

The Graduate Student Guide to Teaching at Yale University



# Becoming Teachers

2004–2005

The McDougal Graduate  
Teaching Center



**The Graduate Student Guide to Teaching at Yale University**

# Becoming Teachers

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**SECOND EDITION**

EDITOR

Robert Lagueux

CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS

Robert Lagueux

Bettina Lerner

Abby Maranda

Bill Rando

The first edition of *Becoming Teachers* included contributions from several other authors: Matt BaileyShea, Bruce Durazzi, Judith Dozier Hackman, Patricia Joritzma, Leon Rozenblit, Jenny Smith, and Cherie Woodworth.

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William Rando, Director

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# Welcome from the Dean

Dear Graduate Students,

Teaching is Yale, the heart of Yale's academic and intellectual mission. In Yale's Teaching Fellow Program, developed through Yale's many departments and programs, Yale College, and The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, you should expect to learn the principles and techniques of effective teaching guided by Yale faculty. Whether your career path leads to higher education or elsewhere, the competencies, skills, and simple excitement of teaching developed in the Teaching Fellow Program will serve you in many different capacities. The students with whom you will interact at Yale are outstanding, and they, plus the faculty and your fellow graduate students all will challenge you to refine your abilities to think clearly, listen attentively, write precisely, and speak eloquently.

Two members of the Graduate School administration and a special group of graduate students play critical roles in making the Teaching Fellow Program work.

JUDITH HACKMAN directs the Teaching Fellow Program. She administers the teaching fellowships in coordination with the faculty, departments, and programs at Yale in an effort to provide graduate students with meaningful and compelling teaching experiences.

WILLIAM RANDO, the Director of the McDougal Graduate Teaching Center, designs workshops, group discussions, and multiple presentations that will support you and your Teaching Fellow colleagues as you develop your pedagogical skills.

The GRADUATE TEACHING CENTER FELLOWS are selected from among Yale's most successful graduate teachers to work with Bill in every aspect of the Center. They bring their disciplinary perspective and experience in labs and sections to the Fundamentals of Teaching Courses, individual peer consultations, and all GTC workshops. In return, Bill Rando provides them with training in consultation, and introduces them to models, theories, strategies, and resources to share with their fellow students.

*Becoming Teachers* is an insightful, fascinating, and sometimes irreverent exploration of teaching at Yale. Always helpful, we hope it exemplifies Yale's deep commitment to graduate and undergraduate education. And, of course, we also hope it guides you toward pedagogical practices that would be effective anywhere, because articulate, vibrant, and stimulating explanations stand at the heart of every successful effort to explain and persuade – to teach – no matter the setting.

*Becoming Teachers* represents a collaboration between the Teaching Fellow Program and the Graduate Teaching Center. It provides essential information as you begin your teaching experiences at Yale, and it is an excellent resource that will be helpful as your semesters progress.

Please take the time to read the important information contained in *Becoming Teachers*. All of us in the Graduate School hope you relish your Yale teaching as among your most memorable and stimulating experiences in graduate study.

Jon Butler

*Howard R. Lamar Professor of American Studies, History, and Religious Studies  
Dean, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences*



## Preface

If you're opening this book, you are probably new to teaching, new to teaching at Yale, or both. Most likely, you are a graduate Teaching Fellow, though you may be a new faculty member, serving as an assistant professor, lecturer, or instructor. In any case, welcome to Yale and to the classroom teaching that awaits you.

For the past six years, I've had the pleasure of serving as the director of the Graduate Teaching Center. Our Center is dedicated to advancing the quality of teaching and learning in the Yale classroom, and to ensuring that graduate Teaching Fellows receive the training, guidance, and constructive feedback they need to become the most skillful teachers they can be. We offer *Becoming Teachers: The Graduate Student Guide to Teaching at Yale University* as one of many resources for you to take advantage of while you're here. I hope you find it enjoyable and useful.

A team of Graduate Teaching Consultants make up the GTC staff. They come from the humanities, social sciences, physical sciences and foreign languages. They are experienced and successful teachers in Yale's labs, sections, and classrooms, and they are specially trained to facilitate your teaching through workshops, discussions, and individual consultations. They are your peer mentors, and I encourage you to call on them for an individual meeting or to set up a teaching workshop with the graduate students in your department.

If you've never taught before, walking into the classroom for the first time can be intimidating, but here's a thought that may ease the tension: I've been teaching for almost twenty years, and I still get nervous at the thought of walking into a room full of unfamiliar students. Most teachers I know feel the same way. What's different from twenty years ago is that, in addition to the usual trepidation, I now bring into the classroom experience, knowledge, and skills I didn't have before. I also bring a clear sense of the challenge ahead, which allows me to focus on teaching and what I want for my students instead of my anxiety and what I dread for myself. I think that's what it means to become a teacher. It takes time to get there, but a great way to start is a course we offer each fall: *The Fundamentals of Teaching*.

Some of you come to Yale with teaching experience. I invite you to use your time here to advance your skills and expand your teaching repertoire. You may want to explore advances in instructional technology, or strategies for using collaborative small groups, classroom writing, alternative assignments, or critical thinking exercises. The Graduate Teaching Center will offer sessions on each of these topics while you are here, and if you'd like to explore a topic that you don't see offered, just ask us.

Teaching is especially difficult if you don't enjoy it, or don't plan on an academic career. To students in this category I want to say two things. First, focus on your undergraduate students. Though not always apparent, your contribution to students' education can be profound. Second, use your time in the classroom to advance your skills in speaking, leading, persuading, motivating, and explaining. These talents will take you far regardless of your profession, and the GTC is happy to help you in any way it can.

For everyone at the Graduate Teaching Center, I wish you a great year of teaching.

Sincerely,

Bill Rando  
*Director, McDougal Graduate Teaching Center*



# Editor's Preface

Hello and welcome! Pull up a chair. Would you like a beverage?

Thanks for taking the time to peruse our little book. What you hold in your hands is the second edition of what began years ago as a scrappy little book—pamphlet, really—full of sage advice on issues large and small. That primordial pamphlet has become this glossy, high-budget affair, but the underlying principles are the same. We've tried to strike a balance between the big picture and the small potatoes, between the boldly conceptual and the ruthlessly practical. We've suggested that you bring chalk to class and think about what the point of section is; that you call Media Services well ahead of time and reevaluate the very notion of grading; that you bring extra handouts to class and create a narrative arc for all of your sections. Teaching is a performance, after all, and great performers not only know their motivation but also have the necessary props. It's all important.

If you're familiar with past incarnations of BT, you'll find that the Second Edition has much of the same information as its predecessor but with better—we hope—organization. We've moved the *Teaching the First Class* chapter out of pole position, reflecting our fervent hope that you'll use BT not just as a pedagogical paramedic at the start of the semester but as something to help guide the thought and reflection that precedes all great teaching. We hope you'll pay particular attention to Chapter 1, *Teaching a Successful Section*, which mixes the nuts-and-bolts of teaching with thoughts on the Big Picture. Scientists will find the section on Leading Labs expanded for the better. We've removed some extraneous material, tweaked some of the humor, changed the look and format, and added a pretty cover. What more could you ask?

While BT might be the first and most convenient place to go for information and help with teaching, it shouldn't be the last. This book is only one of several resources available for Yale teachers—the Yale faculty and the McDougal Graduate Teaching Center are two of the biggies, but there are countless other offices and programs out there to make your life easier and your teaching better. We mention them throughout the book, and contact information is available in the Appendixes. Draw on everyone you can. We're all in this together.

Thanks for dropping in. Have fun.

  
Rob Lagueux

# PREAMBLE: What is Section?

In March of 2004 the Graduate Teaching Center invited four Yale faculty members to speak on a panel at the Spring Teaching and Learning Forum. We asked them to describe the purpose of section in the courses they teach and to illustrate the strategies they employ to help teaching fellows achieve that purpose.

Our four faculty panelists represented different academic areas—Christine Hayes from Religious Studies, Amy Hungerford from English, Ben Polak from Economics, and Stephen Stearns from Ecology and Evolutionary Biology—so the specifics of their descriptions were predictably varied. But disciplinary differences aside, these four faculty members painted remarkably similar pictures of sections. Their perspectives taken together provide us with an inspiring and productive view of section.

## **Section and the Course**

Section complements lecture. Lectures inspire, contextualize, explain, and organize content. They enrich it with stories, examples, paradoxes, and problems. They lay out the broad narrative of what is known and what is thought. They are macro. On the down side, listening to a lecture can produce, as one of our panelists noted, the “illusion of understanding,” the sense that once you hear it, you get it. Section tests that illusion. Section provides the micro. It focuses on the individual problem, the certain line or paragraph, the photo, the scene, passage, transition, experiment, or theory. Lecture is the map, and section is the trek. When faculty members and teaching fellows teach together as a team, with a “common intellectual agenda,” the course coheres for teachers and, more importantly, for undergraduates.

## **Section and the Undergraduate Student**

Section should not attempt to mimic a dinner table discussion. It should be a structured environment that makes use of discussion and problem solving as a means to a specific end: learning, understanding, and the development of skills necessary to succeed in a course. Sections “fill the gap between being able to follow a lecture and actually being able to use what was discussed.” That gap is often quite large.

Section gives students the opportunity to encounter a text, score, image, theory, or set of data as a way of answering well-designed problems and questions. Sections provide students with practice, and practice requires feedback and the applications of standards—right and wrong, clear and fuzzy, persuasive and unconvincing, comprehensive and narrow, deep and shallow, rigorous and slipshod. In section, students transform knowledge and understanding into intellectual power: the ability to do something new or to do something better. At its best, section transforms undergraduates into, as one panelist suggested, “colleagues in an intellectual pursuit.”

## **Section and the Teaching Fellow**

Section is an opportunity for graduate students to learn how to teach. Here again the notion of the “common intellectual agenda” is key. Faculty members plan the course, then share that plan with their TFs, describing how each aspect of the course—readings, lectures, assignments, and sections—work together. Faculty members mentor their TFs by providing them with model problems, selected passages, sample debates, and provocative questions that have proven effective in the past. Teaching Fellows draw on these tools to organize their sections and eventually use them to develop their own strategies for helping students learn. At its best, section encourages both TFs and faculty members to reflect on all aspects of the course, learning from each other how best to engage and educate undergraduate students.



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# CHAPTER 1: Teaching a Successful Section

If you're going to read only one chapter of this book, read this one. It covers some of the most fundamental aspects of teaching section, from asking good questions to maintaining control in the classroom. Although some of the specifics pertain uniquely to being a TF, many of these suggestions will be useful even after you've moved on, whether to a faculty position or something else entirely. Teaching a good section, after all, is a matter of developing good communication and leadership skills. Those will come in handy no matter what you do after Yale.

Teaching a successful section requires balancing the needs and desires of three different parties: the faculty member who's in charge of the course, you, and your students. You need to think about the relationship of your section to the course overall before classes start, but you can't really figure that out until you know what the faculty member who's in charge of the course envisions that role to be. So do a little bit of ground-work before the semester starts: talk to the faculty member, then stroke your long, gray beard and ponder your role.

## WHAT TO DO BEFORE THE COURSE STARTS

### Talk With Your Faculty Member

In the weeks prior to the beginning of the semester you should meet with the faculty with whom you'll be teaching. At this meeting, be sure to find out what the instructor views as the goals of the course and how sections will contribute to that goal. If you don't know already, you'll probably also find out whether you're the only TF or one of a dozen. Go over the syllabus, find out what texts you'll be using (be sure to request "desk" copies, complimentary copies of texts that publishers provide for teachers), and ask how much freedom you'll have in terms of running section: will everyone be running basically the same section, going over the same topics in the same way, or will you have the opportunity to devise your own sections? Set up a schedule to meet with the instructor and/or other TFs on a regular basis (once every one or two weeks is standard). It might also be useful to know where the peaks and troughs of time commitment will fall during the semester so that you can plan your own work

accordingly—you don't want to be trying to write a conference paper the same week you have to read 100 student essays. Above all, make sure you know what is expected of you.

