

Math 591 Teaching Seminar Class Policy
Fall 2018

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[Due to privacy issues, I will only respond to emails from students using their UL Lafayette email address.]

Office Hours: MW 10:30 - 11:45, M 2:30-3:30, T 10:45 - 11:50, R 3:30-4:30 or by appointment

Rumor has it that Alexander the Great, asked his teacher Menaechmus, a Greek mathematician, to show him an easy way to learn geometry. Is there, he asked, an easy way to learn geometry for royalty? Menaechmus replied, "There is no royal road to geometry."

"Alas, TAs, there is no royal road to becoming a good teacher." But you can learn how to teach and develop your own teaching philosophy and style.

Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) are salaried student employees (as determined by Human Resources) who receive a tuition waiver and whose job duties consist primarily of direct involvement in classroom or laboratory instruction. The duties are performed under the supervision of faculty. The University also requires that a GTA's teaching assignment be in his/her own field of study or one that is closely related. Appointment and reappointment of GTAs is contingent upon satisfactory progress toward a graduate degree, as determined by the Graduate School, and acceptable discharge of assistantship duties; an assistantship may be revoked at any time these conditions are not met.

Course Description: This course is designed for first time UL Lafayette Mathematics

Teaching Assistants. The Mathematics Department has on file in the Graduate School a plan for the supervision of graduate assistants who are assigned teaching responsibilities. These plans include such items as orientation and in-service training, preparation of syllabi, review of examinations and grade assignments, classroom visitation, and assistantship evaluation. "A teaching assistant is a registered graduate student in full-time residence, chosen for . . . excellent scholarship and for . . . promise as a teacher, serving under the supervision of a regular faculty member." Graduate students deserve the full support of the departments that count on their teaching and of the faculty who educate them as future mathematicians, while working with them as they prepare to (perhaps) enter the teaching profession. This seminar will help provide full ongoing support, training, supervision, and evaluation of TAs to assure effective teaching. Graduate teaching assistants, must walk a thin line to acquit their teaching duties effectively and responsibly and enjoy teaching, while efficiently pursuing studies and research.

- A graduate student who has lectured has a real advantage in the job market.
- By lecturing before you take a first faculty position, you remove some of the stress over teaching which goes into the tenure-pressure. We will be concerned with the nuts and bolts of teaching. Feel free to bring problems encountered in your class with your students to the seminar.

Evaluation: This is a Credit/No Credit seminar. Class attendance and participation are required. This seminar is part of your responsibilities as a Teaching Assistant.

Attendance: Class attendance is NOT optional and is regarded as an obligation as well as a privilege. All students are expected to attend regularly and punctually. As required by the University, attendance will be taken each class period. Missed classes will be reported to Dr. Magidin, the Graduate Coordinator and Dr. Chiquet, the Assistant Department Head.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE: A map of this floor is posted near the elevator marking the evacuation route and the Designated Rescue Area. This is an area where emergency service personnel will go first to look for individual who need assistance in exiting the building. Students who may need assistance should identify themselves to the teaching faculty.

The Graduate Council of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette has defined a graduate assistant as a graduate student who has been accepted in regular status to a graduate program and who is receiving compensation in return for the performance of assigned duties.

A Teaching Assistant (TA) is a graduate student who has some classroom responsibility and awards grades. An assistantship is always contingent upon acceptable discharge of assigned duties. It may be revoked at any time that these duties are not fulfilled to satisfaction.

Each department has on file in the Graduate School a plan for the supervision of graduate assistants who are assigned teaching responsibilities. These plans include such items as orientation and in-service training, preparation of syllabi, class policy (your contract with the student), review of examinations and grade assignments, classroom visitation, and assistantship evaluation.

A teaching assistantship is viewed in many ways by TAs: To some it is simply a way to get financial support; to some it is just a job which takes them away from their "real" studies. Whatever your personal feelings, remember that you represent the Mathematics Department, the College of Sciences, the University, and the mathematical profession.

Ethics and Professionalism:

"Ethics" - You should remember to treat people with respect and to carry out your responsibilities with integrity. In particular, you have a deep obligation to your students. It is important, therefore, to be friendly and relaxed in dealing with students, but at the same time to remember that you represent the Mathematics Department, the College of Sciences, the University, and the mathematical profession.

"Professionalism" includes the obvious such as preparing for classes and being on time, meeting office hours, grading papers promptly, and superficial such as observing local customs of dress, form of student address, etc. . . Remember that you represent the Mathematics Department, the College of Sciences, the University, and the mathematical profession.

Dilemma? Whether to devote time almost entirely to research and studies or to put effort into teaching? It is a balancing act.

The Nitty Gritty of Teaching involves:

- VOICE
- EYE CONTACT
- BLACKBOARD TECHNIQUE
- BODY LANGUAGE

Other requirements as per The University of Louisiana at Lafayette Faculty Handbook:

OFFICE HOURS (Faculty members shall set aside and post, on or near their office doors, times . . . when they shall be available for consultation with students . . .)

