

***BEST PRACTICES FOR
TEACHING ASSISTANTS
&
GRADUATE PART TIME
INSTRUCTORS***

in the

*Department of Anthropology
University of Colorado, Boulder*

2017-2018

Manual of Best Practices
for Teaching Assistants &
Graduate Part Time Instructors

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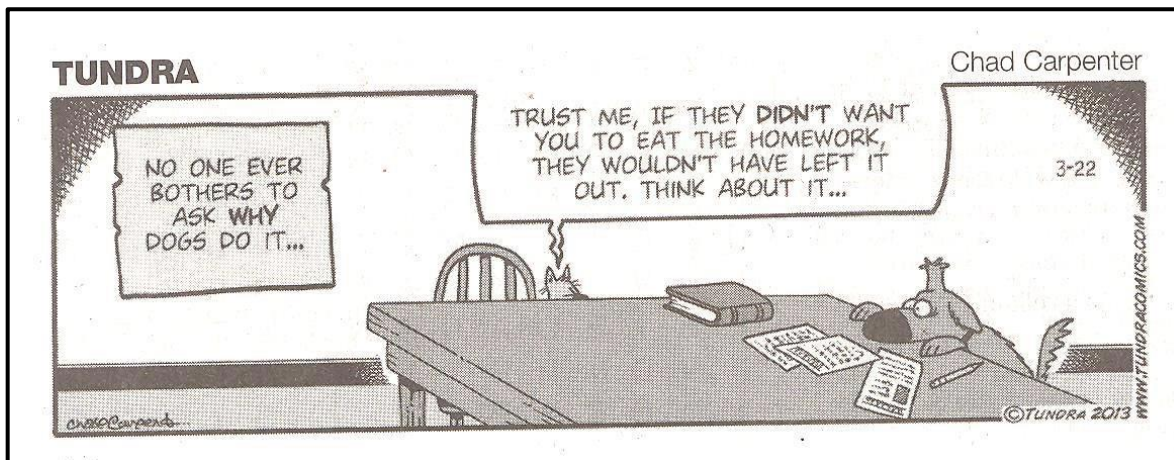
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**BEFORE YOU BEGIN: CU GRAD SCHOOL & ANTHROPOLOGY DEPARTMENT
REQUIREMENTS for TEACHING APPOINTMENTS**

Pre-appointment Graduate Teacher Program

Before a graduate student may begin a Teaching Assistantship or Graduate Part Time Instructorship (GPTI), she or he must complete workshops on Discrimination and Harassment, CU Honor Code Policy, and a workshop on learning styles and/or teaching styles. For calendar and details, please see the Graduate Teacher Program website <http://www.colorado.edu/gtp/>

- TA's should be proactive and show courtesy to their faculty supervisor by contacting him/her well in advance of their assignment. This will promote a mutually-beneficial teaching relationship.
- International students please note special GTP workshops for those new to the educational setting in the United States.

Concurrent Program

All TAs and GPTIs who teach in front of a class are required to:

1. Attend at least one general workshop in teaching skill development offered by the University Graduate Teacher Program (1.5 to 2 hours)
2. Be observed while teaching by their faculty supervisors (i.e. Instructor of Record) at least once every semester that they teach. GPTIs should consult with the department Chair.
3. Discuss their teaching with their faculty supervisor at least once every semester.

Additional Program Guidelines

1. Participation in the University Graduate Teacher Program will be taken into account when equally qualified applicants for departmental funding are considered. Participation, however, does not guarantee a GPTI or TA position.
2. Students receiving a TA or GPTI appointment who *do not* complete *all required* teaching program elements will receive lowest priority consideration for future **teaching** positions and/or may have current appointments reassigned to other qualified students who have completed the requirements.
3. Any graduate student who is interested in learning to teach is encouraged to participate in the University Graduate Teacher Program.

GUIDELINES & ADVICE FOR TAs—THE BASICS

TA appointments provide opportunities to:

- Acquire practical skills as a teacher
- Grow as a scholar through the challenge of teaching
- Observe and model a variety of different teaching styles
- Interact with students and become aware of their ideas and experiences
- Share your own academic enthusiasm and passion for knowledge

TA-ships come in different shapes and sizes:

TAs in lecture-only courses typically do the following:

- Assist the professor to gather, copy, and distribute course materials
- Provide technical & AV support for lectures
- Hold regular office hours to meet with students
- Occasionally give guest lectures at the invitation of the professor
- Assist to prepare, and to grade, course exams & assignments
- Assist to compile and submit final grades

TAs in courses with recitation or lab sections typically do the following:

- All of the above, plus
- Individually teach one or more weekly recitation or lab sections
- Coordinate their teaching with other TAs in the same course
- Attend weekly TA staff meetings with the professor

Professional standards for TA performance include:

- Professional self-presentation in dress and demeanor
- Professional email and verbal communication with students
- Professional work ethic and prompt completion of tasks
- Conscientious preparation for class, including doing the readings
- Punctuality in meeting classes and keeping student appointments
- Consistency and academic rigor in grading student assignments
- Teamwork & coordination with the professor and with other TAs

Normal expectations for TA performance include:

- Supporting the course plan and teaching philosophy of the professor
- Clarifying and performing any course-specific TA responsibilities
- Holding regular office hours and answering student questions
- Attending all course lectures and taking notes

Best practices for TA performance include:

- Working closely with professor and with other TAs
- Sharing ideas and suggestions for improving the course
- Devising ways to link recitation activities with lectures & readings
- Developing interpersonal skills in leading student discussions
- Being candid with students if you don't know the answer
- Relaying student feedback to the professor
- Being sensitive to individual student concerns and problems
- Returning student assignments and exams promptly
- Arranging group review sessions before exams and finals.