### Five Questions to Ask Your Faculty Member

1. What are the most important things you want my students to learn in section?
2. May I see last year's exams or paper topics?
3. How much uniformity do you expect among TFs?
4. Do you have any teaching materials (activities, examples, problems) that I can use?
5. If you were teaching a section, what would you do?

### What You Want

The best teaching comes about from having not only a good lesson plan for each individual section but also a view of the big picture, a sense of how individual sections fit into the grand scheme of things. After all, if you don't know what each section is for, then you can't communicate that to your students, and if they don't know why they're in section, then why should they go? Bottom line: once you've taken into account what your professor expects, fill in the gaps and make the section your own.

## PREPARING FOR CLASS

What does it mean to be prepared for class? Lecturers have an easier time answering this question because the standard for a good lecture, while difficult to achieve, is easy to identify. Preparing a section, or any class, in which you want students to act on, think about, scrutinize, or practice using material requires a different form of preparation. The most obvious and important difference is that class can truly succeed only if everyone—not just you—is prepared. You therefore need to focus your preparation around the preparation and the learning of your students.

### Where to Start

In general, being prepared for class has less to do with how much or how little time you spend preparing, and

more to do with how well and how wisely you use that time. In this way, preparing for class is a lot like writing a paper or preparing to take an exam. That little analogy may or may not be reassuring.

So what do you actually do to prepare? Alas, there's no simple way, nor any "best" way, to prepare for class. What TFs do in preparation for section varies significantly among disciplines, courses, TFs, and sections. The best sections are those in which the point of the section is made clear, and this ties in with the pre-semester preparation discussed above. Once you've talked with your faculty member about the role section is going to play in the course and thought about how you envision your sections operating within that framework, you can think about what each individual section is meant to accomplish: are you introducing students to a specific controversy? Getting them to contrast the views of two different authors? Teaching them a skill? Illustrating a problem? If you know what a section is meant to accomplish, then you'll have a better idea how to prepare. Just doing the assigned reading usually isn't sufficient.

### **Have an Itinerary**

Once you've figured out the role of a specific section, you can move on to planning how that session will unfold. Many sections begin with the TF asking that most dreaded of questions, "So, what did you think of the reading?" Ugh. Unless the reading was really interesting or really controversial, you can almost guarantee that such an opener will be met with the sounds of paper being shuffled, gum being snapped, and brain functions shutting down.

College classes, after all, should be mental workouts. Would you go to the gym, walk over to a treadmill, and start sprinting right off? Probably not. Would you sprint non-stop for fifty minutes, then come to screeching halt and leave immediately? Doubtful. Think of teaching in the same way. No matter what your subject, it's helpful to conceive of each section meeting as following a basic five-stage scheme.

#### **A Five-Stage Game Plan for Section**

- Stage 1: Get students ready to learn
- Stage 2: Present new material (if necessary)
- Stage 3: Let students engage material
- Stage 4: Debrief that engagement
- Stage 5: Prepare for the next section

STAGE 1 merely requires that you make it clear that class—and, with luck, learning—are about to begin. Your students are probably running in from lunch, or another class, or field hockey practice, or a work-study job. Their minds are probably not focused on the task at hand. You simply need to quiet the usual pre-class chatter, close the door, and take a minute or two to create that focus. You should make clear what the goals and expectations are for that particular meeting (or, early in the semester, for section as a whole). This can also be a good time to make administrative announcements, comment on the previous week's section, or whatever else makes a smooth but discernible transition from life-outside-section to section.

In STAGE 2, you present any new material. This doesn't necessarily mean a lecture or anything formal, but merely represents the stage when learning really kicks in. It might be no more than a few minutes in which you give some background on the authors or works the students read, watched, or listened to for that meeting. This is also the point when most students will take out their notebooks, PDAs, or clay tablets and begin taking notes. Remember that real, deep learning rarely occurs when students are passive, so try to keep this stage as short as possible while still doing everything you need to do.

STAGE 3 represents the real meat of the class, and usually takes up the bulk of the time as well. This is the "discussion" part of "discussion sections." At this point the learning process should shift from you to the students. That doesn't mean that you relinquish control of the class—quite the contrary, in fact. You have to pull off an amazing stunt: you need to skillfully and gently guide the class discussion or activity where it needs to go while simultaneously letting the class momentum proceed without too much overt interference. Think of it like that most favorite of winter sports: curling. You set the stone a-coastin' down the ice as best you can, then grab a broom and sweep furiously before and around it, guiding its path oh-so-gently to its intended target. Not an easy task. But it explains why the Swedes are such good teachers.

After the meat of the section, you need to reflect on what was done. That's what STAGE 4 is for. This too need not take up a lot of time, but it needs to happen. If students have been engaged in discussion for forty minutes, they're likely to have lost sight of the big picture: the point of the discussion, the point of the sec-

tion, the point of the course. So take a minute or two to sum up what occurred (or ask a student to do this) in Stage 3. Then place that in the context of the Big Picture. All of a sudden, students know why they gave up their afternoon naps and came to section instead. Omigod—there’s a point to this!

STAGE 5 serves as a prelude to the next class. Give students an idea of what to expect at the next section and distribute any materials they might need. Since they’ll be completely stoked following the stellar section you just led, they’ll be all the more willing to return if they know what’s on the menu. This is also the time to return work to students.

Obviously, each of the five stages requires a different amount of time, and you may find yourself moving back and forth among some of the stages (particularly the middle three) if you need to use section to address more than one discrete topic or task. Nevertheless, conceiving of section as a fifty-minute block of time with a discernible “plot” will not only make preparing for it easier, but will also make class more rewarding for your students.

### **The Nitty-Gritty**

Once you’ve figured out your game plan, then what? The bulk of the time you spend preparing will be directed towards Stages 2 and 3, which form the core of any section meeting. You should think about what you’ll say during Stages 1, 4, and 5, of course – though they’ll take up less time, they’re no less important – but it’s the presentation and discussion parts of class that form the basis for learning. There are lots of things that TFs do to prepare for section, and the accompanying box presents a smattering of them.

#### *When Are You Done?*

You’ll likely feel most comfortable in the classroom if you’ve over-prepared, especially if you’re a first-time teacher. For at least the first few weeks, you’ll probably find yourself preparing elaborately for each class, reading extra background material, creating handouts, working out a minute-by-minute schedule, and devising various means of fooling your students into thinking they’re being entertained when in fact they’re actually (gasp!) learning the material.

But beware! Not only can over-preparing for class become an easy way to kill hours and hours of your week, it can also make students complacent by discour-

aging them from taking responsibility for preparing themselves for class. As always, you need to be perfectly explicit about what you expect from your students in terms of preparation and participation. In addition, you need to be perfectly explicit with yourself about how much preparation time is reasonable given what you want to accomplish in section and what other tasks you have to attend to. For more tips on managing your time, see “You’re Your Own Worst Enemy: Teaching and Time Management” later in this chapter.

### **The Types of Things TFs Often Do to Prepare for Class**

- do the reading and problem sets
- take notes on the material
- review lecture notes for the week
- prepare an outline of issues to cover in class
- make a list of questions to use in class or write on the board
- make a handout of topics to discuss in class
- make a study guide to hand out
- design a homework assignment or question for students to prepare for a future class
- compile bibliographies or other outside information related to the material
- assemble visual material
- slides, videos, dioramas of the first Thanksgiving
- prepare supplemental reading (be stingy!)
- prepare handouts on writing tips, research methods, problem solving, lab techniques, etc.
- meet with the professor and/or other TFs to discuss the material and how to present it in section
- review students’ questions to anticipate their concerns, problems, interests
- make up quizzes
- devise debates, small group discussion, or other interactive projects (see Chapter 4)
- copy articles relevant to the discussion at hand from newspapers and other periodicals

## **RUNNING CLASS**

This section deals with the nitty-gritty of running a class: what to do when you’re actually up in front of Yale undergrads who sit wide-eyed with wonder and anticipation, awaiting your magisterial display of erudition and eloquence. Actually, all they really want – all

any of us really want, actually—is a class session that makes them feel like it was worth attending. You're off to a really good start if you walk into the classroom knowing what the goals of the section are and having prepared the material. Running the class itself, though, usually requires a healthy dose of flexibility, since the dynamic and unpredictable nature of any discussion means that all of the participants, and especially you, acting as the moderator, need to be able to roll with the punches. Rarely will you have the luxury of presenting material without being interrupted by a question or comment (and that's a good thing!), and it's just as unlikely that a discussion proceeds without needing some form of intervention on your part. It's all one big fantastic circus, friends, so step on up.

In the preceding pages we mentioned a five-stage scheme that serves as a useful framework for designing and running sections. We're going to use that very framework here to guide our discussion about running class. That's wicked *mise-en-abîme*. A Lovecraftian glance into the very abyss of teaching itself.

### Stage 1: Getting Students Ready to Learn

#### *Make Expectations Clear*

Getting your students ready to learn is something that occurs repeatedly throughout the semester. At the start of the term you need to make your students aware of what's going to happen during section and what, specifically, is required of them. This includes not only guidelines and due dates for assignments but also such things as attendance, tardiness, and so on. Be as concrete and specific as possible: "be prepared to discuss each week's readings" can mean vastly different things to different people, while "write a concise, lucid one-page paper responding to one of the week's readings" is far less open to interpretation. Your personal expectations and requirements must be reasonable, of course—you cannot require a ten-page paper from your section that other sections do not have to write.

Above all, students should have a clear sense of what they need to do to make section successful. It's their time too, after all.

#### *The Right Thing at the Right Time*

The order in which you do the various tasks planned for each section is important. Making administrative announcements (a change in your office hours, the format for the midterm, etc.) at the beginning of the class prevents students from missing the info in their rush

to get out of class and head to lunch, so say what you need to at the beginning and quickly reiterate it at the end in case anyone was late or missed it the first time. If you return graded work at the beginning of class, your students will spend ten minutes looking over the test or paper, either trying to contain their disdain like a talent scout at an a cappella concert or squealing with glee like a Ph.D. with a one-year adjunct job. Furthermore, 90% of the class will want to speak to you about grades immediately after section. So leave two minutes at the end of class to return the work; they'll read your comments on the way to Toad's and email you later.

#### *State the Agenda*

At the start of each section you should reiterate in some manner the larger goals of the course while paying particular attention to the particular goals of that specific section. What do you hope the section will have achieved after fifty minutes?

### Stage 2: Presenting (New) Material

The way you present each week's material will depend, of course, on what it is, how difficult students find it, and so on. Presumably, however, you'll have to present something new or challenging at least some of the time, even if it's only to review complex material or to clarify something that was explained poorly in lecture. Be aware that, depending on the class you're teaching, students could have disparate backgrounds and varied degrees of familiarity with the material.



*"I'm a gladiator, but that's just to put food on the table.  
What I really want to do is teach."*

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### *Know When to Hold 'Em, Know When to Fold 'Em*

Perhaps the trickiest and most crucial skill required to lead a good section is learning how to balance the desire to facilitate a good discussion with the necessity of conveying certain information to the students, or the need to open students up to different arguments or ideas that might not arise in the course of normal discussion. This battle is pretty well summed up as follows: sometimes you need to talk, and sometimes you need to shut up. That is, most of the learning that goes on in a classroom happens when the teacher isn't talking: it happens when students are thinking and reflecting, responding to yours and others' viewpoints, assimilating new information with what they already know, critiquing, evaluating, synthesizing. Teaching, which is something *you* do in the classroom, is not the same as learning, which is something the *students* do.

