

**GRSC 7770**  
**Seminar for Graduate Teaching Assistants:**  
**An Introduction to Teaching History**

Fall 2011  
Mondays 5:45-7:40 pm  
LeConte Hall 102

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Office Hours: by appointment

Welcome to the UGA History Department's graduate program! This course will serve as a sounding board for the challenges that inevitable arise during your first semester here at UGA. It is specifically designed to prepare you for your role as a teaching assistant in the graduate school, but it will also address the transition to academic life and the historical profession, best practices for teaching your own courses, and the role of technology. By the time we are done meeting this semester, you should have a framework for reflecting and improving upon your life as a teacher and a historian — wherever you go and whatever you do next.

### **Texts**

Required:

1. *The UGA Handbook for Graduate Teaching Assistants*, available at <http://wwwctl.uga.edu/teachingassistant/handbook>
2. Wilbert McKeachie, et al, *Teaching Tips: Strategies, Research, and Theory for College and University Teachers* (any recent edition is fine)
3. Various articles, available through GALILEO or eLearning Commons.

### **Assignments**

There will be two kinds of assignments for this course.

1. Weekly Shorts. On a more or less weekly basis you will have short (usually no more than 500-word) assignments that ask you to respond to readings and formulate your thoughts on teaching and academic life. These assignments are designed to prepare you for thoughtful discussion, and will also be included in your portfolio.

2. Teaching Portfolio. The final assignment is a portfolio that organizes and presents the semester's work. This portfolio will serve two purposes. Since most of you are grading this semester, not leading your own sections, this portfolio will be a kind of resource book for that future day when you find yourself in the classroom. And, since documenting your teaching is an important part of preparing for the job market, the assignment will provide a kind of skeleton for a future professional portfolio. I will give more details about this assignment in the last few weeks of class.

### **Grading and Attendance**

The course is graded on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis. To earn an "S" for this course, you are required to complete all reading and writing assignments on time and participate in classroom discussions. You need to be at our meetings. I will take attendance each week, and any unexcused absences may result in an unsatisfactory grade.

### **Academic Honesty**

All academic work must meet the standards described in "A Culture of Honesty," available online at [http://www.uga.edu/honesty/ahpd/culture\\_honesty.htm](http://www.uga.edu/honesty/ahpd/culture_honesty.htm). Each student is responsible to become informed about these standards before performing any academic work.

### **Disability or Health Issues**

Students with any disability or health-related issues that will affect their participation in the course should make an appointment to speak with me as soon as possible. If any unexpected crises or illnesses should arise during the semester, please let me know immediately.

## **Meeting Schedule**

### **August 15 | Welcome: UGA Policies and Procedures, Your Legal Position as TA, and Surviving Graduate School**

Read:

1. UGA TA Handbook, entire <http://www.ctl.uga.edu/teachingassistant/handbook>
2. The Sociology of Academic Networks  
<http://chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/the-sociology-of-academic-networks/34691>
3. Paul N. Edwards, "How to Read a Book" at  
<http://pne.people.si.umich.edu/PDF/howtoread.pdf>

See Also:

Jane Kaplan, Wise Choices (picking a dissertation topic)

<http://www.historians.org/perspectives/issues/2011/1104/1104art1.cfm>

Gina Barecca, "Practical Tips for Surviving Academic Life (Part One: The Early Years)

<http://chronicle.com/blogs/brainstorm/practical-tips-for-surviving-academic-life-part-one-the-early-years/34028>

"The Art of History" in *AHA Perspectives*

<http://blog.historians.org/publications/1372/the-art-of-history>

Ann Little, "Gender and Performance in Graduate School"

<http://www.historiann.com/2011/06/25/gender-and-performance-in-grad-school/>

### **August 22 | Assessment: Exams, Papers, and the Purpose of Evaluation**

Read: McKeachie Ch. 7-10

Write: Sketch out an assessment plan for your own course (e.g. what sort of tests/papers/projects) and come prepared to defend it.

### **August 29 | Who Are Our Students, and What Are They Learning? The 21st Century Undergraduate at UGA and Elsewhere**

Read:

1. Gerald Graff, "The Problem Problem" (available via eLC)
2. 'Academically Adrift,' Inside Higher Ed  
[http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2011/01/18/study\\_finds\\_large\\_numbers\\_of\\_college\\_students\\_don\\_t\\_learn\\_much](http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2011/01/18/study_finds_large_numbers_of_college_students_don_t_learn_much)

Write: From your own career as a college student, describe some of the best and worst college teaching you have seen. What makes a good college professor? What makes a good course?