Evaluation of TA performance:

- Is done for all Instructors-of-Record (including recitation TAs, Lab TAs, etc.) at the University of Colorado via a Faculty Course Questionnaire (**FCQ**) administered during the final weeks of the term. Results are reported to the department administrators and to the instructor.
- Is done every semester by supervising faculty member of each TA in the Department of Anthropology.
- Is reviewed by the entire faculty every May (first year students in both December and May)
- May result in discontinuance of TA support for substandard performance
"Your employment contract is subject to termination by either party to such contract at any time during its term, and you shall be deemed to be an employee-at-will."
--from the University of Colorado Graduate Student Appointment Manual

The most successful TAs:

- Do not panic
- Ask for help
- Share ideas
- Take it seriously
- And still have fun

TEACHING ASSISTANT GUIDE ANTHROPOLOGY DEPARTMENT

**Michelle Sauter
Graduate Director 2010-2013**

Adapted, in part, from The University of Colorado at Boulder Graduate Teacher Program International TA Manual: A Problem-based Approach, Fall 2006.

Allocation of Department Funds (from the Anthropology Graduate Handbook)

Students in good standing are eligible to receive department funding. Although it is the department's goal to provide funding and teaching experience for all of its students, we cannot guarantee support for any individual student because these resources are limited.

Department funds are limited almost entirely to Teaching Assistants (TAs) who assist faculty in classes and/or teach recitation sections or labs, and graders, who are responsible only for grading exams and assignments. Students who accept TA positions should be aware that these positions require a considerable amount of effort. They may want to consider taking less than a full course load (9 credits) if they accept a TA position, even though this may delay their progress through the program. We expect that any student who is qualified to enter our graduate program is qualified to fill any of these positions, and available positions within the department (with the exception of the classes noted below) will not necessarily be awarded to students in the subdiscipline in which a class is taught. The classes that require special technical or other knowledge are:

Anthropology 2030 and 2040 (Laboratory in Biological Anthropology)
Anthropology 2210 (Laboratory in Archaeology)
Anthropology 4000/5000 (Quantitative Methods in Anthropology)
Anthropology 5350 (Archaeological Field and Laboratory Research)

The faculty who are responsible for these classes will specify a series of steps which graduate students can take in order to demonstrate that they are qualified to teach these classes. In most cases, TA and grader positions are awarded first to students in the PhD program. Students in the MA program receive support only after all PhD students have received awards or declined an offer. Exceptions to this policy may be made in order to

- (1) recruit new students, or
- (2) ensure that TAs in certain classes have the special knowledge required to teach those classes.

The allocation of TA and grader positions is made by the Graduate Committee with input from the faculty in the subdisciplines. The factors taken into consideration in the allocation of funds include:

- 1) Status in the program (PhD students are given preference).
- 2) Special knowledge requirements of certain classes.
- 3) Overall quality of graduate work and progress toward degree (see below).
- 4) Faculty evaluations of performance in previous TA and grader positions (written evaluations are completed each semester).
- 5) The maximum number of TA/RA appointments is 4 semesters for MA students and then an additional 6 semesters for students entering the PhD program, unless granted an exception by the Graduate Committee. This limit excludes summer classes.
- 6) Participation in the Anthropology Graduate Teacher Program (see below).

The department occasionally has GPTI (Graduate Part Time Instructor) positions available. A GPTI is

responsible for teaching a specific course, generally to replace a regular faculty member on leave. The allocation of GPTI positions is made by the department Chair in consultation with the faculty. Because the department has an obligation to the undergraduates enrolled in the course, the most important criteria in awarding GPTI positions are numbers 2, 3, and 6 above, as well as previous teaching experience.

To apply for TA positions, students should complete an application form. The department normally requests applications twice a year, in the late Spring and late Fall terms. However, applications for TA positions in the Field School and summer classes may be requested earlier in the academic year. Applications for GPTI positions are requested throughout the year as these positions become available. Students interested in TA positions in the courses requiring special knowledge listed above, should request that the faculty member responsible for the course provide written support of their application, either on the application form or in a letter to the Graduate Committee.

All students who accept GPTI or TA appointments are required to participate in the Anthropology Graduate Teacher Program. This program is part of the campus-wide Graduate Teaching Program that, among other things, can provide formal certification in teaching to interested graduate students. Information on this program can be obtained through the Anthropology Department Office.

The Importance of Being a TA/GPTI

To the Department

- TAs provide vital assistance to instructors or professors in basic teaching duties, specifically leading recitations and/or labs, and serving as a liaison between faculty and students.
- The TA's role as recitation leader or lab facilitator is extremely important, because TAs encounter students at the introductory level and are their first personal contact with their discipline. The experience that the students have with the TA may determine whether or not they develop enough interest in the discipline and pursue it further in future courses.
- Serving as a TA is a good way to learn how the TA's department specifically and the university at large work.
- GPTIs on the other hand supplement the faculty by actually serving as instructors of record usually for lower level undergraduate courses. When assigned to teach large classes, teaching assistants may be assigned to GPTIs or faculty to assist them with running recitation sessions, facilitating labs, and grading exams. As such they achieve experience in and the responsibility of all aspects of teaching.

To Undergraduate Students

Many undergraduate students spend their first two years in large lecture classes.

TAs, have direct contact with students via recitations or labs and by holding office hours. The time spent interacting with undergraduate students plays a large part in determining how they view the entire academic process. Interactions between TAs/GPTIs and undergraduate students may be the deciding factor in the latter's choosing a major and, thus, a career path. This shows that TAs/GPTIs can have a profound impact in the future life of undergraduate students.

To the University

Well-trained TAs and GPTIs who perform their tasks effectively can contribute to improving the quality of undergraduate education at CU-Boulder. This is also a very important factor in retaining a diverse and enthusiastic body of students.

For Professional Development

An assistantship or instructorship provides a training ground where graduate students learn to teach, as well as learning about how the department and the university as a whole function. TAing for various professors allows for personal contact with those who are active in their field, and may be helpful in the subsequent job search. Even if a teaching career may not be what you desire, you will gain valuable skills in time management and human relations which are applicable to other aspects of life. There is, of course, an immediate monetary benefit in the form of a tuition waiver and a monthly salary, which helps the pursuit of graduate degrees at CU-Boulder.