You thus need to walk a fine line between talking and listening, lecturing and facilitating discussion, giving information to students and leading them to their own discoveries. You need to keep students awake and engaged for fifty minutes or more, and to make each of those fifty minutes worthwhile for each of your students. Alas, there aren't any simple tricks to make this happen—like anything good, it just takes a lot of practice. Just be aware that you're presumably teaching a subject that interests you and about which you know quite a bit: for that reason, you might be apt to talk a lot about it. There are several terms for this behavior, the most polite of which involve words like "pedantry" and "narcissist." Bear in mind that lecturing is among the least effective means of teaching. So give it a rest, for the love of God.

### *Repeat Important Points*

Many teachers use the age-old method of "say what you're going to say, say it, then say that you said it." Remember: repetition is not the same thing as redundancy—it can be quite valuable to say the same thing in a different way as long as you're not just mindlessly repeating yourself like a peanut salesman at a baseball game. Remember: repetition is not the same thing as redundancy.

### *Avoid Jargon*

Define basic terms. It can be very easy, especially in introductory classes, to use terms that are familiar to you and completely foreign to your students. Make sure your students feel that they can interrupt you if you say something that needs immediate clarification.

### *The Hidden Dangers of Student Questions*

It's easy to get sidetracked by questions about what you know to be minor details while the major conceptual issues float by. At the same time, don't assume that the silence after your "Any questions?" means that everyone is on board—ask some easy questions about the larger issues just to make sure.

### *Don't Focus on Lecture Material*

Be wary of taking an entire class period to clarify lecture. Needing to do this might indicate that the students really are having trouble with the material, but it might also mean that they're not attending lectures. Rather than rehashing all of the content, outline the major points of the previous lecture(s) and show them how they fit into the larger picture of the entire course. You should probably have a chat with whomever is giving those lectures if it appears that students consistently don't understand them.

### *Put on a Performance*

This doesn't mean that you should run class like it's high tragedy ("O that this too too diminished seventh chord would resolve itself into a dew!"), but think of each class as a little performance. Be 110% of yourself; being a little bit over-the-top plays well when you're in the classroom limelight. Maintain eye contact. Speak firmly at a controlled, leisurely pace. You should be easily heard but not forceful. Speak up and out, looking at your audience as much as possible; don't bury your face in notes (or something worse). Don't be afraid of silence—what might seem like an eternity to you is really only a few seconds.

Move around, but not too much. Occasionally moving into parts of the room where you wouldn't normally walk can be a good way to mix up the pedagogical energy, since a change in focal direction often helps students redirect their attention. At the same time, though, don't prowl around like a lion in a cage—that's distracting.

Sound like this might take practice? It sure does, amigo. Achieving a good classroom persona may require some rehearsal on your part, especially if you've never had need of one before. Speak in front of a mirror. Lecture to your spouse, partner, roommate, friend, pet, or plant.

Once you feel comfortable in front of a class, you might consider taking stock of the more subtle aspects of your own body language, the physical signals we aren't normally aware of giving off but often pick up subconsciously from other people. Some of these are obvious: facing the class is much more open and welcoming than showing them your hindquarters. But everyone has a wealth of tiny gestures that manifest themselves under various conditions, nervousness being perhaps the biggest catalyst. Who hasn't seen public speakers stabbing at the air with a finger or rattling coins in their pockets? These types of behavior are the ultimate distraction. If you've never taught before, get someone to watch you. Better yet, get a GTC consultant to observe (and videotape, if you choose) your class (see Appendix E for contact information). The videotape will reveal habits you never knew you had. You will undoubtedly cringe when you see yourself—everyone does; it's like hearing a recording of your own voice—but you'll be glad you did it. And you need share your shame with no one.

#### *Know Your Audience*

This goes hand-in-hand with the performance aspect of teaching. Be aware of the body language of your students. Most won't be so brutally honest as to tell you straight-out that they think this particular section is as interesting as a jar of mayonnaise, but their non-verbal cues will be pretty clear. If a majority of the class seems to think that the ceiling is significantly more fascinating than whatever learning is supposed to be taking place, then something probably needs to change, and right quick. Have you been talking non-stop for twenty minutes? Are you speaking too quickly? Are you staring out the window?

#### *Getting Engaged*

It's not often that you'll be free to lecture at length during a discussion section, but the mood might strike you from time to time (especially if the *sujet du jour* is something you know well). It's okay to lecture a little bit, but keep it to a minimum. Why? Various studies have shown over and over again that even the most motivated students—even (gasp!) graduate students—tend to zone out after only ten or fifteen minutes if it's a single person who's doing the talking. The Zone is good for daydreaming, writing poetry, and losing fifteen pounds in only ten days, but it's *nicht so gut* for the classroom. Lecture is among the least effective means of promoting real learning, so try to avoid it. Mix it up. This goes for just about everything from the pitch of your voice to your position in the room.

If student interest seems to be waning, you may feel compelled to fall back on the “this will be on the test!” strategy. There are times when that's appropriate. You don't want your students to develop the habit of focusing only on what might be on the test, but let's face it, sometimes you have to ring the dinner bell of anxiety in order to get the learning saliva flowing. Nevertheless, if you are regularly resorting to the test threat to get students to pay attention, it probably means that you've lost them. It does happen, but you need to do something about it. If none of the tips in this book help you get your class back on track, talk to the professor or seek out advice from the GTC. A lousy section is bad for you and it's really bad for your students.

### **Stage 3: Engaging the Material With Discussion**

The prospect of facilitating discussion is often a source of intense stress for TFs. What do I say? What if no one else says anything? What if someone asks a question I can't answer? What if the discussion goes off-topic and I can't regain control?

These are all perfectly understandable responses: leading discussion is not a simple task. It's unpredictable. It can be intensely exhilarating and intensely frustrating. And it's among the most important things TFs do as teachers—most undergraduates equate “section” with “discussion,” since discussion probably accounts for 90% of the time they spend in section.

But there are several simple things you can do to grease the wheels of discussion. First off, you should strive to create an environment amenable to productive discussion. A good classroom dynamic is the holy grail of teaching. The way you interact with your students and your students with each other is crucial in making them receptive to learning from you and from their peers. Your students, like you, learn and work best in a fair and reasonable environment where the basic rules of civility hold sway. Here are a few basic guidelines for creating that kind of classroom.

#### **THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

##### *Positioning the Furniture*

The way the chairs, table, podium, and other furniture are arranged will have a distinct impact on the classroom dynamic. Consider the different messages a student would receive upon entering a room with chairs arranged in rows, all facing the front (where you get to stand), as opposed to a room with the chairs arranged

in a circle or around a table. Similarly, imagine the message it sends when the chairs are arranged like Stonehenge. What is that message? “Druids at work.”

### *Positioning You*

Remember that where you put yourself in the classroom says something too. If the students sit in a circle while you pace around the perimeter, it implies that you’re more of an outsider observing their discussion, whereas sitting with them in the circle makes you more of a fellow participant. Neither set-up is inherently better than the other, and of course you need not do the same thing every week (or even for the entirety of a single class). Just make sure that the physical placement of yourself and your students jives with your plan for the day. Likewise, keep simple logistics in mind. Arranging the chairs in rows facing you is likely to squelch discussion and make you seem more authoritarian, but it’s useful if you have to write a lot of information on the chalkboard.



## **THE INTELLECTUAL AND PERSONAL ENVIRONMENT**

### *Challenge, but Don’t Intimidate*

Remember that you (presumably) know this material far better than any student. As such, there’s no need for showboating; your students will (presumably) respect your knowledge and authority in the classroom. Putting students down or highlighting their ignorance in any given instance makes you look tyrannical and insecure, two adjectives that most people wouldn’t want applied to them. Two others are “pug-nosed” and “leprous.”

### *Don’t Bluff!*

It’s okay not to know everything (unless you’re taking your qualifying exams). If questions arise that you can’t answer, don’t make stuff up – it’s academically unethical, and students are likely to know that you’re trying to bluff. If they catch you, your credibility will be damaged. Either say “I don’t know, but I’ll find out,” (and do so!), or “I don’t know, but here’s how we can find out.” You might even consider making the answer to the question an assignment (or opportunity for bonus points). If you do make it an assignment, be aware that it will likely seem like a punishment and possibly prevent students from asking provocative questions in the future; making it an opportunity for bonus points (or something similar) is a good way to reward students’ motivation.

### *Know Their Names*

If you know your students’ names, not only is it easier for you to call on them (easier than, say, “You there, with the fedora and the confused expression”), but it also subtly communicates your interest and connection to the class. Some TFs make a map of the table or classroom and fill in students’ names, some have the class make little name cards like they’re senators at a committee hearing, some rely on name games – whatever works for you. It’s also helpful to make sure the students know each others’ names. Say names out loud to reinforce your learning and to get the rest of the class to know each other.

### *Give Students the Benefit of the Doubt*

Even if you think you’re being hopelessly naïve, even when experience suggests otherwise, assume that your students are motivated by a desire to learn. Treat class members as mature, responsible, willing, and intelligent students. Let them know that you respect their abilities, as nascent and formless or advanced and sophisticated as they may be. But don’t be a sucker – make clear that you will assess them individually according to their abilities and weaknesses in the class and will not tolerate a lack of preparation.

### **Leading Discussion**

The nuts and bolts of leading discussion involves two fundamental activities. First, you must be prepared to ask good questions, whether to get the ball rolling, restart a stalled section, or redirect a discussion that seems to be going off topic or off the rails. Second, you must be able to facilitate the discussion itself, commenting on students’ insights, eliciting thoughts from



students who might not be keen to speak, decorously but firmly preventing those with a lot to say from dominating a class. These two tasks run in parallel during every class section.

#### ASKING QUESTIONS

Asking questions is one of the most important things a section leader does. This might seem like an absurdly simple task, but it is extremely difficult to formulate a good question. It requires knowledge of the subject matter as well as a thorough understanding of the various ways in which a student might approach the subject.

Thus, you should consider what each question you ask in your section is meant to accomplish. Good discussion questions tend to require some higher-order thinking, above and beyond the factual. Such questions can be difficult to produce off-the-cuff, so if you're a new teacher or new to the subject, spend some of your section preparation time devising them. It's okay – encouraged, even – to have a list handy.

It may be true that there's no such thing as a dumb question (though you will soon find this proposition specious at best), but there are definitely bad questions when it comes to initiating discussion. There's nothing inherently wrong with asking a yes/no or factual question once in a while: if you suspect, for example, that there is some misunderstanding among the students about a basic issue. If you never bust out some more sophisticated queries, however, you will almost certainly bore your class.

#### Types of Questions that Tend Not to Provoke Discussion

Yes/No: *“Are the words ‘charity’ and ‘whore’ etymologically related?”*

Factual: *“What is the only state with a unicameral legislature?”*

Multiple: *“What are some of the songs the Beatles wrote, and who wrote each one?”*

Elliptical: *“So how about those Cubs?”*

Leading: *“Don't you think Ulysses is overrated?”*

Tugging: *“Who can give me one more word to describe Tijuana?”*

Guessing: *“Why do you think Ayn Rand was such a weirdo?”*

#### Types of Questions that Are More Likely to Provoke Discussion

Analytic: *“How can you account for the popularity of 'reality TV' shows?”*

Evaluatory: *“Explain the statement ‘Van Halen was far superior with David Lee Roth as lead singer.’”*

Compare/Contrast: *“How are ale and lager different?”*

Causal: *“What connection, if any, is there between smoking and lung cancer?”*

Personalized: *“What would you say to someone who thinks that if there is no God, then all is permitted?”*

Descriptive: *“How would you describe a penguin?”*

#### FOSTERING PARTICIPATION

As with any group of people, the dynamic of your section is apt to vary radically from class to class and week to week, so there's really no easy way to prepare for the facilitatory legerdemain required by any given session. Nevertheless, there are some common issues and fears surrounding discussion sections; these issues and fears are addressed below with admirable competence and puckish good humor.

