

## Regularly Offered GRAD 701 Workshops, Fall Semesters

★ = Recommended

✓ = Applicable to responsibilities

*Sessions are offered on multiple days of the week, varying times of day, in the evenings (after 5 pm) and on Saturday afternoons.*

*Registration is NOT required – all sessions will be held as scheduled (unless otherwise notified).*

GRAD 701 Session Topics	Approx. # Repeated	Instructor of Record	Laboratory Assistant	Grader	Recitation Leader	Discussion Leader
Active Learning Techniques for Any Discipline	2	✓	✓		✓	✓
Assessing Student Learning	1-2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Balancing the Multiple Roles of Graduate Students	2-3	★	★	★	★	★
Best Practices for Grading Objectively	2-3	✓	✓	★	✓	✓
Dealing With Disruptive Student Behavior	1-2	✓	✓		✓	✓
Developing a Course Syllabus	1-2	★	(Recommended for future reference!)			
Developing Your Teaching Persona	2	★	✓	(Recommended for future reference!)		
Fish Bowl: Discussing Current Issues of TAs	1-2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Getting Good Teaching Evaluations	2	✓	✓		✓	✓
Interacting With Students Appropriately & Professionally	1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Leading a Good Discussion Session	2	✓	✓		✓	★
Leading a Good Laboratory Section	2		★			
Leading a Good Recitation Session	1		✓		★	✓
Overcoming Apathy & Maintaining Student Motivation	2	✓	✓		✓	✓
Planning a Good Class Presentation	2	★	✓	(Recommended for future reference!)		
The Tip Jar: General Teaching Tips for New TAs	1-2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

# GRAD 701 Session Descriptions

## 1. Active Learning Techniques for Any Discipline

Active learning is a student-centered approach in which pre-planned activities are used to engage the student as an active participant in their learning. Techniques such as think-pair-share, one-minute paper, concept mapping, and others have been shown to improve student learning of material and enhance the presentation format of a course. However, active learning strategies can be difficult for new GIA/TAs to implement because they require preparation and skills in guiding and moderating the learning activity. In this workshop, we will examine the three key student learning benchmarks integrated into active learning techniques, and explore the planning system necessary to incorporate such activities. To illustrate these, attendees will actively participate in several active learning techniques applicable to a wide range of classroom settings. Join us to learn helpful tips on what you can do, how to do it, and why active learning in the classroom is important to student learning.

## 2. Assessing Student Learning: Different Methods and Styles

Student learning is assessed, in its most basic form, via grades. But grades should only be the end result of a series of measures implemented by instructors to fully assess what students are actually incorporating into their knowledge base. Such measures include discussing expectations with students, engaging with the students in “real time” regarding their learning, providing varied assessment (assignment) types, and ensuring that assessments are measurable and directly linked to specific learning outcomes. Assessment types will certainly vary depending on the content, course structure, and individual instructor. This session will highlight the breadth and scope of assessment practices, and provide you with specific examples of assessments and strategies that effectively and objectively measure learning.

## 3. Balancing the Multiple Roles of Graduate Students

Graduate students must handle a myriad of responsibilities during the span of their graduate studies (e.g., teaching, research, coursework, etc.). Meeting the high expectations of these academic demands is challenging at best, and for many graduate students, it can be stressful, overwhelming, and guilt-inducing due to the competing demands of their professional and personal life. How to balance and find time for each of these facets is not a skill that graduate students automatically know! Recognizing your stresses, determining and defining both short-term tasks and long-term goals, and learning how to prioritize these are key to beginning to find your balance. This workshop will help you learn to recognize the different levels of stressors in your life by interactively applying the Covey Time Management Matrix tool to your own situation. Advice for managing your workload, prioritizing your responsibilities, along with identifying personal traits that may be contributing to this imbalance will be given, and discussion with other participants will be encouraged to help you begin to gain perspective on your graduate school experience.

#### **4. Best Practices for Grading Objectively**

The responsibilities of all GTA/IAs typically include grading student work. However, grading objectively involves certain strategies and considerations, of which TAs are often not aware. When grading at any level, a TA needs to consider what their “grading philosophy” is for the course. Grading should be recognized and treated as a type of constructive feedback to students, with feedback types differing depending on the type of assessment. How to provide this feedback, along with grading different types of assessment styles, use of rubrics, and common student complaints, will also be discussed.

#### **5. Dealing with Disruptive Student Behavior**

A student's cell phone buzzes while you're lecturing. The class snickers as the student checks it and sends a text in front of you. In a classroom discussion, a student uses charged language and other students become visibly distressed. Grades have been posted, and an upset student sends you an email challenging his final project and class grade. What do you do in these situations? How do you handle other challenging classroom disruptions? This session will provide examples of scenarios that can (and will) happen, along with the best (and worst) ways for handling and defusing situations, and best practices for preventing these scenarios from happening in during your teaching.

#### **6. Developing a Course Syllabus**

Developing a syllabus is a skill which many instructors wish they had been provided some guidance prior to teaching their first course. In this workshop, we will begin to develop a syllabus for a course you may teach in the future. We'll discuss the importance of learning outcomes, and interactively explore how to craft them. The development of thoughtfully designed learning outcomes subsequently guides participants in creating quality learning activities, assignments, assessments, and finally, your teaching methodology for the course. Other tips and advice for syllabus development, and examples of good and bad syllabus construction, will be discussed.