CLASS POLICY (Faculty members must state in writing and explain to their students the grading system prior to the close of the drop and add period. Such statements will include the minimal expectations of scholastic achievement for earning the grade of A, B, C or D in a particular course, the number and type of examinations to be administered, and any other outside requirements).

Assignment: Your class policy is your contract with your students. There are copies of sample class policies available for your perusal. See Dr. James Kimball. Ideally, you should discuss yours with your students on the first day of school.

Submit a copy of your class policy to me no later than **Tuesday, August 28, 2018**. If you are not teaching, create a class policy for some freshman level course, say Math 103/104 or Math 105.

Let your first days of school set the tone for the entire semester. Be prepared. Have your material mastered. Do not try to “wing it.” Students deserve your best. Steven G. Krantz writes in his best seller, *How to Teach Mathematics*, Remember this: You should be conscious of maintaining discipline in class from day one. If you let a class slide out of control for four weeks and then try to take back the reins of power, then you will have an extremely difficult and unpleasant time.

Don Miguel Ruiz offers a powerful code of conduct in his book *The Four Agreements* which will bode well for your success as a Teaching Assistant:

- Be impeccable with your word
- Don't take anything personally
- Don't make assumptions
- Always do your best

. . . Again, remember that you represent the Mathematics Department, the College of Sciences, the University, and the mathematical profession, and yourself.

The UL Lafayette Mathematics Faculty and Staff are here to help you in any way we can. If you need help, please ask.

NOTE: The skills involved in teaching are generalizable to just about every other position of responsibility that you may have. Communicator, manager, and consultant are just a few of the roles that you will fill.

Instructional Critique

Instructor (TA) _____ Course _____ Date _____ Time _____
Classroom _____ Attendance _____
Observer: Dr. Patricia Beaulieu or _____

1. Preparation

2. Classroom presentation

3. Competence in spoken English (for international TAs)

4. Knowledge of subject

5. Organization of material

6. Interaction with students/student interest

7. Overall teaching effectiveness

Other comments:

A Teaching Assistant's workload is intended to allow you to fulfill your own academic obligations. You are expected to devote your TA hours to duties including preparation, classroom teaching, office hours, and grading student papers. The TA is responsible for teaching all of his/her students, for assigning student work, for planning and writing examinations, and for determining the final grade for each student in the course.

I. Planning: This is an important key to your success as a TA.

- The UL Lafayette Mathematics Department has developed syllabi for courses ranging from Math 100 (College Algebra Fundamentals) through Math 302 (Calculus III). Hence, the Plan for each of these courses is in place. Please adhere to the syllabus for the course that you have been assigned. Mathematics departmental committees have put much time, effort and deep thought into determining what topics should or should not be included in a particular course. You do not have the right to vicariously delete or insert topics. Outlines were designed knowing that the course you are teaching is the prerequisite for some subsequent course in a student's curriculum. Stick to the Plan that is already in place and you should be able to successfully complete the course outline by the end of the semester.

Planning on your part may include:

- i) Developing an outline which summarizes or highlights what you intend to cover in class on a given day;
- ii) Making a list of any new words or concepts that you plan to introduce or discuss for the first time.

II. Lecturing: Implementing the Plan

- Create an atmosphere in your classroom which promotes open dialogue between you and your students. Learn your students' names and make eye contact with your students when you are speaking to the group as a whole. Encourage lots of student involvement/practice. Can they DO whatever it is you want them to be able to do?
- Teach your students to use the phrase "I do not understand . . ."
- Write new terms or concepts on the board as you introduce them.
- Avoid talking with your back to your students.
- Try to speak slowly and clearly.
- Provide students with ample opportunities to ask questions. You ask "What are your questions?"
- Ask questions designed to assess whether students have understood what has been presented or discussed in class.
- Watch your students.
- Ask your students if they can hear you.
- Listen to your own speech for annoying habits like repeatedly saying, "uh", or "um", or "you know", or "Okay, okay?".

Board presentation is important: Students must be able to see and to read what you have written; your board work must be organized so that students will be able to interpret their notes later; erase only when you have run out of space to write; colored chalk may help to clarify drawings

Assignment: Be prepared to present a 10-12 minute mock lecture in class next time. You may use any topic that you have taught in your class this semester

Perception Survey of Mock Lecture

Rate each TA/GA (presenter) as accurately and honestly as you can. Use the following key:

A. Strongly agree **B.** Agree **C.** No opinion **D.** Disagree **E.** Strongly disagree

(Feel free to write any constructive criticisms in each box.)

TA's/GA's Name	Was well prepared; did not try to <i>wing it</i>	Organized material well (use of board, etc.)	Spoke clearly and audibly; communicated ideas effectively (eye contact, etc.)	Has thorough knowledge of subject taught	Held the attention of the <i>class</i> ; Interaction with class	Had very good overall teaching effectiveness
Any other comments/suggestions:						

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Any other comments/suggestions:						