



Foundations of Teaching in the Social Sciences

Fall 2015

Week 1, August 26, 3:30-4:45 (Notre Dame Room, LaFortune)

- Understanding your role, communicating expectations, and preparing for the first day of class

Week 2, September 2, 3:30-4:45 (Montgomery Auditorium, LaFortune)

- Preparing, structuring, and facilitating discussion sections and presentations

Week 3, September 9, 3:30-4:45 (Montgomery Auditorium, LaFortune)

- Grading and responding to student work

Week 4, September 16, 3:30-4:45 (Notre Dame Room, LaFortune)

- Teaching for critical thinking

Each workshop attended counts toward your "Striving for Excellence in Teaching" or "Advanced Teaching Scholar" Kaneb Center certificate

Facilitators:

Kristi Rudenga; krudenga@nd.edu

Andre Audette; aaudette@nd.edu

Week 1 Outline:

- Welcome and introductions
- Establishing communication and expectations with your professor
- Establishing communication and expectations with your students
- Learning about your students
- Teaching on the first day

Running a Successful Discussion Section

Andre Audette & Kristi Rudenga

Preparing for sections (the first day and beyond)

- Meet with the course professor (and other TAs) to address any questions
- Create a mini-syllabus or policy sheet for your section
- Find (or ask the professor for) the names/photos of students in your section
- Review any assigned readings or lecture materials for the week so you know what background the students should have
- Write down a variety of potential discussion questions or learning activities based on the course material and topic
- Prepare an outline of what you need to remember to say or do during the discussion section, from welcoming students to the end of the class period
- Think of short backup activities if yours don't go as planned (ex. one-minute papers, small group breakouts, brief in-class readings, etc.)
- Read over your notes, and even practice saying them out loud

On the day of the section

- Dress neatly and professionally
- Arrive to your room early to welcome students and get set up
- Aim to be professional, while also friendly and approachable
- Greet your students and begin to learn or review names

During your section

- Distribute your policy sheet and highlight the key points
- Make any important announcements about assignments or grading, upcoming events, plans for the next week, etc.
- Introduce yourself and have the students introduce themselves
- Begin with easier discussion questions to get students comfortable, then transition to more difficult ones
- It is ok to not have an immediate answer for a student question; try to follow up with an answer via email or in the next section
- Depending on your professor's instructions, consider trying a variety of activities to promote learning (ex. debates, role-play scenarios, student-led discussions, case studies, etc.)
- You are the TA for a reason...be confident!

After sections

- Write down notes on how the section went
- Learn strategies for efficient, effective grading (Foundations week 3!)

Throughout the semester

- Set high expectations and your students will rise to the occasion
- Show that you are serious by maintaining those same high standards yourself
- Pay attention to feedback from your students
- Continue discussing sections with your professor and the other TAs

Talking to Your Course Instructor

Here are some basic questions you might want to ask your course instructor early in the semester, to avoid future problems:

1. Is the section required? Are there suggestions for attendance policies?
2. What time is the TA expected to devote to the course besides preparing/leading section? (Office hours? One-on-one appointments?)
3. What other resources are available to students in the section?
4. In the professor's eyes, what is the purpose of the section?
5. What aspects of the section will be graded?
6. Will the TA assign any/all grades for students in the section?
7. May/should the TA assign work for students in the section?
8. What determines the students' overall grade?
9. In the event of a grade dispute, who is the final arbiter?
10. How much uniformity is expected among TAs?

Beyond these basic pragmatic issues, you might also find it helpful to have your supervising instructor clarify the following:

- What is the “big picture” of the course, pedagogically? Broadly speaking, what are the students expected to know or be able to do that they (presumably) don't know or can't do now?
- What is the *role* of the TA in this course? Does the instructor view you mainly as a tool for disseminating and clarifying his or her content? Or is there room for personalization, supplementation, and so on?
- Are there materials (exams, etc.) available from previous years that might be helpful for you to look at?

...AND SOME HELPFUL ADVICE

We all know that course instructors can sometimes regard TAs as faceless functionaries. But take heart! The students in your section *do* care who you are. Two points to recall when heading into the classroom are that (1) the students *always* appreciate the effort you put into their instruction, and (2) it's OK to “teach how you are.” The best strategy is to be a professional version of who you are in “real life,” so long as boundaries are acknowledged and the course content is your primary focus.

Course Number & Title

Meeting Time & Room Number

TA Information:

Name

Office hours and location, or by appointment (Your office, the library, other space)

Email address

Phone (only include if you want students calling you at this #)

Aim of Sections:

The overall purpose of these sections will be (what?)

Format of Sections:

What students should prepare for, types of activities, etc.

Email:

What are your email policies? Can students expect to hear from you within 24 hours? Will you respond on weekends? What types of messages are encouraged?

Assignments/Papers:

If you are expected to grade assignments or papers, how should students turn them in to you? (Make sure this section aligns with your professor's expectations!)

Grades:

Is attendance/participation required? How will attendance/participation impact one's grade? What is the policy for missed/late work? How are grade disputes handled? Will you give feedback on paper drafts?

Participation:

How do you grade participation? What policies/expectations do you have for students participating in discussion? You might also include a statement about how/when students can find out their participation grades (ex. "I will distribute an advisory midterm participation grade.")

Evaluations:

A statement such as "Evaluations will be distributed periodically to collect feedback on discussion section format and any other section-related issues" lets students know immediately that you value their input and that it can make a difference.

Other Policies/Sections:

If you wish to prohibit laptops or texting during class or want to request that cell phones be silenced, it's a good idea to put it in writing. You might also include a list of additional resources for students (writing center, counseling center, subject librarian, etc.), information about online discussion forums (if applicable), or how to succeed in discussion sections, among other possible syllabus components.

