

## **EDUC 775 – Preparatory Course for New Teaching Assistants**

**General Description:** This is a special, free, one-credit course that is mandatory for all incoming teaching assistants. It consists of **two days of pre-term TA Orientation workshops** and **four two- hour workshops** scheduled during the term.

**Objectives:** This course is designed to provide teaching assistants with the following:

1. Understanding of the role and value of the TA in the Drexel undergraduate academic experience
2. Awareness of the expectations and needs of a diverse student population
3. Awareness of support services, instructional resources and technology: audio visual and online,
4. Understanding of teaching tasks and opportunities to practice doing them:
  - how to prepare for a class
  - introduce yourself to a class
  - create an interactive learning environment
  - present material in different ways to accommodate different styles of learning
  - field student questions
  - evaluate good teaching practices
  - manage challenging classroom and office hour situations
5. Mechanics of teaching: creating a syllabus, grading.

**Materials:**

- Drexel University TA Handbook: The Effective Teaching Assistant  
Available online as a link from:  
(<http://www.drexel.edu/provost/graduatestudies/audience/incoming/orientation.html>)
- Observation form
- Course evaluation form.

## **Pre –Term TA Orientation Program**

**Tuesday, September 15, 2009 (Matheson 109)**

**8:30 – 9:00 am Continental Breakfast**

**9:00- 9:3am Welcome**

**Dr. Teck-Kah Lim (Associate Vice Provost, Graduate Studies)**

**Overview of Drexel; Value of Being a TA; TAs Interaction with Dept. & Course Director.**

*The Academic Structure of the University:*

Our mission: Provost's Office, Colleges, Faculty, Teaching Assistants

*Background to the Teaching Assistant Program:*

The Undergraduate Curriculum;

Why we need TAs; How TAs fit into the undergraduate academic experience;

How the TA's role fits into the graduate experience

*Working with a Professor*

**9: 35 – 10: 25 am Good Teaching Practices Across Disciplines**

**Dr. Shivanthi Anandan (Bioscience) and Dr. Alexander Friedlander (Associate Dean, CoAS).**

Two master teachers share their experiences of teaching a variety of courses over the years.

**10:30 –11:30 am What Do Students Want?**

**Professor Alexis Finger (Chair, TA Excellence Sub-Committee)**

Current teaching assistants, past nominees and winners of the TA Excellence Award and Drexel undergraduate students talk about what works and doesn't work in the classroom. Opportunities for questions will follow.

**11:35 – 12:00 am Support Services at Drexel**

**Ms. Antoinette Torres (Executive Director of AARD)**

Overview of services available to students on campus.

### **Assignments:**

1. Look over the TA Handbook
2. Visit your department. Get a copy of the syllabus for a course you will/might teach or a basic course offered in your department.
3. Select a routine topic in your field that you can "teach" for 10 minutes. Prepare to teach it on Thursday afternoon (the second day of the Orientation)

**Lunch with Department Advisors**

**Afternoon: Department Visit (TA assignment and office)**

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**Thursday, September 17, 2009**

**8:30 - 9:00 Continental Breakfast (Corridor of 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Matheson)**

**9:05 - 9:20 Introduction to Audio-Visual Technology (Matheson 109)  
Chris Gibson (Director, Instructional Media Services)**

**9:25 - 9:55 Information Resources and Technology (Matheson 109)  
Chris Shields (Director, Online Learning, IRT)**

**10:00 – 12:00 am Interactive Group Workshops (Matheson 301, 304,  
305, 306, 307, 309, 310, 311)**

**Professors and Veteran TAs from various Departments**

**Topics to be covered:**

- The first day (Introducing your course; developing rapport; creating interest; attendance, grading and exam policies),
- Teaching strategies for specific areas. (Experienced TAs demonstrate teaching techniques )
- Giving and getting feedback (role play office hours),
- Handling problems (role plays)

**Lunch**

**1:30-3:30 pm Practice Teaching Workshop (Matheson 301, 304,  
305, 306, 307, 309, 310, 311)**

Directions: Each TA has an opportunity to address the group (through an activity, see below) and provide feedback for the others. Teaching activities include:

1. First Day: introduce yourself and the course, and review the syllabus and the course policies (8 minutes)
2. Teach a topic (5 minutes)
3. Role play a situation that could occur in the class or in the office (5 minutes)

**Fall Term Workshops****Fridays 1:00-3:00 pm****2<sup>nd</sup> Week** **Preparing to Teach** – Dr. Roberto Ramos  
(Oct 2<sup>nd</sup>)

1. Creating a lesson plan
2. Incorporating activities to accommodate different styles of learning.

**Assignment:** Two Teaching Observations: (lecture, recitation, or lab)

- Professor in your department
- Teaching assistant
- Fill out observation forms found on the website for this course and bring them to the final workshop.

**3<sup>th</sup> Week** **Mechanics of Teaching** - Dr. Shivanthi Anandan  
(Oct 9<sup>th</sup>)

1. Creating a syllabus
2. Grading
3. Interacting with students and managing a class

**Assignment:** Evaluate Your Teaching.

- Give your students midterm course evaluation forms to fill out after midterms. ( see website)
- Collect them and review your strengths and weaknesses from the comments.
- Discuss problems with an experienced TA.
- Bring course evaluations to the final workshop.

**4<sup>rd</sup> Week** **Practice Teaching Session** (Instructors and Rooms to be announced)  
(Oct 16<sup>th</sup>)  
Each TA gives a lesson (10 minutes). Feedback (5 minutes)

**Assignment:** Getting Feedback

- Invite an experienced TA to observe you teaching a class.
- Ask the TA to give you verbal feedback and fill out observation form ( found on website)that indicates that s/he observed you.
- Bring observation form to the final workshop.

\*\*\* If you are not teaching at this time, get permission to team teach a class in your department.

**11<sup>th</sup> Week** **Time for Reflection** (Pizza & refreshments) – Alexis Finger  
(Dec 4<sup>th</sup>)

1. Discuss the classes you've observed and your own course evaluations.
2. Share how you have progressed during the term.
3. Discuss your goals for your next teaching experience

**Students who believe that their experience has prepared them appropriately for their TA duties can request exemption from the Fall Quarter workshop.**