#### Section Compared with A Dinner Party

Many teachers, particularly first-time teachers, view a class session as a “success” if fifty minutes elapse without any silence. There's definitely something appealing about this view: when there's no silence then people have been talking, and when people are talking then people are learning, right?

That's true some of the time. But a classroom discussion is not a dinner party. A bit of silence is not necessarily bad. Having one person – even if that person is you – do all of the talking, regaling everyone present with wit and wisdom, is rarely beneficial.

Yet you do need to act like a dinner party host, figuring out ways to get everyone to participate but preventing one boorish lout from dominating the discussion. So before you host that first party, think carefully about what will constitute “participation” in your section. Which leads us to...

### *Defining Participation*

TFs define “participation” in different ways. For some it means just that everyone comes to section; others think that everyone should say something too. Some TFs require weekly response papers but allow shy students not to speak during section; others like to meet each of their students individually during office hours. Whatever your idea of participation, the way in which you carry yourself will make a big difference in your class dynamic in general and the participation level specifically. Participation often increases when students feel comfortable and confident enough around their colleagues and you to speak openly without fear of censure. To this end, be open about your own thinking and opinions; it can help to tell your students how you first encountered the ideas of texts at hand, some of the problems you had with certain authors, and so on. Regardless of how comfortable you make the classroom, it’s entirely possible that you’ll occasionally need to coax students into participating. Likewise, some students may feel perhaps a bit too open about speaking, monopolizing the discussion and preventing others from sharing their views. In the worst cases, a heated discussion turns into a clash of wills, leaving you to defuse the tension. For more on these topics, see “The Usual Fears, the Usual Suspects” and “Managing Controversy” below.

### *Communicate Expectations*

It should come as no surprise that the best way to deal with issues of participation is to tell your students from the get-go what you expect of them. Tell them if attendance is part of their grade, if they’re expected to say something meaningful every section (beware of requiring this, though, as you will likely end up with a string of “meaningful” comments that amount to little more than “I agree with what she said”), or whatever it is you want out of them.

### *Acknowledge Student Comments*

Every student comment deserves some sort of acknowledgement, even if it’s merely a restatement of what was said (“So, Joe, you seem to be suggesting that Kirk was a better politician, Picard a better strategist. Is that a fair summary?”) or even some lighthearted nay-saying on your part (“I’m not sure I agree – after all, the Yankees are overpaid poseurs, while the Red Sox have real heart”). The acknowledgement doesn’t have to come from you personally; it can come from another student as well. The key is to make it clear that someone is listening.

### *Give Students Time to Answer*

Don’t intervene too quickly during those moments when no one speaks at all. Doing so takes away the opportunity for reflection. Remember that you probably already know how you would answer; what you hear as the silence of ignorance could very well be the silence that accompanies thought. A good rule of thumb is to wait five seconds before answering the question yourself or rephrasing it. These five seconds will seem like forever. Smile pleasantly, groom your cuticles, whatever. Just give the class time to think.

### *Incorporate Different Teaching Techniques into Section*

Not all students respond well to traditional discussion or lecture–discussion formats. Consider breaking the class into groups, staging a debate, assigning larger collaborative projects, or using some other form of active learning (see Chapter 4 for some ideas). Remember too that “participation” does not occur only in section: TFs are increasingly making use of email as a means of “discussion,” both on a one-to-one basis and as a group. You can create a discussion forum on the classes.yale.edu server in which students can post their views on the subject matter (see Chapter 4 for this as well).

### **THE USUAL FEARS, THE USUAL SUSPECTS**

Perhaps the most common fear among teachers young and old is that their students will sit in class as silent as monks in a library. What if you threw a section and no one talked? Oh, the humanity! Equally common is the fear that one student will dominate, giving no one else a chance to get their two cents in. Both situations do occur, but probably not as often as you might think. Nevertheless, it’s good to be prepared.

### *It’s Quiet... Too Quiet: When the Class Won’t Talk*

Why is the class silent? There are several reasons you might be faced with such deafening nothingness:

- *All your students are mimes.*  
There’s not much you can do about this.
- *You’re not allowing time to think and respond.*  
This is a very common problem with first-time teachers. If you’re trying to get through a large amount of material, you’ll be apt to rush your questions. Remember that you know this material much better than your students do, so what might seem to you a perfectly obvious question might actually require some reflection on the part of the students.

Wait five seconds after you ask a question before either rephrasing it or answering it yourself.

- *You've just asked a question so obvious that no one wants to be the one to answer it.*

On the other end of the spectrum, don't ask a question like "So, who is the author of this text?" None but the most sycophantic of students will offer up an answer to that, and even then it will be preceded by a profound sigh.

- *They just didn't do the reading.*

Hey, sometimes that happens. When students are studying for midterm exams, for example, they are especially likely to be less prepared for section than normal. While it's probably not a good idea to reduce demonstrably the amount of reading or work for section during the midterm period, it is a good idea to be aware of the potential for under-prepared sections. Other times of the year are also likely to draw students' attention away from your brilliant section to other things: the Yale-Harvard game in November and Tap Night in April are two biggies. If you suspect that no one has done the work, ask the section. They'll likely be honest with you.

- *The material is particularly difficult.*

Again, as something of a specialist in whatever you're teaching, you may not always be aware when something is especially challenging. This will likely become apparent shortly after section starts, as even your most basic questions are answered with more silence. You'll probably have to revise your game plan for section and focus on making sure everyone has the basic concepts down.

- *The students who normally dominate discussion are absent.*

Often, despite your best efforts to the contrary, there will be one or two students who always have something to say (or nothing to say, but speak incessantly anyway). If these students contract dysentery and are absent, the remaining students might have no idea what to do once faced with the opportunity to speak their minds. This will usually resolve itself after a few minutes and the students will enjoy their new-found freedom; with luck, that new dynamic will carry over to the next section.

Clearly, the way to deal with a silent classroom varies with the particular problem. But you'll be in good shape if you prepare for section with that possibility in

mind. Have back-up questions or plans ready if it becomes clear that no one has done the reading or if everyone has done the reading but no one understands it. It might help to keep lists (either physically or just conceptually) of basic information, slightly more complex issues, and advanced ideas for the topic(s) at hand. If no one has done the work, you can resort to the basics; if everyone has done it and engaged with it, you can unleash the big guns.

#### *"Problem" Students: Talking Too Much, Talking Too Little*

It's very common to have a few students in every section who simply never talk. There will also be a few students who so monopolize every discussion that you can't believe they don't notice. In both cases, a good first line of attack is to approach them outside of class. Be as non-threatening as possible. Speak to them immediately after section, invite them to office hours, or email them. In the case of the Silent Sams, ask if there's a specific reason they're not speaking. Are they bored? Shy? Coy? Would they speak more if you asked them questions directly, or would that make them more nervous?

In the case of the chatterboxes, tell them that you appreciate their enthusiasm and interest, but that you'd like other students to have a chance to speak and that their not interrupting people constantly would really help in that endeavor. In class, you can always try the "Let's hear from somebody else" routine. Add glaring as necessary.

#### **Stage 4: Debriefing After the Discussion**

You may be tempted to allow discussion to go on as long as possible, preferably until fifty minutes have completely elapsed. Most students, moreover, are probably used to this phenomenon. Probably the most common way to end section is something along the lines of "Whoa, it looks like we're out of time. Think about what we discussed. See you next week!" That tactic can send the wrong message, however. The point of section is not (well, should not) be to fill fifty minutes: there's a goal to each one, right?

The conclusion of class should, like the conclusion of an Agatha Christie novel, tie things up nicely. Don't let students talk all the way to the end of class. Stop them with five or ten minutes left to go so that you can reflect on what happened during the section as a whole and the discussion in particular. Were the goals of the section met? How so? If not, what didn't happen, and why?

You might summarize the discussion and perhaps reiterate its relation to the course as a whole; you might indicate how what you covered in that section will relate to the subsequent lectures or sections; you could merely observe that the discussion illustrated how controversial or difficult the material is. If you started the section by referencing a particular text or statement or artwork, you might consider coming back to it at the end, uroborically tying it all together. If you can, incorporate some positive feedback, perhaps praising the students for engaging with the material in such a lively way, or even for their patience in dealing with what is a difficult subject. Another strategy is to show students how what they've accomplished in section relates to success on papers or exams. Highlight well articulated arguments, use of evidence, or problem-solving strategies.

When you take two minutes for this crucial debriefing step, you send the message to your students that their discussion was worth something other than merely a participation grade. The class as a whole made progress toward a larger goal, whatever that may be. The result? More motivated students who have a reason to come back for the next week's section.

#### **Bad Wrap-Ups**

"Well, enough of that. I'm starving. Let's get out of here."

"As you can see, the question of whether bad men can produce great art is a difficult one. The answer, however, is No."

"I'm surprised no one brought up the possibility that Kafka himself actually turned into a cockroach for a period of time. Oh well. See you next week."

#### **Better Wrap-Ups**

"I think our discussion today has shown just how thorny the issue of judicial interpretation is. Next week we'll relate our discussion to the 2000 presidential election debacle."

"At the start of class we watched part of an episode of *The Simpsons*. Can anyone relate our discussion of appropriating stereotypes for political gains to the social satire in that excerpt?"

### **Stage 5: Preparing for the Next Section**

The final minutes of class inevitably take place amidst the sounds of paper shuffling together, chairs scratching across the floor, and cell phones being released from their homes in the straps of messenger bags. The wrap-up of Stage 4 served as the postlude to the current section; use the final moments of section to dish up a prelude to the following week. Better yet, suggest how this week's discussion will play into next week's section. Now students really know what's going on! A—Always. B—Be. C—Closing. Always Be Closing.

### **Managing Controversy**

There are two main types of controversy that can erupt in the classroom. The first is a result of the material, when student viewpoints diverge and productive debate is transformed into unproductive animosity. The second kind is the result of interpersonal relations between the students and TF. These two kinds of controversy are very different in cause but produce similar results: a classroom dynamic that squelches discussion and learning rather than encouraging it.

#### **CONTROVERSY RELATED TO THE MATERIAL**

Classroom controversies can be a double-edged sword. If it's difficult to spark discussion in section, a TF will welcome any kind of controversy; other TFs—particularly those in courses that address contemporary issues, such as those in political science or sociology—find that a few students want to and expect to voice their opinions loudly and forcefully on a weekly basis.

Conflicts can be directed at you, the professor, other students, or the material itself. Dealing with these conflicts is one of the trickiest aspects of being a teacher, since the means of handling them varies with their object and intensity. In some circumstances conflict can be a great means of sparking (and continuing) discussion, so you need not feel that every conflict has to be smothered like a spark in dry grass. However, if a conflict or controversy seems to be causing a palpable sense of discomfort in the class, it's your duty to defuse it in some way.