**September 5 | No Class (Labor Day)**

**September 12 | Doomsday for Academe: The State of Higher Education**

Read:

1. William Deresiewicz, "Faulty Towers: The Crisis in Higher Education"  
<http://www.thenation.com/article/160410/faulty-towers-crisis-higher-education?page=full>
2. Timothy Burke, "The Culture of Graduate School"  
<http://blogs.swarthmore.edu/burke/permanent-features-advice-on-academia/features/>

See also:

Jonathan Rees, "It's faculty! Soylent Green is faculty!"  
<http://moreorlessbunk.wordpress.com/2011/07/18/its-faculty-soylent-green-is-faculty/>

**September 19 | Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts: Beyond Memorization**

Read:

Sam Wineburg, "Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts"  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/20439490>

Write:

Why do you think history is important for students to learn? (Hint: this is the germ of your Teaching Statement.)

See also:

- "Historical Thinking at the K-12 Level in the 21st Century: A Roundtable" in *Historically Speaking* [http://muse.jhu.edu.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/journals/historically\\_speaking/toc/hsp.12.3.html](http://muse.jhu.edu.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/journals/historically_speaking/toc/hsp.12.3.html)
- Historical Thinking Matters, <http://historicalthinkingmatters.org/index.php>

**September 26 | Un/Coverage: How to Structure a Course**

Read:

Lendol Calder, "Uncoverage"  
<http://www.journalofamericanhistory.org/textbooks/2006/calder/index.html>

Write:

Sketch out two courses you plan to teach one day: one survey and one specialized course. Each should include a 2-3 sentence description of what the course includes, a list of poten-

tial readings and assignments, and an explanation of why your approach is the best thing ever.

See also:

- The Tenured Radical's Thoughts on Teaching  
<http://chronicle.com/blognetwork/tenuredradical/category/teaching/>
- Timothy D. Hall and Renay Scott, "Closing the Gap Between Professors and Teachers: 'Un-coverage' as a Model of Professional Development for History Teachers" *History Teacher*, available at <http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/ht/40.2/hall.html>

### **October 3 | Using Technology in the Classroom: eLC and Beyond**

CTL Guest Presentation on Teaching with Technology: Location TBA

### **October 10 | Not Using Technology in the Classroom: Academic Workflows and the Perils of Powerpoint**

Read:

1. Powerpoint
  - <http://blog.carolynworks.com/?p=154>
  - <http://blogs.swarthmore.edu/burke/2009/11/11/if-you-must/>
2. Research Software:
  - <http://chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/zotero-vs-endnote/33157>
  - <http://cliotropic.org/blog/talks/camera-laptop-and-what-else/>

Write:

Bring a short "workflow" description of some aspect of your academic life: research, grading, writing. Check out the "see also" sites for some examples.

See Also:

Steven Berlin Johnson on DevonThink Pro:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2005/01/30/books/review/30JOHNSON.html?oref=login>

Chad Black's Workflow:

<http://parezcoydigo.wordpress.com/2008/11/29/devonthink-for-historical-research-iii/>

Zotero for Research Papers

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pu7nNKplwV4>

**October 17** | No class (TA observations)

**October 24** | No class (TA observations and UnCivil Wars Conference)

### **October 31 | Saving the World in Your Own Discussion Section: Lesson Plans, Sensitive Topics, and Problem Students**

Read:

1. Stanley Fish, *Save the World on Your Own Time*, excerpt

2. Claire Potter's Response:

<http://chronicle.com/blognetwork/tenuredradical/2009/10/how-to-do-your-job-without-really/>

3. McKeachie Ch. 14

*Write:*

A reflection on your TA observations. What strategies did the TA use? What was successful? What wasn't?

*See Also:*

Claire Potter, "Ask The Radical: Have You Stopped Discriminating Against Republicans Yet? Or; Do Political Views Count As Diversity?"

<http://chronicle.com/blognetwork/tenuredradical/2009/10/ask-radical-have-you-stopped/>

## **November 7 | Maturing as a Teacher: Documenting Your Teaching and Responding to Student Feedback**

*Read:*

Gabriella Montell, "How to Write a Statement of Teaching Philosophy"

<http://chronicle.com/article/How-to-Write-a-Statement-of/45133/>

Creating a Teaching Portfolio (CTL Guidelines and Samples)

<http://www.ctl.uga.edu/teachingassistant/portfolioprogram>

*See Also:*

Future Faculty Teaching Statements:

[http://www.ctl.uga.edu/teachingassistant/ta\\_mentors/philosophy#1011](http://www.ctl.uga.edu/teachingassistant/ta_mentors/philosophy#1011)

Columbia's Guidelines for Teaching Statements

<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/tat/pdfs/teaching%20statement.pdf>

## **November 14 | The Teaching Statement**

*Write:*

Rough Draft of Teaching Statement

**November 21 | No Class (Thanksgiving)**

**November 28 | Wrap Up**

**December 5 | Portfolios Due**