Types of Teaching Assistants

GPTI: Graduate Part-Time Instructors supplement the faculty by actually serving as instructors of record usually for lower level undergraduate courses. When assigned to teach large classes, teaching assistants may be assigned to GPTIs. In our department the GPTI are responsible for their own syllabi, course requirements, midterms, and final exams. However, they should always develop their syllabi to fit common expectations for an established course. A good way to do this is to ask faculty who commonly teach the course to provide them with a copy of their syllabus.

Recitation Section TA: The TA is responsible for a recitation section within a large lecture course. The lecture is given by a faculty member (the instructor of record); occasionally there might be an opportunity for a TA to give a lecture as well. The lecture class is split into small recitation sections of 20-30 students who meet once a week to discuss and clarify lecture topics or go over homework problems.

Lab Section TA: The TA is responsible for a section of a laboratory class. There is a faculty of record, but it is the TA who assists students with experiments and other hands-on assignments, does all of the grading and assigns student grades.

Graduate Assistant [Grader TA]: This position is not directly involved in instruction. The 'GA' is tasked primarily with grading exams and assignments but will be assigned more duties than a grader paid by-the-hour. [The Graduate School currently refers to GAs under the umbrella label 'TA', so to avoid confusion, the Department of Anthropology refers to these as 'Grader TAs'.]

Understanding your Role as a TA

The department of Anthropology at CU is lucky in that we have a variety of excellent teacher-scholars. Pedagogy, the art and science of teaching, is also practiced a variety of ways and no two faculty will probably teach their classes in the same manner. As such, it is important to understand the needs and requirements for each faculty as you provide your services as teaching assistants. One of the best ways to be sure you are meeting the needs of the faculty you are assigned to is to have a formal contract or agreement regarding your expected duties. Many faculty may have such contracts that make your duties explicit. Others may not. Either way it is extremely important that you both have a clear understanding of these expectations right from the start. If the faculty does not have a particular list of duties, ask them! This can include the following:

- What are the goals of the course? (Reviewing the syllabus and text will also help TAs grasp the content and scope of the course. Reviewing old exams the professor used in previous courses will help them delineate the importance attached to the various themes and topics to be covered in the course.)
- How many class sessions (lectures) am I required to attend? All of them?
- Will I be required to present any of the lectures?

- What are my grading responsibilities? How much time will grading take?
- Will I be expected to construct exams or contribute exam questions for the midterm and final exam?
- Should I develop a section syllabus?
- Who is responsible for conducting review sessions?
- How many office hours am I required to hold?
- How much freedom will I have in designing/teaching my own recitations (highly structured with much supervision from the professor or free-form without much supervision)?
- What sort of teaching methods should I employ in recitations? Should I ask questions and lead discussion? Should I lecture and re-teach what the professor or instructor taught? Should I use a study guide to lead my recitations? Should I focus on issues that I felt were unclear during lectures or in the assigned reading? Should I get students to work in pairs or in small groups? What about employing debates, roleplays, and other more active and interactive methods of learning? Should I give them a quiz during every recitation?
- How closely should I coordinate what I offer in recitations with that of the other TAs assigned for the same course? How uniform should our content and approach be?
- Are students required to come to recitation? How much of their grade will attending and participating in recitation count for?
- How do you want me to handle argumentative or disruptive students?
- How should I handle suspected or clear-cut cases of cheating on exams, assignments, or projects? How does the Honor Code apply to recitations?
- What should I do if I have a student who seems to have personal (i.e. psychological, emotional, or family) problems?
- Will a faculty member ever observe my recitation?
- What should I do and to whom should I speak if something comes up (an illness, or an emergency) and I am unable to conduct my recitation?
- Will you be expected to solve problems and answer questions about the lecture in sections?

TAs for Recitations:

Recitations are usually held for one hour, once a week for 20-40 students in a class.

Graduate students, faculty and sometimes advanced undergraduates may lead recitation sections. Individual faculty will inform you regarding what is entailed but methods used in recitations may include:

1. summarizing the main lecture,
2. recapitulating difficult issues and concepts covered during lecture,
3. answering students' questions,
4. leading discussions based on lecture and assigned readings,
5. leading small group problem solving,

6. organizing pair work or pair discussions,
7. solving problems on the board,
8. setting up student debates,
9. guiding student presentations,
10. helping students give project presentations,
11. giving quizzes,
12. going over answers to exams,
13. facilitating the preparation of drafts of student papers,
14. giving feedback sessions on student works
15. leading review sessions for exams, or
16. having guest speakers, and so on.

When using any of these methods, TAs need to be capable of providing essential help to their students, and must have a good understanding and mastery of their roles as TAs.

TAs for Labs:

TAs lead labs, grade student papers, and hold office hours. In some cases, what the TAs have to do may be decided in advance by the professor or instructor, while in other cases TAs may be given more freedom to run their recitations or labs in ways of their choosing.

TAs for recitations and courses should attend all lectures given by their faculty mentor and be familiar with the material being presented. They should obtain all handouts and take notes as needed so they may help to answer specific questions students may have later during recitation or office hours.

GPTIs' Basic Roles

As an instructor of record (this means being responsible for the course and students' final grades), Graduate Part-Time Instructors prepare for and conduct classes (by lecture, discussion, demonstration, and/or whatever method is best suited to the course content). They keep all course records and turn in final grades to the Registrar at the end of the semester. As an instructor of record for large classes, GPTIs supervise TAs assigned to their course. They hold regular meetings with the TAs and hand out or clearly communicate their expectations as would any faculty member.

- GPTIs may also grade assignments, or share or supervise this task with TAs.
- GPTIs design tests with or without their TAs' assistance.
- GPTIs hold consistent office hours each week, and allow students the opportunity to arrange an appointment at other times when necessary.
- GPTIs keep all course records and turn in their final grades to the Registrar at the end of the semester.
- GPTIs do not evaluate their peers. This is the responsibility of supervising faculty and/or the Graduate Director.

