocation for Course Completion

Students will have one semester to complete the four assignments. If warranted by valid extenuating circumstances with supporting documentation, an assignment of a grade of Incomplete (I) may be considered. A student must receive approval of these extenuating circumstances from their Graduate Director, then have their graduate director submit a written Incomplete request to the GRAD 701 instructor.

Topical Outline: *TBA*

GRAD 701 Session Schedule: *TBA*

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