#### *Controversial Course Material*

Unless you're wildly insensitive, you'll be able to anticipate when the course material will be controversial. Controversial issues lead to situations in which students feel too intimidated by a subject to risk voicing their views, or to situations in which the strongest

opinions dominate the debate. You can anticipate and compensate for a range of student responses in a number of ways. One of the most fundamental strategies is to decide how responsible you will be for creating a safe speaking environment for all your students. You should start the class (or semester, if you're likely to encounter controversial material frequently) by reminding students that they should be respectful and sensitive to the opinions of others. One effective way of creating an appropriate atmosphere is to ask the students themselves to devise a list of ground rules for discussion. These might include "argue with opinions, not people" and "only the woefully ignorant can use ad hominem attacks," for example.

Nevertheless, it is quite possible that you will be faced with a student whose opinions might be considered racist, sexist, or homophobic.

It can require an extraordinary amount of restraint to keep yourself from railing against these views yourself, but it is most effective in such circumstances to suggest that there might be another view, then invite another student to offer it. (It's almost certain, of course, that a profoundly offensive comment will have students of the opposing viewpoint jumping out of their seats for the opportunity to voice it.) If you argue with students yourself, they may feel that you are trying to shut them up. On the other hand, students may feel that the class is not a safe environment if you let flagrantly offensive comments go by without comment.

#### *Students Who Challenge Your Authority*

Student challenges to the TF's authority often occur in the context of grading. However, there are a number of more subtle challenges that may disrupt class, such as a student interrupting you, aggressively disagreeing with you, talking to other students while you're speaking, appearing bored, or repeatedly leaving early. A disagreement may turn into a lively debate, but if the behavior is egregiously disruptive, you might not be able to deal with it in the classroom. Discuss the matter with the student outside of class to see if it's just a cry for attention or if there is a deeper problem. If you are the target of harassing remarks, speak with the profes-

sor, DGS, McDougal Graduate Teaching Center, and/or a dean regarding possible referral to University sexual and racial harassment committees.

#### **CONTROVERSY RELATED TO THE CLASSROOM DYNAMIC**

Controversy can also be the result of festering resentment. This happens most frequently when students perceive that the TF is treating some students differently from others, either academically or personally.

#### *Don't Play Favorites*

Chances are you'll notice if you're actually playing favorites—your favorites will be the students you discuss with your fellow TFs outside of class, the ones whose papers you "just know will be good." Favoring some students over others is unavoidable. What is avoidable is making that fact obvious to everyone.



Class morale and the classroom dynamic can be damaged just as much by the mere perception of favoritism as by actually engaging in it. Encouraging participation from everyone (by force, if necessary) is one way to avoid favoring those who speak over those who don't.

#### *Be Fair and Flexible*

It's important for students to feel that you're treating everyone equally. Don't say to one student what is not appropriate for all. If one student successfully negotiates with you some form of extra consideration (a paper re-write, for example), then you are ethically obligated to offer the same to everyone. (Consider too the practical issue if word gets out among your students that some are being offered something that others aren't.)

Remember that in many cases you are the liaison between the students and professor. If some of the class asks for the opportunity for extra-credit work, discuss this with the instructor and report back to the class. Similarly, if it seems that the class is consistently lagging behind the instructor's presentation of information, relay that to the instructor so that changes may be considered.

### *Cute Student? Get Behind Me, Satan!*

Ah yes, the question everyone's been waiting for. There can be a very fine line between the professional and friendly side of teaching, especially when TFs are only a few years older than their charges, and particularly so in discussion sections, which tend to be fairly informal. If you find that you're attracted to a student and would like to see that person in an (ahem...) "social" sense, there is but one guideline: DON'T. Simple, no? Not only would such a relationship violate the basic ethics of the teaching profession, but it would also jeopardize your standing with the class as a whole by focusing your attention on the student. It's also kind of creepy on your part. Moreover, University policy expressly prohibits a teacher from having a sexual relationship with a student in his or her class or over whom he or she has direct supervisory responsibility, regardless of whether the relationship is consensual (see "Standards of Behavior" in Chapter 7 for the University's policy).

But there's another aspect of this situation that may not immediately occur to you. If you express interest in a student in a manner that is perceived as inappropriate, harassing, or even threatening, then that student has the right to take the matter to a DUS, dean, master, or other authority. Even if you felt that it was misconstrued harmless flirtation, you will still be in the position of explaining and justifying your conduct. As you can imagine, this is a situation no TF would want to be in, so adopt a social posture of friendly neutrality. You can smile at your students, you can be jovial and pleasant. But beyond that: err on the side of caution.

What about if you're the object of flirtation or proposition? It's likely to happen to every TF at some point. First of all, be aware of one thing, as sad as it may sound: it's never an attraction to you; it's an attraction to the TF. If you have to deal with this situation, be tactful and discreet, but also be careful. If you receive flirtations via email, save them (for your records, not just to read and re-read in order to bolster your sagging ego). If you discuss the matter with the student, you

should consider having the meeting in a public area outside the classroom and having a third person present (an instructor, the DUS, a dean, but not a fellow student). This third person can vouch for your handling the situation properly, should the need to do so arise.

## USING MEDIA

There was a time when a classroom had little more than some desks for the students, a chalkboard for the teacher, and a birch branch for the unruly. Those days are long gone. However, what sound pedagogy no longer permits in terms of arboreal discipline is more than made up for with all the types of media now available for your use: while most classrooms still have chalkboards, you can also use things like overhead projectors (if you're going old-school), DVD players, and data projectors (if you're oh-so-avant-garde). Chances are, however, that the blackboard will continue its unchallenged reign for quite some time.

### *Da Board*

Writing on the chalkboard may seem like the simplest of tasks, and in many ways it is. It's like writing with a pen on paper, except the paper is vertical, black, and huge, and the pen is chalk. Some tips:

- Write legibly. Forget cursive. Print. If you've never used a board extensively before, consider getting to your classroom early on the first day and trying a few test words to make sure you can read them from the back of the room.
- Erase everything. Before class (every class, not just the first), erase the boards completely and thoroughly. A few stray words from the previous section can distract students for the entire fifty minutes. This is especially true if the words are anatomical or palindromes — everyone loves palindromes. A man, a plan, a canal — Panama!
- Don't erase so much. Try to use all of the board (assuming it's visible to everyone, and without sacrificing clarity) so that you don't have to erase something in order to write something.
- Be organized. In general, try to start writing on the board at the left and work towards the right. Flawlessly logical. This is of course less important if you're just writing a list of terms on the board or brainstorming or something like that, but a jumbled board makes for jumbled minds.

- Bring your own chalk. Most rooms will have a few pieces lying around, but you can't count on it. Invest one of your hard-earned dollars in a box of chalk, and you'll be set for years of TFing.
- Talk while you write. If you're writing a lengthy equation or explanation or series of terms on the board, try to keep speaking (or let a student speak) while you write. Dead time while you write on the board can really kill any rhythm you've worked up. Also, it's boring to watch someone writing, and keeping your back turned for too long, while hip in a Miles Davis sort of way, is a bit off-putting.
- Get out of the way. Once you've written something on the board, refer to it by pointing to it from the side while facing the class. If students can't see it, why bother to put it on the board?

### *All That Other Fancy Stuff*

The staff at Media Services on High Street (432.2650) can set you up with all sorts of neat gadgets you might need or want to use in your teaching. These include overhead projectors, slides, VCRs, audio equipment, and data projectors for PowerPoint presentations. Make sure you contact Media Services well in advance of your anticipated use date, just to make sure the equipment is available. Furthermore, try to get it delivered early if at all possible so that you can make sure you know how it works before students arrive. Stumbling over a standard CD player makes you look a bit, well, simple, while plugging your iPod into that same CD player makes you look *awesome*.

## ON THE WEB: THE CLASSES SERVER

Perhaps you're an experienced, technology-savvy TF with an elaborate web page devoted to your dissertation. But maybe not. Pine and the Pantheon petrifying, perhaps? Mars and Morpheus mostly menacing? "Java" generally just gibberish? Fear not, young squire. You need not don a propeller-topped beanie and wade through C++ manuals to become a suave, swank, technology-usin' teacher. Yale has built an excellent, user-friendly set of on-line tools available to instructors to help them manage course-related information. The tools are useful for collecting assignments, delivering information to students, and allowing students to communicate with each other and with the instructor. The

best part? You can build a functioning course or section website in a jiffy (that's about 1.6 jiffies Canadian). Open the pod bay doors, HAL.

### **What Is It?**

The classes web server ([classes.yale.edu](http://classes.yale.edu)) allows instructors to create class-specific web pages and to provide syllabi and other course materials online. It also permits online submission of homework and supports real time chat and discussion groups. Students and instructors need their NetID and password to access the server. This means that you can update your syllabus from anywhere in the world! Are you sold on it yet?

A folder is automatically created on the classes server for each course listed by the registrar. Access to this folder is given to the instructor of record (that means the course head). If you're the TF for a course and will be responsible for posting materials or creating web pages, the instructor can grant you access.

### **Why Use It?**

Oh, you silly straw man of an interlocutor! You'll soon be asking "Why NOT use it?" Among the many things you can do:

- Post lecture notes, PowerPoint presentations, or other documents in the Materials section. This reduces the number of paper handouts and ensures that students have easy access to these documents. You also don't have to carry around copies of all the course handouts in case someone misses a class.
- Require that students submit homework assignments via the Student Uploads section. These uploaded documents are time-stamped and identified by the student's name. In a word: kewl. (No more "I couldn't find your mailbox to turn in my paper" or "the building was locked" or "your mailbox was surrounded by alligators with flaming swords.")
- Return corrected homework or comments to students via secure folders in the Materials section. For each student you can create a folder to which only that student has access. In short: "My voice is my passport. Verify me!"
- Use the e-mail list (created automatically by the server) to communicate with students.

- Conduct “virtual office hours” with the Chat feature: you schedule a time when you will be available on-line to answer questions or participate in a discussion. Chat sessions are automatically cleared each week or may be saved by the instructor. Note that this allows you to hold office hours naked without any grievances being filed against you (assuming you refrain from asking “anyone want to guess what I’m wearing right now?”).
- Create a Newsgroup where you can post discussion topics and students can participate in discussions. The Newsgroup differs from the chat in that the postings are preserved for the entire semester and permits threaded discussions – all of the responses to a particular subject are collected in one topical “thread.” Students and teachers can participate in the Newsgroup discussions at any time, whereas the Chat is most useful if several people are logged in at the same time.

### How to Use It?

If you have experience creating web pages, you’ll find that the classes server makes it easy to put up the class web page and post the syllabus or other materials. If you’re not familiar with this business, visit [classes.yale.edu/help](https://classes.yale.edu/help) for documentation. ITS is happy to schedule orientation sessions or workshops for small groups or to meet with individual TFs to discuss individual needs.

It’s a good idea to test your course site by logging in as a student at <https://classes.yale.edu/student> and selecting your course. This enables you to see the course from the students’ point of view and puts you in a better position to answer their questions. Try uploading a document, viewing the documents in the Materials section, and accessing the Newsgroup.

You can email questions or comments to [classes@yale.edu](mailto:classes@yale.edu). You’ll get a response quickly, usually within one working day. For other course resources, don’t forget to check with the library. Yale libraries can provide specialized reference pages with links to content-specific materials. For example, the Social Sciences Library will put together a very nice subject guide for your course if you ask them nicely and ply them with treats. Go to [www.library.yale.edu/guides](http://www.library.yale.edu/guides) to see what’s already been put together for various subject areas.