Absences and Illnesses

If for any reason TAs or GPTIs are unable to perform assigned duties on a particular day, they should telephone the department chair, department administrative assistant, or graduate director immediately. A class may never be canceled without prior notice or approval. If a substitute is asked to cover the class being taught by a GPTI, the person must be approved by the chair, and in the case of a TA by the professor or lead instructor. The bottom line is that students have paid for instructional time, and graduate student teachers as well as faculty must meet this commitment.

University Requirements

Note that all employed graduate students, whether or not they are pursuing Graduate Teacher Certification, are required to attend a session on CU's Sexual Harassment Policy at the GTP Fall Intensive or later. Please see the GTP web site (<http://www.colorado.edu/gtp/>) for dates. A record of your attendance will be noted on your employer record in Human Resources.

The Dual Role of Graduate Students and TAs/GPTIs

Becoming a TA/GPTI presents new challenges for the graduate student in general and for international graduate students in particular. The dual challenge of delivering instruction to students (with backgrounds and expectations different from one's own) and making progress toward achieving one's advanced degree requires good time management and a high degree of professionalism. Course preparation, office hours, and grading need to be balanced against one's required reading, writing, and research. How this balance is achieved will be a little different for each department and for each graduate student, but there are many shared issues and experiences. It might be worthwhile to ask the advice of more advanced students who have successfully managed their responsibilities for teaching and who are making adequate progress toward completion of their degree.

Rapport with students

As a liaison between faculty and undergraduate students, TAs are in constant contact with undergraduates both in recitations and office hours throughout the semester. Although it is important that they remain open and approachable to students, appropriate balance between closeness with students and reserve must be established. In other words, personal relationships with students should not compromise TAs' and GPTIs' roles.

Evaluation by the Anthropology Department

Our department has recently revised the formal evaluation of our teaching assistants. THE TA OBSERVATION AND PERFORMANCE RATING FORMS has a number of formats, some with itemized criteria, some which allow the faculty of record to provide a narrative, one which allows classroom observation, or a combination of the above. These are public documents and each TA will be provided with a copy of their own evaluation. The role of this document is not punitive, but rather to help faculty mentor you in your development as a teacher, to note strengths and weaknesses and to provide a way for the graduate committee to assess your performance as our Teaching Assistants. (Note: GPTIs are not defined as faculty and should not evaluate their peers.)

Faculty Course Questionnaires (**FCQs**), which the University distributes in all course sections near the end of the semester, have proven to be a less reliable instrument for evaluating our TAs and are consulted only in special cases.

PRACTICAL ADVICE

Advice concerning grades

- Each professor handles his or her grading policy a bit differently. Be sure to check grading procedures with individual professors at the beginning of the semester.
- It is usually a good idea to mention problems that arise, particularly over grade disputes, to the other TAs you are working with, as well as the professor for whom you are a TA. This has the double

benefit of advising them as to the kinds of problems that they may encounter, while at the same time ensuring that you have not made an error.

- Many professors will sit down with their TAs to correct a few exams, so as to determine how each question will be scored and to make sure that all those who are grading are (roughly) doing so using the same scale. Even so, problematic answers to test questions are bound to arise; for example, where it is unclear how much partial credit a given answer should receive. To a certain extent, each TA must use his or her own judgment. Still, it is often a good idea to send out an e-mail to the other TAs for the class as well as to the professor asking how a particular answer should be scored (and perhaps suggesting an answer to this question).

When you pass out exams and/or papers, announce your policies concerning questions on grades to the students. Here are a few policies you might want to adopt:

- Do not take questions on grades the day you distribute an exam or paper. There are almost always a few students who are disappointed or angry about the grade they have received, and it is best to let them calm down before speaking with them about their grade. Instead, remind them of your office hours, and invite them to come see you then to discuss any questions they may have.
- Remind your students that they can appeal the grade or score you have given them to the professor for whom you are a TA. However, ask them to discuss the grade with you first. You may have made an error, or you may change your mind as to what score to assign a student. Should you meet with a student, explain your reasons for giving the student the score you did a couple of times, and if he or she continues to argue with you, then you should bring the conversation to a close by advising the student to meet with the professor.
- Right after you collect a student's exam/paper it's a good idea to record the fact that the student has turned it in. This way, if you lose students' work you'll know it.
- Keep at least two copies of your students' grades for a class, in case (for example) the thumb drive/computer you have saved their grades on should disappear or malfunction. Also, be sure to record your students' grades before you return their exams to them. Recollecting exams is annoying; when some of your students have thrown them out, it can become a serious problem.
- Remember, unless he or she expressly states otherwise, final decisions on grades are the professor's.

Meeting and Corresponding with Students

- Remind your students of your office hours, especially before exams or papers. Also, be prepared to have students who cannot make your office hours. Meetings with such students should be arranged via e-mail.
- You should leave your door open when meeting with a student in your office. This can greatly reduce the possibility of uncomfortable, and potentially litigious, situations.
- Save all of the e-mails your students send you. This can be done by setting up a folder in your e-mail account, with the name of your class as the title. Old messages can be helpful in many ways, not least when students complain that they have not been able to contact you.

Helping Students with Problems Outside of the Class

On occasion, your students may come to you with problems outside the scope of the class. Such problems may include anything from trouble with some other class, or picking a major, to conflicts with family members, financial difficulties, psychological conditions such as depression or eating disorders, and even sexual violence. The University of Colorado has a number of offices set up to address these problems, and you may wish to help your students contact these offices.

Student Classroom and Course-Related Behavior

While we hope your TA experience is positive in developing your skills as an instructor, conflicts can arise between students and the TA. This is unfortunate, but you should be prepared and know what to do.

As noted above, if you cannot resolve a student's issue about grades you should have them meet and

discuss this with the instructor of record. If you are a GPTI you have the ultimate authority regarding grades, but you should also feel free to consult with the Graduate Director.

AT NO POINT IS AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR TOWARDS YOU TO BE TOLERATED.

If a student becomes either physically or verbally aggressive you should immediately leave the room, and either contact someone at the front desk in the Anthropology Office or call the Campus Police.