PSY 268: Social and Behavioral Influences on Health

Dr. Prof Eссор

Office Hours:

Tuesday 3¹⁵-5¹⁵pm or by appointment

Email: pessor@nd.edu

TA: Tyler TA

Thursday 3pm-5pm Haggar 414

TyTA@nd.edu

Due Dates:

All assignments must be submitted in paper form. Emailed assignment will not be accepted.

Concept Sheets:

- Approximately 2 pages, double-spaced responses to weekly readings to be handed in at the beginning of lecture on Tuesdays prior to that topic's discussion section
- Total of 6 concept sheets on the topics of your choice (the lowest grade out of the six will be dropped in calculating your final grade for the course).

Media Analysis: (due **10/21**) to be handed in at lecture, discussion sections, or my mailbox

Op-Ed: (due **11/18**) to be handed in at lecture, discussion sections, or my mailbox

Term Paper:

A detailed description of paper topic (**10/7**)

Final draft (**12/8**)

****Examples will be posted for all of the assignments on Sakai.****

Participation:

Professor Eссор's lectures provide a broad overview of different areas within social and behavioral sciences. In discussion sections, we will focus on the assigned readings and consider how they relate to the broad topics of health discussed in lecture. Discussion section attendance is mandatory. Additionally, you are expected to come to discussion sections prepared to talk about the week's assigned readings. Participation in discussion sections will contribute to the final grade. (If you must miss a section, advanced notification is appreciated.)

Course Grading:

Participation	10%
Concept Sheets (5)	25%
Op-Ed	10%
Media Analysis	10%
Final Paper Proposal	5%
Final Paper	40%

POLS 20100 □ Fall 2015
Introduction to American Politics

Section 6, Fridays, 11:30-12:20 pm, O'Shaughnessy 202
Teaching Assistant: Tasha TA

Contact Information:

E-mail: tasha.TA@nd.edu

E-mail Hours: 8am-6pm

Office: Center for Digital Scholarship (1st floor Hesburgh Library)

Office Hours: By appointment only

Class Goals

The objective for this discussion section is to give you an opportunity to take a critical approach to a variety of major issues in American politics. Our discussions will complement the lectures on the relevant social, policy, and political issues. Additionally, you will learn to conduct a literature review and will write one for the political science topic of your choice (approved by Tasha and Prof. Ziegler).

Grading

Your discussion section grade will be based on:

- Attendance
- Participation
- Potential pop-quizzes
- Literature review project

Literature Review Project

Your literature review will be due the week before the final exam (Dec. 11th). It should be 5-7 pages in length. Please use 12 point font and double space. The literature review should be submitted via Sakai. Any questions or concerns about format, grading, etc. will be answered via email or appointment. We'll discuss this assignment in more detail in later sections.

Expectations

I expect you to:

- Attend every section (you get one "freebie")
- Respect your TA and fellow students in discussion
- Pay attention in class and avoid distractions (no laptops or cell phones)
- Read the assigned texts and come prepared to actively discuss them

Evaluations

Evaluations will be distributed during regularly throughout the semester to get feedback on the format of discussion sections.

- Design Your Policy Sheet Here -

Student Information Sheet
SOC 10002, TA: Tracey Daniels

Name:

Email:

Year at Notre Dame:

What sociology/social science classes have you taken? Do you have any other previous experience with survey research?

What is your major? What are your career goals?

What are your expectations for this class? What are your expectations for your TA?

Why did you choose to take "Understanding Societies"?

10 Tips to “Rock the First Day”

1. Show up early and greet students as they walk in; this demonstrates that you are approachable and care about their individual success.
2. Create a collaborative environment by introducing yourself and learning everybody’s names early on in the semester. There are plenty of ideas online for effective icebreakers, and consider having students make nametags too.
3. Have students fill out an information sheet (like the one in this packet) with any info you may need to know to create a productive learning environment.
4. Teach something on the first day. This indicates that yours is a course where learning occurs every class period.
5. Use a “real-world” example to motivate students’ interest, show the relevance of the class, and leave them wanting to know more.
6. Promote discussion and student interactions from the very beginning. With each successive class that does not provide an opportunity for students to participate, they become increasingly less likely to speak up. Give them plenty of opportunities to ask questions and participate early on.
7. If your course is part of a series or dependent on students’ prior knowledge, consider having students fill out a questionnaire or ungraded quiz to assess entry-level competence.
8. Communicate your expectations to your students with a syllabus or policy-sheet, but consider discussing the details of it at the end of class. Use the first part to make a first impression of passion for the subject matter and commitment to the students and their education
9. Have a clear beginning, middle, and end to the class. Be in control of the time and use up all of (or most of) your scheduled time period.
10. Be yourself! (Or at least a slightly more professional version 😊.) You are the TA/instructor for a reason. Students appreciate authenticity, and you will feel more comfortable in your role and be better able to do the job well if you are willing to be you.

BONUS: Take advantage of your resources on campus to advance your teaching excellence. Learn as much as you can from your faculty member, other TAs, the Kaneb Center, and other campus resources to help you rock the first day and the rest of the semester!

Foundations of Teaching in the Social Sciences (Fall 2015)

Week 1 Survey

1) Have you had any prior teaching experience? If so, describe.

2) Have you had any prior teaching training? If so, describe.

3) Why are you taking these workshops?

4) What do you expect to know or be able to do at the end of this series of workshops?

5) Do you have any concerns/fears about teaching or topics related to teaching that you would like for us to cover in remaining workshops?