#### **7. Developing Your Teaching Persona**

Good teaching involves creating a teaching persona that is authentic, requiring a balance between establishing authority, content mastery and classroom management style. Tips for developing these skills will be discussed, along with a discussion of related common concerns of TAs new to teaching, and helpful advice for any who are still learning to become comfortable in front of a classroom.

#### **8. Fish Bowl: Discussing Current Issues of TAs**

It's later in the semester...and you've probably had some "issues" crop up during your GIA/TA responsibilities. Using a popular active learning technique called "Fish Bowl", participants will write down on a slip of paper specific issues, questions, concerns they have had or are worrying about, and place them in a fish bowl. The facilitator will then draw these topics out individually, and

discuss their own strategies for dealing with each situation as well as encourage discussion with other participants. Bring your issues, concerns, questions, and be willing to contribute to an interactive discussion!

## **9. Getting Good Teaching Evaluations**

The best way to get good teaching evaluations from your students is from the beginning, by being a good teacher. Good teaching involves developing your teaching persona, balancing content mastery and course rigor with student ability, and encouraging regular interpersonal rapport. Tips for developing these skills will be discussed, along with methods for encouraging student feedback on your instruction during the semester, in addition to end-of-semester course evaluations.

## **10. Interacting With Students Appropriately & Professionally**

A concern of many new teaching assistants regards the level of appropriate interaction considered acceptable with respect to the instructor-student relationship. Should you “friend” your students on social networking websites? How do you maintain a professional, but helpful, boundary? What is considered inappropriate interaction? These questions and more will be discussed in this workshop, using scenarios in which participants will “act out” a situation and then discuss the proper professional response to these scenarios.

## **11. Leading a Good Discussion Session**

Discussion sections, even classroom discussions within a lecture setting, may seem difficult to facilitate for new instructors. What you will find is that even discussion sessions take planning and preparation, as well as practice. Effective methodologies and best practices for leading classroom discussions, and techniques for directing student responses, will be addressed and modeled. GIAs, GTAs, and instructors at all levels of teaching and experience are welcomed.

## **12. Leading a Good Laboratory Section**

While teaching laboratory sections may seem like a “piece of cake” to an outsider, in reality they are multiple-hour classes that require numerous instructional skills, including detailed planning, content mastery and presentation, implementation of experiments, classroom management, troubleshooting, and interactive student assessment. In this workshop, GTA/IAs will be given guidance in how to facilitate an engaging, learning-centered laboratory session, as well as tips on effective grading strategies for laboratory-style assessments. Discussions of particular issues with other laboratory GIA/TAs will be encouraged.

## **13. Leading a Good Recitation Session**

The responsibility of a GIA/TA leading a recitation session is a bit different from instruction in other courses – what is required of you, what is required of your students, and how do you go about facilitating this unique classroom setting? How do you deal with student issues such as non-interaction, attendance problems, or non-preparedness? These issues and more are discussed in this

session, along with tips from prior Recitation Leaders across campus. All GTA/IAs are welcome to this discussion session even if your primary responsibility is not a Recitation Leader.

#### **14. Overcoming Apathy and Maintaining Student Motivation**

Students today have been called the "Apathetic Generation." With the constant presence of distractions from technology influencing a student's interaction with the world around them, students' attention spans are shorter and communication skills are in decline. It seems more and more difficult to engage today's students in the traditional classroom setting. However, there are specific strategies that you as a TA can use to enhance your teaching style and engage students from the first class, and then maintain that engagement throughout the semester. Learn different techniques to develop a personal connection with your students, encourage preparation and student involvement in your class, provide motivational feedback, and expect (and receive!) excellence from your students. These strategies to engage students can be applied in small classrooms as well as in large lecture-hall style courses.

#### **15. Planning a Good Class Presentation**

Part of the role of many GIA/TAs is providing course content to students. Whether the format involves a whiteboard, chalkboard, PowerPoint, pure lecture, or combinations of these, the old "sage on the stage" format of lecturing still used by the majority of instructors simply does not address the learning styles of students in this technological age. In preparing a presentation, an instructor must consider this issue of engaging different learning styles, as well as addressing course learning outcomes, the connection between content, assessments, application, and student expectations. We will discuss the importance of, and techniques for, factoring in these considerations, along with preparation strategies and speaking tips, and a few "best practices" for the use of Microsoft PowerPoint as a presentation tool.

#### **16. The Tip Jar: General Teaching Tips for New TAs**

While it is definitely exciting, your first graduate teaching or instructional assistantship can also be quite overwhelming, especially if you have no teaching experience. Concerns and questions are likely swirling in your head: How do you conduct yourself in class? What is expected of you by your advisor? How much preparation does it take? What if you're nervous? How do you deal with problem students? How do you develop a teaching style? These and many other questions are addressed in this helpful "Tips" workshop for new GIA/TAs to make your teaching experience more successful and more efficient. Experienced TAs are welcome to share their stories and experiences as well.