## YOU’RE YOUR OWN WORST ENEMY: TEACHING AND TIME MANAGEMENT

On the whole, undergraduates find their contact with TFs to be one of the most important aspects of their Yale education. As a result, you might find yourself wanting to spend an inordinate amount of time helping your students succeed in your class or section. This is a natural and noble response. Nevertheless, you need to find a way to work with students while continuing to make progress in your own coursework and research. And while you’ll probably find yourself spending extra time preparing for class at the beginning of each semester, too much of a good thing can really wreak havoc on your academic and personal lives. It’s true, it can be a lot more fun to prepare a really stellar section, garnering the respect of tomorrow’s world leaders, than to consign yourself to the bowels of Sterling for the afternoon. Fortunately, most TFs strike a balance between teaching and the rest of their lives (such as they are). How do you do that? First of all, set reasonable goals for what you’d like to accomplish in each section and a limit on how many hours you’ll allow yourself to accomplish them. Once you’ve done that, the rest is cake: (1) set boundaries around the time you spend striving to achieve your goals; and (2) prevent others – particularly your students – from encroaching on those boundaries.



## Setting Boundaries

### *Schedules*

Effectively limiting the amount of time you devote to teaching each week requires, above all, creating a plausible and realistic schedule for yourself, allotting time for all of your activities: teaching, working on your own research, part-time job, intramural stickball, gamete donation, and so on. So devise a schedule for yourself, providing blocks of time for each activity. You'll probably get more done working in a single two-hour block than in three 45-minute sessions. If you're teaching a discussion section, try to limit your teaching prep days to two or three a week. If you teach two sections, try to arrange to teach them back-to-back, thus eliminating extra prep time. If you teach every day (as in many language courses), set a limit on the total number of hours you spend on teaching each day.

You might also make a semester calendar, marking down when exams and papers will need to be graded so that you can count on having less time to devote to your own work during those times.

### *Call It A Day*

What you might suspect is true: the person most likely to encroach on your time boundaries is your own fine self. There's no way to avoid the feeling that there's just one more reference to track down, one more helpful handout to make, one more student to email. With teaching prep, as with writing a dissertation, you never really finish: you just stop. At some point you just have to be done, so budget your allotted prep time accordingly. You might be surprised to find that your students will forgive you if not every section is mind-blowing. Be reasonable, we beg you.

## Keeping Students at Bay Like the Rabid Dogs They Are

### *Front Load!*

Do as much preparation as possible before the course starts, or during the first few weeks of the semester. If you need to read a particularly long or dense text or if you have to learn (or review) part of the subject matter, do it early so that you're not under the gun when the time to teach it rolls around. If you want to give your students a handout on writing tips (or something else), make up a draft of it early on, well before you need it.

### *Make Student Responsibilities Clear*

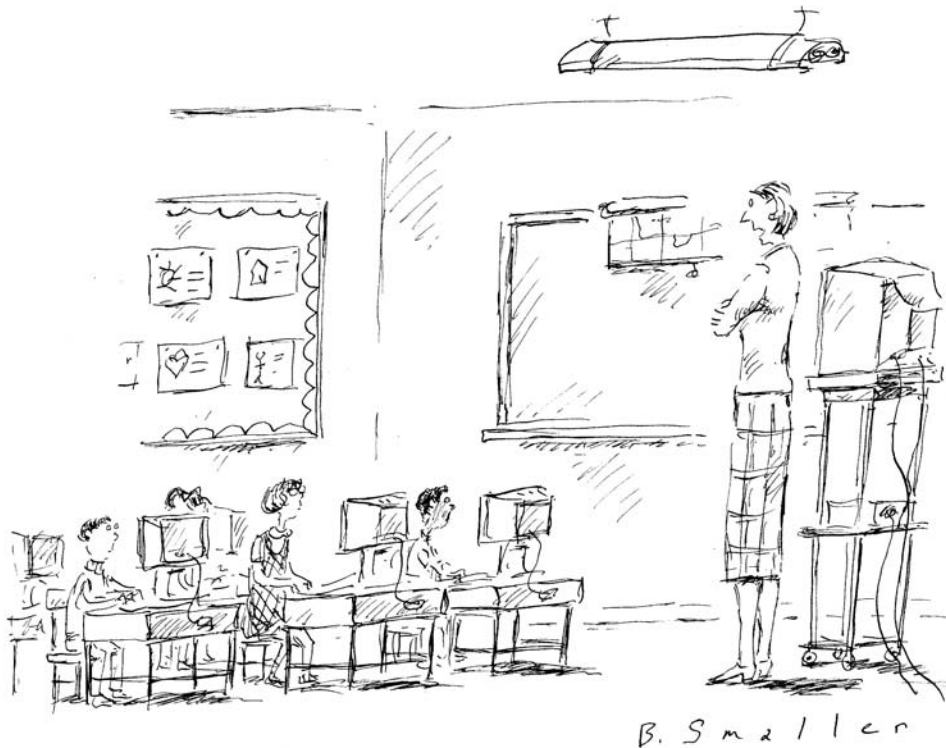
Students can be remarkably clever in the sundry and devious ways in which they suck hours from your schedule. Believe it or not, you are not single-handedly responsible for each student's success or failure in a course. You do not have to tailor the course or section to each student's individual needs. Moreover, the students who demand the most of you are usually the ones putting the least amount of effort into the course. They're the ones who need to meet twice a week because they slept through lecture, or want to re-write their papers because they didn't do it right the first time. Don't do more for these students than they're doing for the course. If they miss a week of class, don't email them your notes; instead, tell them where they can find the information. (There are of course cases – a medical or family emergency, for example – in which the right thing to do is to bring the student up to speed. These cases are the ones for which a student can obtain a Dean's Excuse. See "Late or Postponed Work" in Chapter 7.)

Dealing with late work can be a burden, so make your late policy clear from the very beginning. Be concrete. Don't say "late work will be penalized"; say "late papers will lose a letter grade for each day they're late" (or whatever system you choose). If you want to cut students some slack on an individual basis, that's fine (but see "Be Fair and Flexible" above), but don't try to impose a strict late policy halfway through the semester. Not only is it rude – you shouldn't change rules seemingly at will – but it also won't work.

### *Be Reasonable With Student Meetings*

You are not obligated to meet students at the time most convenient for them. Direct them to your office hours, or, if that's unfeasible, make an appointment for a mutually agreeable time. Don't shortchange your work for theirs.

Similarly, be clear about how available you'll be outside the classroom. Email is a godsend in this regard because it allows students to contact you whenever they want, and you to respond whenever you want. Make sure your students know how often you check your email so that they don't harbor unrealistic expectations as to how quickly you'll respond: many undergraduates check their email compulsively and many graduate students do not.



*"Keep your eyes on your own screen."*

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It's a good idea to save every email message you receive from and send to your students. Create a separate mail folder for each course, and save it for at least a semester after the course ends. Do this in part for reference, but also for your own protection. For vital or thorny emails (for example, if you are informing students that they are failing the course or that their paper is three weeks late), cc: the head of the course so that a faculty member is aware of the situation.

If you choose to give out your home phone number, be extremely explicit about acceptable times to call. Emphasize that students who call you at unacceptable times will be the object of unrestrained wrath.

#### *Share the Burden*

If you have a particularly hectic week, consider asking your students to share the burden for a bit (though you need not necessarily say "I'm having a really busy week, and so..." unless you want to hear that very excuse coming out of their mouths the night before papers are due). It might be a good time to try having a student-led discussion. You could also invite a guest speaker or find some other way to get others to help you out. Do NOT cancel section because you are "just too busy." Instead, do your best for the week and figure out what went wrong in your time-management scheme.

# CHAPTER 2: Teaching the First Class

## DON'T PANIC.

Feeling nervous? Doubting your ability to conduct a class? That's okay. A pretty smart guy named Bertrand Russell once said "The whole problem with the world is that fools and fanatics are always so certain of themselves, and wiser people so full of doubts." See that? If you're having doubts, then Bertrand Russell thinks you're smart. Put *that* on your c.v.

The prospect of teaching probably makes you terrified, bewildered, excited, or some combination of all of those. That's understandable, particularly if you've never taught before. After all, the first day of class is like a blind date. You and your students have never met before, but you've been set up with the hope that a fruitful relationship will develop. You're optimistic, naturally, but you're also anxious about what you might discover when your students come through the door for the first time, and you know that they're anxious too. There's no question that the first class is an important one – it's your opportunity to establish the basic goals and expectations for the course as well as to set the tone for the entire semester. With luck, things will go so well that your students will be excited to return for the next class meeting, and the tips in this chapter are meant to help make that happen.

Nevertheless, you shouldn't worry so much about the first day that you stake the semester on it; there'll be plenty of time to overcome any first-day catastrophes (though a nickname like "Dry-Heave Johnny" might be hard to live down).

With luck, you've already read the previous chapter, *TEACHING A SUCCESSFUL SECTION*, wherein you learned that a lot of what goes into a good section happens long before you enter the classroom. That chapter focused a lot on the big-picture: what's section for? What is it supposed to accomplish? How do I set goals and expectations for my section and communicate them to my students?

That's all good stuff, no question about it, but if you're a first-time teacher you've probably got a lot of more practical questions: what do I wear? What do I have my students call me? What if I'm so nervous I pray for

spontaneous human combustion? The next few pages are intended to address some of those concerns. Read on, and fear no more.

## BEFORE THE FIRST DAY

If you're lucky, you've been able to talk with the faculty member teaching your course well in advance of the semester and had time to think about the role of your section (hey, did we mention that we stress this in Chapter 1?), but there's a chance that never happened. That's a pity. Nevertheless, you should still have time to do the barest minimum of research before the semester even begins. The most important things to be familiar with are the obvious – the course, the classroom, and the students. Get crackin'.

### Initial Research

#### *Learn from Your Elders*

Talk to your professor or course head before you do anything else. Ask about her goals for the course and her expectations of you and of your section. Get a copy of the syllabus, assignments, tests, and any other course materials. Then talk to professors and TFs who have taught the course before. What did they like or dislike about teaching the class? How did they approach the first day? What materials did they use?

#### *To Know Them is to Love Them*

Find out about the students who will be taking your course. How many should you expect? What skills and abilities will they bring to the class? What prerequisite courses can you expect them to have taken? What years will they be in?

#### *Mark Your Territory: Check Out the Classroom*

There are a number of reasons to visit your classroom before the first day. First of all, you don't want to get lost on the first day – nothing precipitates paroxysms of terror quite like a frantic run through the hallways in desperate search of your classroom. If you've been given a key to your classroom, you'll want to make sure that it works (unless of course you're keen on the idea of holding the first class in a stairwell). Finally, you want to feel as comfortable as possible with your surroundings. Get to know the classroom. What space do you have to roam around in? How big is the room?

Can you move chairs around? If it's hot outside, make sure you can get the windows open or work the air conditioning. If it's cold outside, find out how the heat works (assuming you have any control over it). If it's just the right temperature, you can move on to testing Mama Bear's and Papa Bear's beds.

## Things to Think About

### *Your Duds*

There's much more to being a TF than choosing your teaching garb, but what you wear will make a statement, and you probably don't want that statement to be "I have only recently begun dressing myself." Perhaps the most important guideline is: dress comfortably. If you feel like a stiff, you'll probably act like a stiff. On the other hand, don't get too comfortable—it might be hard to command the students' respect in a pair of acid-wash jeans and an old Guns n' Roses T-shirt. In general, more "professional" attire has the advantage of setting an authoritative, formal tone, but it might create a certain amount of distance between you and your students. Informal clothes will probably be much more comfortable, but your students might take you less seriously. Ultimately, the decision depends on what image you want to convey and what makes you most at ease. Don't worry too much about it, though: you can wear different clothes next week. In fact, please do so.