Student Resources and Related Links on the Grad School website:
<http://www.colorado.edu/graduateschool/campus-resources>

University of Colorado Police Department

1050 Regent Drive
303-492-6666 (non-emergencies, for emergencies dial 911)
<http://www.colorado.edu/police>

Maintains a full-service police department. Officers, who are state certified, respond to reports of criminal acts and emergencies both on and off campus.

There is a code of student conduct at CU that requires students to maintain respectful behavior and the University can and will carry out punitive measures towards students who do not follow these codes. More specifically, the University of Colorado has a policy about student classroom and course-related behavior. For questions and or guidance on these issues or to file a complaint, go to:

Office of Student Conduct

<http://www.colorado.edu/studentaffairs/studentconduct/>

Difficulties with the Professor

Establishing clear and straightforward communication is extremely important and many problems are often simply the result of miscommunication. However, if any conflict between you and the professor for whom you are a TA arise such that you believe the resolution requires outside assistance, you can contact the Ombuds Office. The Ombuds Office assists students, faculty, and staff in resolving complaints or disputes with other individuals, offices, or departments within the university.

Ombuds Office

Center for Community N440
303-492-5077
<http://www.colorado.edu/ombuds/>

The Ombuds Office maintains impartiality and confidentiality in working with individuals.

More Tips for TAs and GPTIs

The Syllabus

TAs may decide to develop a recitation syllabus, distribute it and explain it to their recitation class. Everyone in class should have a course syllabus and understand the important points as well. Syllabi should focus on the following:

- a) Contact information (mainly name, e-mail address, office & office hours)
- b) Required (and optional if any) texts and materials
- c) Attendance policy
- d) Assignments – number and type of, and due dates
- e) Preferred format of written work
- f) Exam dates
- g) Make-up exam and assignment policies
- h) Grading and late work policies
- i) Extra credit policy (if applicable)
- j) Extra help and/or tutoring options (if any)
- k) Emergency policy (what constitutes an emergency and what to do)
- l) Cell phone policies (e.g., turning off the ringer while in class)
- m) Students' personal needs such as disability support and accommodation (look for handouts and the university emails regarding diversity statement on the syllabus)

Credibility

Students will be watching TAs and GPTIs closely to gauge their professionalism and qualifications to be an instructor. If TAs' mastery of the subject matter is not visible, their overall control of the class might be jeopardized. TAs need to model and expect professional behaviors: preparedness, punctuality, enthusiasm for the subject, good organization, neatness of written work, and respect for all people and viewpoints.

Communicating in and Outside of Class

- Students often neglect to learn their instructors' names. TAs can solve this problem by writing their name on the board for the first several sessions. Also, be clear about how instructors want to be addressed (e.g. first name or last name). At CU-Boulder as in many other universities in the US, it seems customary for TAs to be addressed with their first names, although this might be contrary to the cultures from which many international students come.
- TAs can take roll during the first several weeks of class to learn students' names. After that, if attendance is required an attendance sheet can be passed around for students to sign with the date written at the top. This can be very helpful to prove the number of times students attended the recitation.
- Email is a great way for students to ask TAs questions and get a quick response. TAs should keep up with their messages. Also, communications with students should not be deleted until after the semester has ended. TAs may need to prove something they or any of their students said; saved messages keep record of their interactions. If necessary, crucial interactions can be printed and filed, since some students may come back for clarification of their grades after the semester is over.

Handling Assignments and Grading

- If possible, TAs should have a stapler available when students hand in assignments and tests because many forget to staple their work together. Carrying some paper clips to hold loose papers together is also useful.

- It helps to use a red or colored pen for grading. Students appreciate brief comments on what is done well in addition to where improvement could be made rather than simple grades or points without justification.

- It is against university policy to return papers or tests by leaving them in a public place; they should be handed back in class.

- TAs should return any graded papers toward the end of a recitation or class to avoid causing students to be distracted from the planned lesson for the day. TAs should give some group feedback (such as grade range, their overall satisfaction with the students' performance and what they would like their students to do better in the future, including clarifying concepts that seemed to trip up many students).

Thoughts for Faculty [and TAs] on Turnitin.com [and plagiarism]

CU has joined a growing number of colleges and universities that use <http://Turnitin.com>. *Turnitin* works by comparing an uploaded paper to the web sites, scholarly articles available online, and all previously uploaded papers. It provides a report that highlights similarities and gives an overall numerical "originality score." *Turnitin* should be looked upon as an opportunity for faculty and students to partake in CU's continuing pursuit of academic excellence. We hope members of the CU community view *Turnitin* as a beneficial way to maintain academic integrity. In a perfect world, no one would need a service like this; but until then, we hope *Turnitin* will prove a useful tool for students and professors. Toward that end, we propose two principles:

First, Integrity should be everyone's concern in every class:

- *Turnitin* should help maintain an atmosphere of trust and honesty in the classroom, not just catch misconduct.
- We hope professors who use *Turnitin* will announce that they are doing so. Reasonable steps will be taken to help students understand the rules of writing and citing.
- We hope professors will give students the chance to submit their papers to *Turnitin* whenever it is reasonable.
- Personally identifiable student information should not be included in papers submitted to *Turnitin*.

Second, *Turnitin* should be used fairly and appropriately:

- *Turnitin* should be used consistently - for example, for all papers or according to a random schedule - and that students will not be singled out except where there is reasonable cause to do so.
- Results from *Turnitin* should be interpreted carefully. Several minor coincidences of word usage should not be labeled as plagiarism.

Adapted from The University of Oklahoma's website.
<http://www.ou.edu/honorcouncil/>

Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have about academic ethics and integrity.

Best, Vincent
Vincent.McGuire@Colorado.edu
303-735-3019

[About CU](#) > [Policies](#) > Student Classroom and Course-Related Behavior

Student Classroom and Course-Related Behavior

Introduction

Students and faculty each have responsibility for maintaining an appropriate learning environment. Students who fail to adhere to behavioral standards may be subject to discipline. Faculty have the professional responsibility to treat students with understanding, dignity and respect, to guide classroom discussion and to set reasonable limits on the manner in which students express opinions.

