

# Seminar for Graduate Teaching Assistants

POLS 7770, Fall 2016

Friday 2:30-4:25

Instructor: Chase B. Meyer email: [chasebm@uga.edu](mailto:chasebm@uga.edu) Website: [chasebmeyer.com](http://chasebmeyer.com)

## Course Description and Goals

Class Room: 212 Sanford Hall

Time: 2:30-4:25, Fridays

Office: Baldwin Hall Graduate Student Lounge Office hours: by appointment

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

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

## Readings

The required text for this course is the UGA Teaching Assistant Handbook, drawn from *McKeachie's Teaching Tips: Strategies, Research, and Theory for College and University Teachers*. It is available online at: <http://wwwctl.uga.edu/teachingassistant/handbook>.

There will also be other readings required throughout the semester, I will post the other required readings on my website. Currently, weeks that do not assign the Teaching Assistant Handbook are labeled TBD, the readings for these weeks will be posted on my website a week in advance.

## Students with Disabilities

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

## Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a core value of institutions of higher learning. All students, upon enrolling, must pledge: "I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others." It is your responsibility to avoid plagiarism, cheating, and dishonesty. The university policy on academic integrity is posted at:

<http://www.uga.edu/honesty/>. To qualify the application of the policy in this course: tests and

written assignments should be your own work, while studying and class preparation can (and should) be done with others.

## **Course Requirements and Evaluation**

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

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

*Lesson Plan:* You will design a lesson plan for one class, with direction toward incorporating an innovative or creative approach to teaching political science. We will revisit the lesson plans later in the semester. These will be due (electronically) by the September 16 class meeting.

*Midterm Evaluation Exercise:* Using the sample questions we will devise in the Sept. 30 class meeting, create a midterm evaluation form for your class and implement it. Summarize the responses in a 2-page report, detailing the overall response from your class and how you plan to address your students concerns for the remainder of the semester. This assignment is due (as a hard copy) at the October 21 class meeting.

*Peer Observations:* An important part of learning how to teach is responding to constructive criticism. You will observe two of your peers teaching their discussion sections and provide a short written review based on an evaluation form that I will provide to you. You may not observe on a test day or on a day reserved for returning and covering graded tests. These will be due to me in electronic format by December 2.

*Revised Teaching Philosophy Statement:* By the September 23 class meeting, I expect you to provide a preliminary draft of your teaching philosophy, a document in which you will outline your approach to teaching political science, as well as the principles that will guide you in your instruction. Near the end of the semester you should have sufficient teaching experience to revise and update this teaching philosophy. Revisit your first draft and make changes that reflect your growth as an instructor over the semester. The revised teaching philosophy statement will be due (as a hard copy) November 18.

## Course Schedule

| <b>Date</b> | <b>Description</b>  | <b>Due</b>           |
|-------------|---|----------------------|
| Aug. 10     | Introduction pre-class  |                      |
| Aug. 12     | Introduction and Syllabus<br><i>Reading: Handbook I. A-F</i>    |                      |
| Aug. 19     | Making Lesson Plans<br><i>Handbook II. A-D</i>                  |                      |
| Aug. 26     | Academic Honesty<br><i>Handbook III.D</i>                       |                      |
| Sept. 2     | <b>No class</b> - APSA Conference                               |                      |
| Sept. 9     | Teaching Philosophy Statements<br><i>TBD</i>                    |                      |
| Sept. 16    | Dealing with Problem Students<br><i>Handbook IV.C</i>           | Lesson Plan          |
| Sept. 23    | Using Multi-Media in Class<br><i>TBD</i>                        | Teaching Statement   |
| Sept. 30    | Evaluating Students & Midterm Evals.<br><i>Handbook III.A-C</i> |                      |
| Oct. 7      | Diversity in the Classroom<br><i>Handbook IV.B</i>              |                      |
| Oct. 14     | Revisiting the Lesson Plan<br><i>TBD</i>                        |                      |
| Oct. 21     | Helping Students Write<br><i>TBD</i>                            | Midterm Evaluations  |
| Oct. 28     | <b>No class</b> - Fall Break                                    |                      |
| Nov. 4      | Group Based Learning<br><i>TBD</i>                              |                      |
| Nov. 11     | Getting Students to Come to Office Hours<br><i>TBD</i>          |                      |
| Nov. 18     | How to Improve<br><i>TBD</i>                                    | Revised Teach. Stat. |
| Nov. 25     | <b>No class</b> - Thanksgiving Break                            |                      |
| Dec. 2      | Final Wrap-up   | Peer Observations    |

*All dates and assignments are subject to change.*