### *Hey You*

What are the students going to call you? There are no set guidelines, and it can cause consternation for you and your students alike. Some students feel awkward referring to TFs by their first name, but many TFs feel awkward being referred to as Mr. or Ms. So-and-So. (Naturally, you can avoid either of these choices by asking them to call you "El Profesor Mas Macho.") Just make sure you say at the outset how you'd like to be addressed. If you avoid the issue, your students are going to spend the entire semester trying to find ways to get your attention without addressing you directly. In their emails, they will probably end up adopting an awkward mix of formal and informal titles ("Dear Professor Susie..."). Head 'em off at the pass.

### *"Office" Hours*

Since most graduate students don't have their own offices, this whole topic is usually regarded as a sick joke. Nevertheless, you're going to have to come up with some plan about where and when you want to meet students. Standard places include the McDougal



Center Common Room, Machine City, and local coffee shops. Some TFs meet only by appointment, while others set up regular office hours at which students can drop in freely. The tricky issue here is to make yourself available to your students without letting yourself become overwhelmed with meetings. Although it's absolutely vital that you set aside time to meet with students on a regular basis, you shouldn't let it dominate your entire work week (especially when there's that pesky little thing called a "dissertation" to worry about). See "You're Your Own Worst Enemy: Teaching and Time Management" in Chapter 1.

## THE FIRST DAY

### Essential Provisions

#### *Chalk*

You can't count on chalk being in your classroom, and, like a cop or a box of Hefty bags, it'll almost certainly not be there when you need it. Also, do everyone a favor and dull the edges of the chalk before using it. You want to begin class on a good note, not high-pitched, wraith-like screeching.

#### *TF Policy Sheet*

In order to ensure that your expectations are clear, you should write up a policy sheet that details everything students are responsible for (see the sample policy sheets in Appendix C). At the very least, you should include your name, email address, grading policies, late policies, and office hours. Most TFs prefer email for communicating with students, but if you choose to give out your home phone number, make sure you're absolutely clear about when it's acceptable to call; you may regret giving out your number when the phone rings at 3 AM the night before the midterm. One useful tactic is to announce that you'll accept phone calls until 10pm, but that you'll deduct one point from the exam

or paper grade for each minute after 10 that they call. Students will laugh and think you're kidding when you say this. Don't flinch. Ask, with a steely eyed glare, "Do I look like I'm kidding?"

### *Student Information Sheet*

Although you'll probably want your students to introduce themselves to the class, it's a good idea to get some basic information from them on paper (name, email address, college, year, major). You might also ask about their background in the subject (what other related classes have they taken?) and any extracurricular activities they are involved in. Many TFs use index cards for this, but a full sheet of paper is often necessary if you want a lot of information. However, don't ask for too much; students will become justifiably suspicious if you ask "What's your sign?" or "Do you have any tattoos?"

### *A Plan*

Though you need not script everything that you're going to say on the first day, it's a good idea to have a definite plan of attack. Make a list of tasks that you have to accomplish and the order in which you plan to do them. You should probably allot some time for introductions, going over the syllabus, and teaching or discussing the material, though the order in which you do these is up to you. Certain tasks may take more or less time than you had initially imagined, so make sure you prioritize your tasks and keep an eye on the clock.

## **What to Do at the First Class**

### *Discuss the Goals of the Section*

With luck you've had some time to think about your goals for section (see Chapter 1 for more about preparing to teach). What is the purpose of your section? How does it relate to the lecture and reading? If your answer to this is simply that you want them to learn the material, then you should probably think about the question some more. How will your section help students with the papers they'll write or exams they'll take? If students participate in section, what will they be able to do that they can't do now? Are there some big questions to explore? The important thing is to think about your section from their point of view. What's in it for them? Share the answers with your students so they know why they're there.

### *Be Clear about Expectations*

On the first day of class, you set ground rules that the students will hold you to for the rest of the semester. If you take a lax attitude toward grading, attendance, or

class participation, your students will take advantage of it. Make sure you're explicit about what you expect from them. It's a good idea to be especially strict at the beginning of the semester. Remember: it's easier to change from Dr. Evil to Mary Poppins than it is to do the reverse. Students will be happy should the former occur, but they will never forgive the latter. Nobody likes it when Mary Poppins gets mean.

### *Establish a Safe Environment*

By "safe" we don't mean metal detectors and padded walls. Your students need to feel that they can speak freely in the classroom; if they have questions that they want to raise or points they want to make, they should feel free to do so. This is essential in all classrooms, but it becomes particularly important in sections that deal with controversial issues (as in Sociology, History, Political Science, Multivariable Calculus).

In order to establish a safe environment you should set ground rules right from the beginning. If you're going to be discussing touchy subjects, you need to make sure that everyone will respect everyone's opinions. One strategy is to have the students draw up and agree to a list of guidelines for discussion. (This might not need to be done at the very first section, but the subject should be broached, if only to give your students the heads-up.) Whenever you do this, distribute copies of the rules to all of the students at the next section.

### *Getting to Know You*

Don't introduce yourself just by name ("We are Falco and this is Music 804"). Tell your students something about yourself: your interests, your background, why you're teaching the course, anything to let them get to know you a little. Don't babble on too much about your background, though. In the same vein, avoid revealing too much in the way of personal details. You want to keep a professional distance between yourself and your students, and telling them about the nasty breakup with your ex-boyfriend might blur the lines of authority (and make you seem borderline psychopathic).

Some TFs like to have their students introduce themselves. This may not work with large sections, but it can be a great way to get a class to loosen up a bit. Take care how you handle this, though—it isn't summer camp, so you don't need to use lengthy, probing ice-breakers. Unfortunately, a little embarrassment is par for the course with just about every such activity, but you don't want to leave the students with deep emo-

tional scars (superficial emotional scars are probably okay). One common strategy is to have the students pair up, talk for a few minutes, then introduce each other to the class. Another approach is simply to ask the students individually to say their name, year, and something unique about themselves. The benefit of this is that at least one or two students will probably have something amusing or interesting to say (“My name is Karlheinz, I’m a freshman, and I know what the word ‘petrichor’ means”). The downside is that some students won’t be able to think of anything and will end up feeling both embarrassed as well as uninteresting. Avoid pointing and laughing.

### *Begin Learning Names*

Unless you possess freakish memory skills or have a very small class, you’re probably not going to learn all of your students’ names on the first day. However, here are a few suggestions to get you started:

1. Draw up a seating-chart of the room beforehand and fill it in as the students introduce themselves. In addition to writing down their names, write something distinctive about them (“Larry Legassino; has a huge forehead”). Though your students may not sit in the same place for the next class, it’s a good start.
2. Ask the students their names when they ask questions, and repeat their names when you answer them.
3. Use nametags or name cards. You might feel like you’re at an insurance salesmen’s convention, but it’s a great way for the students to become familiar with each other’s names.

### *Teach Something!*

A substantial chunk of your first class will be taken up by bureaucratic details (introductions, going over a syllabus or TF policy sheet, etc.), but it should not deal with these alone. Try to teach the students something. Give them an idea of what they’re going to be studying. You might even consider doing this right at the beginning of class—in many cases it would be far more interesting to jump right into the subject at hand than to begin class by simply reading out loud from the syllabus.

### **A Report From The Field**

“I once began an abnormal psychology section with an in-class activity. I played a number of taped recordings; some were selections from contemporary poetry and some were selections from the recorded speech of schizophrenic patients. I then asked the students to see if they could distinguish between the two. Not only was it a fun little exercise to kick off the semester, but it also introduced them to some of the basic issues of the class.”

— Spooky Milgram, GRAD '07

### *Dealing with the Shopping Period*

The so-called Shopping Period (see Chapter 7) is a great opportunity for students, but it can be a giant headache for you. For discussion sections this tends to be somewhat less of a problem, since such sections generally don’t meet until the second week of class or later, by which point most students have already decided on their semester schedules. (Rest assured, however, that students may attempt to change sections as the time demands of their social—and sometimes academic—lives mutate.) But if the class you’re teaching begins meeting from the first week of the semester, it’s quite possible that you’ll have students walking in and out of the room throughout your first class, and there’s no guarantee that they’ll all be back the next time. You can’t do much about this, so relax and try to have a sense of humor. Don’t take it personally when someone leaves after ten minutes; it’s not uncommon for undergraduates to shop three or four courses that meet during the same time slot, and they need to make the



*“And that’s how ya clean a deer!”*

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rounds in order to make an informed decision about which course to take. For that reason, make sure to have a comprehensive syllabus that lists everything students need to know about the course so that you don't have to repeat yourself incessantly for the first two weeks. Keep in mind, though, that you are not responsible for bringing up to speed those students who missed the first two weeks of class because they were shopping other courses. It's up to them to get the notes and other information from fellow students.

## MANAGING ANXIETY

Anxiety is one of the toughest things to deal with on the first day, but it is something you can manage. While you probably won't feel completely relaxed when you enter the classroom for the first time, there are a few things you can do to make it less stressful.

### *Be Prepared*

At one time or another almost every TF has had the same nightmare. No, not the one where you're fighting a giant monkey in a pretty pink frock. It's the one where you imagine yourself in front of the class without any idea what to do or say. Of all the ways to help control anxiety, the most important is preparation. Chances are you'll never completely eliminate your first-day anxiety, but if you've thought about most of the issues discussed above you should be able to walk into the first class a lot cooler and a lot calmer. Be prepared—twenty million Boy Scouts can't be wrong.

### *Waiting to Inhale*

It may seem cruel and unusual to point out the importance of your basic, unconscious bodily functions. But breathing is crucial when it comes to managing anxiety, and it's worth remembering that when you're in front of the class. Take the time to breathe. One of the most common reactions to a difficult situation is to speak more quickly, taking shorter breaths and making what could be a minor problem into a minor catastrophe. If you begin to panic, can't remember what to do next, or just don't think things are going well, take a second or two for a nice, deep breath. A little oxygen to the brain will work wonders.

### *Focus on the Friendly Faces*

You're going to see a lot of different faces when you look out at your audience on the first day. Some will look nervous, some eager to please, some far too cool to be in your classroom, and some outright bored by everything that passes in front of them. As a TF, it's crucial that you attempt to make eye contact with all of your students at one time or another. However, if you start to get really nervous, it's a good idea to block out much of the group and home in on the friendly faces. In every class, there's always at least one student who just can't get enough of whatever it is you're offering and who beams with joy no matter what. The other students will learn to hate these people, but on the first day, we TFs love them. They are our friends. Spend a minute or two speaking in their direction and you'll regain the confidence to turn back and face those too-cool-to-care students.

# CHAPTER 3: Languages, Labs, and Review Sessions

## THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

Because most language courses meet between three and five times a week, foreign language TFs will have, on average, three to five times the amount of face-to-face contact with students than will their colleagues who teach discussion or lab sections. This extra time in the classroom often means more preparation time for the TF, but also makes for one of the most rewarding teaching experiences out there. The extended face time means that the student-teacher relationship is likely to be closer than in other courses: freshmen who are unfamiliar with large lecture courses are often relieved to have a teacher whom they can get to know, and often ask their language teachers to be sophomore advisors. That's a sword that cuts both ways, of course. If you have a great class, you get to enjoy that five days a week; if there are problem students, then you'll have ample opportunity (perhaps too much opportunity) to deal with them.

### Administrative Issues

#### *One Among Many*

Language courses tend to comprise a number of sections (sometimes as many as ten). There will likely be a course chair or head instructor who provides the syllabus, quizzes, and exams, though the TFs may be asked to contribute to these. But for the daily grind, you'll be expected to provide your own written and oral exercises. You needn't come up with all of these on your own, though—keep in touch with the course chair and the other TFs and tap them for ideas. If your department doesn't already have a folder where TFs can leave copies of exercises that have worked in their sections, start one, you eager beaver!