Disruptive students in the academic setting hinder the educational process. Although disruptive student conduct is already prohibited by regent Laws and the Students' Rights and Responsibilities Regarding Standards of Conduct, the purpose of this policy is to clarify what constitutes disruptive behavior in the academic setting; what actions faculty and relevant Assistant/Associate Dean's offices may take in response to disruptive conduct; and the authority of the Office of Judicial Affairs to initiate disciplinary proceedings against students for disruptive conduct.

What Constitutes Disruption?

"Disruption," as applied to the academic setting, means behavior that a reasonable faculty member would view as interfering with normal academic functions. Examples include, but are not limited to: persistently speaking without being recognized or interrupting other speakers; behavior that distracts the class from the subject matter or discussion; or in extreme cases, physical threats, harassing behavior or personal insults, or refusal to comply with faculty direction.

Civil expression of disagreement with the course instructor, during times when the instructor permits discussion, is not in itself disruptive behavior and is not prohibited.

Some disruptive students may have emotional or mental disorders. Although such students may be considered disabled and are protected under the Rehabilitation Act/ADA, they are held to the same standards of conduct as any student.

Policy

- Students are required to adhere to the behavior standards listed in the Rights and Responsibilities Regarding Standards of Conduct and to refrain from disrupting classes and other academic settings.
- If a student is disruptive, the faculty member and/or the relevant Assistant/Associate Dean's office may ask the student to stop the disruptive behavior and warn the student that such disruptive behavior can result in academic or disciplinary action.
- A faculty member is authorized to ask a student to leave the classroom or other academic site if the faculty member deems it necessary. If the faculty member does this, s/he shall file a Disruptive Classroom Incident Report with the Office of Judicial Affairs and the Assistant/Associate Dean of the College or Department Chair (as determined by the College) within 24 hours. The Office of Judicial Affairs shall provide the student with a copy of the report.

- A faculty member may also exclude the student from the classroom or other academic area pending resolution of the matter by: (1) informing the student of the exclusion, (2) informing the student of his/her rights to request an expedited review of the exclusion, and (3) by immediately referring the matter to the Office of Judicial Affairs by submitting the Disruptive Classroom Incident Report and informing the relevant Assistant/Associate Dean of the College. If such exclusion occurs, and if the student requests a review, the Office of Judicial Affairs shall review the exclusion within three business days of the date the student requests the review.
- Nothing in this policy prohibits an immediate call to the University of Colorado Police or referral of the matter to another policy office, as determined to be appropriate by the classroom instructor.

Possible Sanctions

Authority of Instructor and Relevant Assistant/Associate Dean's Office

- Warning
- Exclusion from the instructor's classroom or academic area, pending expedited review by Judicial Affairs
- Academic sanction, if course participation is a component of the final grade and is indicated in the course syllabus

Authority of the Office of Judicial Affairs

- Warning
- Educational Sanctions, such as classes, papers or community service
- Disciplinary Probation
- Suspension
- Expulsion
- Exclusion from any part of or all of campus

Authority of the Chancellor or Vice Chancellor

- Summary Suspension
- Exclusion from any part of or all of campus

Documentation

Instructors should be aware that notes of the dates, times, witnesses and details of the incidents of disruption, and the impact of the disruption on those present, may be important in any future proceedings which may be necessary. Referrals to the Office of Judicial Affairs require written documentation containing factual and descriptive information. The student is entitled to see this documentation.

Resources

- University of Colorado Police
 - Emergency 911
 - Non-emergency 492-6666
- Counseling 492-6766

- Cultural Unity Center 492-5667
- Disability Services 492-8671
- Judicial Affairs 492-5550
- Ombuds Office 492-5077
- Victim Assistance 492-8855
- University Counsel 492-7481
- Assistant/Associate Dean's offices in relevant schools and colleges

Disruptive Classroom Incident Report

The Disruptive Classroom Incident Report shall contain the following information:

- Date of Report:
- Student's Name:
- ID#:
- Instructor's Name:
- Instructor's Phone Number:
- Instructor's E-Mail:
- Title of Course, Course Number and Section:
- Date/Time/Location of Incident:
- Attach a detailed summary of the incident, including a description of the disruptive behavior.
- Witnesses:
- Action, if any, taken by the instructor (e.g. student warned, asked to leave the class, etc.):
- What is your recommended course of action and reasons for this recommendation?
- Instructor's Signature:

This campus policy has been reviewed and approved by the CU-Boulder Provost, Dean's Council and Boulder Faculty Assembly.

Date: October 18, 2001

Approved by: Richard L. Byyny, Chancellor

Authors: Offices of Judicial Affairs, Undergraduate Education, Diversity & Equity, Faculty Affairs

13 Things I Wish I Knew Before I Started Teaching

Compiled 2010 by Michaela Howells

Wise words from tried and true graduate teachers

1.) Mastering a subject and knowing how to communicate that mastery are two different things. Seek out new ways to talk about topics you already understand well. Different students learn in different ways; strive to reach out to all of them. **(Mark, Archaeology)**

2.) Learn everyone's name and use it. Students like to know they are not just an ID number **(Nicole, Cultural Anthropology)**

3.) It is okay to make mistakes. This was something I had been so afraid to do in front of students. In fact, making and admitting to your own mistakes provides for a better learning environment. If you do not know the answer to a question, say so. If you say something confusing or incorrect, bring it into the open and deal with issues as a class, and as a teacher. The old adage, "to err is human" rings true, and simply admitting to mistakes in the classroom can create a fun and interested atmosphere, and strong connections between you and the students. **(Larry, Biological Anthropology)**

4.) Prepare for recitation discussion but be flexible: As a TA you must prepare your notes ahead of time so as to know what you are going to do in a class that day. However, sometimes the discussion can veer off track and go in the direction the students want to go. It is important to control the class and follow your notes, but be flexible: give students a chance to explore different topics, differing view points, and a chance to ask questions. It is the TA's job to be able to fine tune the class to the needs of students. **(Magda, Cultural Anthropology)**

5.) I have found that students are very appreciative when an instructor (or professor) stops class to address a student that is behaving poorly. If a student is behaving in a manner to disrupt your lecture, chances are they are disrupting the learning process of their fellow students. On the first day, I tell them if they plan to engage in these activities that can also plan to be called out publicly. Lastly, I have had an absolute blast teaching every course here at CU-Boulder. Most of the students are very committed to learning. Unfortunately some are not. Remember that you're here to get experience as a professor and professional. **(James, Biological Anthropology)**

6.) Use faculty as a resource not only for ideas on how to present a difficult concept/topic but also for troubleshooting classroom management issues. They have heard and seen it all and will usually have ideas on how to handle potentially difficult situations. **(Dana, Biological Anthropology)**

7.) Learn to use technology in the classroom early in your career. This applies to powerpoint/smart room techniques as well as using CULearn to post your syllabus, grades, lecture notes, handouts, etc. ITS offers 2 hour seminars to get you up to speed with this medium. I would say all students are using this in their classes and expect instructors to be up to date on this mode of communicating and teaching with students. **(Dana, Biological Anthropology)**

8.) First off, relax. You will quickly learn that you do not have to know EVERYTHING to be an effective teacher. Secondly, there are some students who will sleep no matter how great your lecture is! I used to get very nervous when I saw a student starting to doze off. Then I attended a lecture of one of the most dynamic, engaging, and brilliant professors I have ever met and noticed more than one student fast asleep. Bottom line, don't take it personally, be prepared, and remember to include the parts of that subject that first engaged and inspired you. **(Christine, Archaeology)**

9.) First, your teaching style will evolve, and there is no one correct teaching style. Be comfortable with yourself, and flexible. Each classroom is different, and it is important to teach to the style of the students. **(Larry, Biological Anthropology)**

10.) Don't refer to your students as kids/children--even when you are speaking with other TAs or graduate students. It is degrading and reinforces power differentials. They are adults just as you are and deserve respect. **(Nicole, Cultural Anthropology)**

11.) Take the time to study, learn from, and talk with other TA's and professors in your classes. Time passes quickly, and before long you will be teaching your own lecture courses. Take the time now to talk with others about teaching, about the challenges, and take the time in your own classes to watch your professors and learn from their experience. The students and classroom will teach you to be the best teacher, but there is no need to reinvent the wheel. Seize the opportunity to learn from other great teachers. **(Larry, Biological Anthropology)**

12.) Set some ground rules the first day of class. Make it perfectly clear that students they should not be late consistently. If you do this, the students will approach you after class and let you know that they may be late because they must walk across campus to attend your class. I always make a mental note of this, and I don't have a problem with those that come in late due to these circumstances. Be a bit of a hard ass at first. Don't tolerate any sleeping or using cell phones in class. You can always lighten up as the semester progresses but it's difficult to get tough after you've been easy going. At least once a semester I have to stop in the middle of lecture to tell someone to quit text messaging, or talking, or what have you. It may make you feel uncomfortable to do this, but it makes the student more uncomfortable and they will stop their behavior immediately. **(James, Biological Anthropology)**

13.) Films, either in entirety or in part, are an important part of the recitation. However, it is what you show and how you show it that makes all the difference. Make sure you have time to frame, view, and discuss each film (or part of it). Without framing the films properly they can become a tool for "exotic" ogling rather than an educational experience. Make sure that you have clear goals as to the purpose of showing the chosen film: Will it help with what you are trying to teach? Will it add to the curriculum? Can you build on the information shown? **(Magda, Cultural Anthropology)**

Online Archive of Anthropology TA/GPTI Resources

One of our PhD students set up a site on *PBworks* to post syllabi, class notes, quizzes and other materials which will help you develop and implement your own classroom lectures and discussions. This is a collaborative website for the free exchange of course materials (with permission of the author, of course).

The link to the site is: cuanthropologyteachingarchive.pbworks.com (You will need to copy/paste this address into your browser.)

This will take you to a login screen. You have to be an invited member to view the site, though. Contact adam.blanford@colorado.edu for an invitation.

Teaching Difficult or Contentious Topics

Adapted (considerably) by Kate Fischer from

http://codac.uoregon.edu/files/2011/02/Teaching_Challenging_Materials_GTF_Series-3.pdf

- Embrace controversy. It helps students learn to think critically, be empathetic scholars, and consider alternative perspectives.
- Lead with the science and/or vocabulary so students have concrete terms and examples to work with before you move into abstraction. Try to avoid vague statements that can be mistaken as opinion.
- What are the controversies within the/a literature? Present multiple sides of a controversy; if the controversy is, in your mind, one-sided (e.g., evolution vs. intelligent design), you still need to consider that it may not be so clear for students. You do not want to shut them off from considering what, to them, is an alternative viewpoint.
- Having *no* opinion can seem like apathy or dishonesty to students, but there is a fine balance between presenting one's own opinion as opinion, and presenting it as the Right Answer to complex issues. That line shifts depending on the topic, the size of the classroom, the possibilities for engaged discussion, and even class personalities. Be careful of sending a message along the lines of "Once you peasants finish stumbling around, I shall show you the right way to think about this."
- To avoid the above, make sure you have created a space where students feel comfortable questioning your position (but not your authority). Also make it clear that they are entitled to their own opinions but not their own facts. Think about how these topics will be tested.
- Establish ground rules for discussion. This might be a syllabus, or the group might decide on what rules they want to enforce, what assumptions they will begin from, and what a good model for discussion what might be. For example, students might have to respectfully restate each other's statements before disagreeing, or to take turns, or avoid using stereotypes. They might decide to only make statements that they would feel comfortable saying to the person or group being discussed.
- Provide time to reflect before asking for commentary. This might involve a brief writing prompt, questions sent out the night before, group work, or silent reflection. Embrace the silence. Do not expect students to contribute a fully formed argument moments after asking a question.
- Get out of the way. Let students take the discussion in unexpected directions. At the same time, be prepared to sum up both the class discussion and the course content at the end of the session, or to redirect when students veer wildly off course or make derogatory statements.
- Encourage equal participation. Are all students contributing? Are you calling more on males than females, or letting certain groups talk longer than others? We are not always aware of our own biases. Video tape consultations can help point out inconsistencies. Other possibilities include using tokens or moving around a circle.
- Think back to your own process in understanding the topic. Perhaps you were exposed to it at an early age, or maybe you had no idea that sex was not the same as gender until you were a senior in college. Students will likewise be at different points on their familiarity with a topic, and should not be expected to display the nuanced understanding of a graduate student. Demonstrating your own struggles can also help students feel comfortable asking questions.

RESOURCES

(with apologies for links that have changed recently)

- TEP Inclusive Teaching Website <http://tep.uoregon.edu/resources/diversity/index.html>
- Managing Hot Moments in the Classroom
<http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/html/icb.topic58474/hotmoments.html>
- Teaching for Inclusion: Diversity in the Classroom <http://cfe.unc.edu/pdfs/TeachforInclusion.pdf>
- Teaching in Racially Diverse College Classrooms
<http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/html/icb.topic58474/TFTrace.html>
- Diversity/Inclusive Teaching Tips <http://www.indiana.edu/~icy/diversity.html>
- Journal of Educational Controversy <http://www.wce.wvu.edu/Resources/CEP/eJournal/>
- Guidelines for Discussion of Racial Conflict and the Language of Hate, Bias, and Discrimination
<http://www.crlt.umich.edu/publinks/racialguidelines.php>
- Sensitive Topics in the Classroom <http://teaching.berkeley.edu/sensitivetopics.html>
- Teaching in Difficult Times and in Times of National or International Stress
http://teaching.berkeley.edu/difficult_times.html
- Guidance For Instructors Concerning Class Discussions About The War In Iraq
<http://www.crlt.umich.edu/publinks/wariniraqdiscussion.php>

Teaching Generation Z

Higher Ed Online

http://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2013/01/16/essay-teaching-students-who-seem-unengaged?utm_source=VR2013MAYGSNewsletter&utm_campaign=ValMar2013&utm_medium=email

Bridging Generations—Boulder *Daily Camera*

On 'stealth fighter parents' and how CU prepares to handle them and their kids

http://www.dailycamera.com/cu-news/ci_29975628/cu-boulder-preps-handle-todays-students-and-their

How TAs and RAs are Selected

Purpose: Students should bear in mind that the University's primary purpose in employing "student faculty" is to support undergraduate education. The Department of Anthropology aspires to maximum support of its graduate students, but in reality their employment is a correlate of the University's principal goal. Limits of support are dictated by financial policies at administrative levels that are beyond departmental control.

TAs

1. **Seniority:** PhDs first, then MAs by seniority (but see limits of support below)
2. **Admissions package:** Contract in offer letter
3. **Training:**
 - Labs require prior training. 2040 labs require background in evolutionary biology. **[Right?]**
 - Recitation TAs should have background in the subdiscipline.
 - Graders have more flexibility in terms of training in the subdiscipline.
 - Teaching experience can tip the balance among new grad students.
4. **Scheduling:** Some decisions have to be made on the basis of whose schedule will accommodate the course and/or section.
5. **Performance:** Contracts state that you are an "employee at-will". Failure to meet the obligations of your contract can lead to disqualification or even dismissal. FCQ's may be consulted as one criterion of evaluation.

Limits of support and Adequate Progress

- PhD students with six semesters of support in a TA/Grader TA position (excluding semesters enrolled at MA level) will be placed on a waitlist.
- MA students with four semesters of support in a TA/Grader TA position will be placed on a waitlist. Allowances can be made for students in dual degree and academic certificate programs and those completing theses.
- Exceptions may have to be made according to department need, but the caps are intended to give everyone a fair chance at being a TA.
- TAs must meet all the requirements of good standing outlined by the Grad School.
- PhD students with six semesters of support in a TA position who have not formally presented a Preliminary Paper and/or Prospectus to their advisory committee will not be considered for a TA position.

Distribution across subdisciplines

The Department attempts to give equal distribution of TA assignments to each subdiscipline. Variations may exist when: faculty are on leave and fewer courses are being offered in their subdiscipline as a result; demand for particular classes skews the balance among subdisciplines; number of PhD students in the field skews balance of TAs available in subfield; other unforeseen circumstances.

Q & A:

Q: If there is a huge waitlist for a class, can't we create another recitation section?

A: Only if the College of Arts and Sciences has funds for another TA salary. It is totally up to the Dean.

Q: Couldn't the Department just enroll fewer grad students, so they could all be fully supported?

A: While the Department aspires to provide the best support possible for all of our graduates students it also runs the risk of not having ENOUGH grad students to avoid cancellation of seminars due to low enrollments OR to teach labs and recitations in large lectures. We aim for a quota of ~10 total new admits annually to balance these needs.

RAs

The Department divides funds from an endowment equally among the three subdisciplines.

Archaeology and Biological Anthropology then rotate those funds among their faculty so that, when their turn comes, one of them can hire a research assistant that year. Cultural Anthropology divides their portion equally among all their faculty so that all can hire hourly help every year. Some Cultural faculty may choose to 'bank' their portion for a year (if they are on leave or have funding from a grant, etc.), but the funds remain earmarked for that purpose. Additional funds for research assistants are sometimes available through a grant that has been awarded to a faculty member.

How GPTIs and Summer Instructors Are Appointed

GPTIs

Graduate Part Time Instructors are irregular appointments for which no application process is currently available. GPTI's are appointed by the Chair to replace faculty on sabbatical, medical leave, administrative appointments, and for other special circumstances. Selections are made in consultation with the faculty member on leave and preference is given to qualified PhD candidates.

SUMMER COURSE INSTRUCTORS

Summer courses are administered by Continuing Education and are entirely enrollment-driven. Opportunities to offer a course are announced to faculty and grad students in early Fall.