#### *Absences*

Most courses have a firm policy on absences, usually permitting a maximum of three to five per semester. Intensive courses may allow even fewer. Because language courses weigh heavily on participation (it often constitutes 30% or more of the grade), it's important to explain this policy to your students on the first day of class, and to stick to it. Be especially careful if you're

teaching an early morning section (8:30 or 9:30).

Students whose alarms seem to fail on a regular basis should be advised either to switch to a later section or to find a sadistic, early-rising friend with a cattle prod.

### In The Classroom

#### *The Daily Grind*

If you've never taught a language course before, you might think that fifty minutes, five days a week, is a lot of time. It isn't. You'll have a ton of material to cover, so use those minutes wisely. It's imperative that you plan each class carefully, allotting time for different activities that will reinforce reading, writing, aural comprehension, and oral proficiency. None but the most pedantic wants to sit in a class for fifty minutes doing grammar drills. (*Agricolae, agricolarum, agricolis, agricolas, agricolis*. Again, please.) Try to mix things up, using a variety of both fun and useful drills, exercises, games, and texts. Why read *Le Monde* when you can read *Paris Match*?

#### *Your Young Charges*

Language courses—especially the first two years of instruction—tend to be extremely diverse in terms of proficiency. A first-year course may have students who have never studied the language sitting next to those who took it for four years in high school but just barely missed passing the proficiency exam. To make matters worse, native speakers with poor grammar skills will occasionally be placed in lower-level classes. A mix of different levels is thus unavoidable, and the TF's task of balancing the needs of all the students can be very tricky.

#### *Participation*

Your primary goal should be to motivate students to use the language that you're teaching them, but they can't if you do all of the talking. Set the tone and get those lips a-movin' by starting section with a short activity that immediately gets the students to speak. Ask them questions about their plans for the weekend (use the future tense!) or about what they did the night before (past tense!), or about why they're drooling on their desks (present tense!). Sometimes, simply having students read a short text or tongue-twister out



loud to practice pronunciation will set the mood for the whole section. During class, try to keep the *da-nyet* questions to a minimum, as your students are probably already familiar with those words.

### *Keep Your Tongue Out of It*

Most language courses require that the use of English, both by you and your students, be kept to a bare minimum. The more the students speak and hear the target language the better off they are. This is not always easily accomplished, but it's important that you establish this as a rule from the very first day. (It is acceptable to use English—if necessary—to make important announcements or to make absolutely sure that an assignment is understood.)

### *Language Lab*

Gone are the days when students had to trek to the famed Language Lab to listen and practice speaking with language tapes. These days, most language materials are available online so students can access them from their own rooms. But you know how that is: you turn on your computer, check your email, play Snood, bid on eBay, and then it's time for the language assignment—maybe after a nap. Make sure you remind students to do these online assignments, and check their work regularly! Also, listen to the audio program that students must practice with even if you're not required to; this will not only give you a better idea of what they may be tested on, but will also help you help them if they come to you with questions about the material.

### *Feedback*

As a language TF, you have the unique opportunity to provide your students with constant feedback on their performance. Instead of just one paper due at the end of the semester, weekly quizzes and daily written assignments are a part of nearly every language classroom. Keep in contact with all of your students about their performance, if not every few weeks, then at least once at midterm. Students will appreciate it if you set time aside to discuss their progress with them, based on the grades that they have received and on their participation in section.

## **Reinforcing Classroom Learning**

### *Office Hours*

Being available for office hours is perhaps even more important for language courses than for other classes. Try to be available at least one hour every week to meet with your students, especially if you run class entirely

in the target language; point out to your students that office hours are a good time to ask clarifying questions in English.

### *Language Tables*

One of the best ways for students to get extra practice is at language tables. These meet several days a week for lunch or dinner in various residential colleges and allow anyone who's interested to practice their speaking and listening skills informally. Stress to your students the usefulness of this practice, though you might also want to mention that the ability level is likely to be even more disparate than in class. Your department will usually post a list of the tables as soon as the schedule is arranged (usually by the third week in the semester).

### *Tutoring*

You do not (and should not!) have to teach students who are having a particularly hard time on an individual basis. If you find yourself meeting anyone for extensive beyond-the-classroom help, advise the student to contact his or her residential college dean to arrange for a tutor. Any student who experiences academic difficulty (i.e., who is earning or likely to earn a grade of C or lower) is eligible for 10 hours of cost-free tutoring.

### *The Center for Language Study*

The Center for Language Study (CLS) coordinates resources for the many languages taught at Yale. The center houses classrooms and foreign-language labs equipped with state-of-the-art technology, including a recording studio and a wealth of audiovisual technologies that provide students with access to media from different countries. Not sure how to use this stuff? Fear not. The CLS provides on-hand assistance with all your questions, and even has grants for TFs with a hankering to develop a language-specific program or



technology. You'll get the most out of the CLS if you visit well before you start to teach. For contact information, see Appendix E.

## IN THE SCIENCE LAB

As a lab TF, you are responsible for introducing impressionable undergraduates to the gritty world of experimental science. What this means in practice is that you introduce each experiment and then release the students, like pigs on the scent of a truffle, to pursue the glory of successfully reinventing the wheel. Lab sections can be great for students because they allow them the opportunity to learn actively, to do something physically. On the other hand, they can be long and tedious—the procedures for a given lab are often written out in detail, giving the impression that each lab is just a recipe to be cooked. For this reason alone the lab TF can make a huge difference in undergraduate science education, since you're the one who can make clear to students the often murky or unstated relevance of each experiment. Even better, you have an opportunity to instill in students even more lofty and lasting ideals, and to introduce to them the unique experience of scientific discovery itself: the adrenaline rush that accompanies success, the exquisite thrill of solving mysteries, the perseverance and elbow-grease necessary for real progress. It's a lifestyle, baby.

### The Elephant in the Room

Let's get it out in the open, shall we? Many of the students enrolled in lab courses are pre-med. For many of these students, their primary aim is to get an A in your course so that they can go to the medical school of their choice. This is not an ignoble goal, but it can be the cause of consternation for student and TF alike. Almost every experienced lab TFs has horror stories of what they perceive to be rampant grade-grubbing, of students arguing for one or two points on a lab report or exam because they're convinced that those two points will make or break their medical careers.

Yet pre-med students' concerns should not be brushed aside as petty hindrances. Yes, the med school admissions process is ruthless and highly competitive. Yes, it can be exhausting to be forever on the defensive with your grading. Yes, it can be frustrating if you perceive that students have no real interest in your course apart from its future literal incarnation on their transcripts. But turn this into an opportunity! The old "You need to do this to get into a good medical school" routine is,

admittedly, often all you need to say to get students to pay attention, but this goes only so far. These are Yale students, after all: they're clever folk. They'll see through such thinly veiled attempts to get them interested, and the med school sword dangling over the future Dr. Damocles will slowly lose its edge.

Alternatively, think of all that can happen when you relate the lab to the bigger scientific picture. Stress the importance of learning to ask questions, thinking scientifically, and solving problems. Try to work current scientific findings into your pre-lab presentation. Relate the lab to some aspect of the students' educational career ("this ties in with that immunobiology class you took last year," "this will help when you take orgo next year") or life ("this is why your car tires get worn out," "this is why new windows keep heat in better than old windows"). All of a sudden those four hours in the lab have a point.

As for the grading issue, well, that's probably going to stay with us for a while. There are a few things you can do, though. Openly acknowledge to your students that you're aware grades are a concern and that you're sympathetic to their plight. Then make your standards and expectations *extremely explicit*. Stick to them rigorously. Students will be less keen to barter for points if they know why they received the grade they did, and if they know that you're clear on why you gave them that grade. This doesn't mean you should coldly rebuff all discussions of grading—students do have genuine questions and a genuine desire to learn!—but clear grading guidelines will help to eliminate many grading annoyances. Remember too that you can always refer a student to the supervising faculty member. Don't let yourself get roped into an epic battle when there's a higher authority who can arbitrate the matter.

### Before the Lab

In consultation with the professor, determine the goal of the lab: is it meant to introduce a new concept or technique, to complement lecture material, or something else entirely? Knowing the goal allows you to explain the purpose of the experiment to students. It may also be helpful to attend some of the lectures that are related to the lab if you feel you're not familiar enough with the topic.

Make sure you're familiar with the lab design, experimental techniques, equipment, and reagents. Is the lab manual clear to you? (If it's not clear to you, then you

can bet it won't be to the students.) If possible, run the entire experiment once in advance of the lab session to make sure there are no design flaws (do the vinegar and baking soda make the volcano erupt properly?) and to identify what steps may prove to be difficult for students.

Arrive early for the lab session itself to make sure that everything is set up properly. Acquaint yourself with the lab storeroom so that you don't waste time during lab session looking for reagents and glassware — martini glasses in particular are notoriously difficult to locate.

### **For External Use Only**

It's difficult to call a lab a "success" if there's been a horrible accident, so stress safety procedures and policies again and again, both before and during the lab. Enforce them strictly. Prohibit smoking, eating, and drinking; in particular, discourage students from eating chemicals. Check out the first aid kit, (eye) shower, fire extinguisher, and fire blanket. If you're teaching a lab that involves potentially hazardous chemicals, make sure that the eye bath actually works: many of them haven't been used in years and may issue forth viscous brown goo into the user's face. Parlez-vous "yuck"?

Most importantly, know where the phone is and whom to contact in case of emergency. Have the emergency contact's name and contact information posted prominently in the lab — sure, it's good that you have it written down on a crumpled-up Starbuck's receipt in your wallet, but it can be tricky to find that piece of paper if you're distracted by a chemical conflagration, or if you're the one whose hair is on fire.

Familiarize yourself with the potentially hazardous steps in each experiment. For example, make sure to ground yourself before re-animating stolen corpses with lightning. In sum, make sure that your students understand the potential hazards in the lab, adhere to the safety rules, and know what to do in an emergency.

### **Running a Lab**

#### *Preliminaries*

At the first lab, make sure to introduce yourself and discuss bureaucratic matters such as office hours, grading, and other policies. Prepare a handout with all of this clearly outlined so as to save yourself some grief later (see Appendix C for examples). Set strict ground

rules regarding how and when students may contact you, unless you crave unexpected 2 AM phone calls.

After introducing the lab and discussing safety regulations and precautions, you can move on to explain the experiment and its relation to the class lectures as well as to The Advancement of Science. Present any relevant theories, explain the objective(s), and answer any student questions. This introductory material is vital to the success of the lab: making clear to students the context of the lab and its relevance to the larger scientific picture makes them more likely to learn while they're measuring things and making observations later. You don't need to go on forever — in fact, try to avoid the semblance of lecturing — but these few minutes are the best chance you'll have to encourage big-picture, synthetic thinking during the minutiae of the lab that follows.

#### *Expectations and Time Management*

Some students will come to lab totally unprepared and begin the experiment right away, mindlessly follow the instructions, then go home to write their lab reports. These students are the ones most likely to be safety hazards, but they're also not getting much learning out of their not-insubstantial time investment. Asking students before each lab to make a flow chart of the experiment is a good way to get them to read it through and think about it beforehand. This will also help students be more efficient in completing the lab.

To the same end, set clear guidelines about when you expect students to have finished the various parts of the experiment, and set a time by which the lab should be completed. Check on student progress regularly (maybe every half hour or so). No one — with the possible exception of necromancers — wants to be in the lab until midnight. Identify the students who usually stay behind and try to diagnose why they struggle; some feedback on their performance and a few pointers on time management and organization might help them to finish faster.

#### *Labs as Learning*

Labs entered science education as a way of supplementing and reinforcing the ideas students learn in the classroom, and in the paragraphs above we talked about making that role explicit to your students. No matter how brilliant your introduction, however, few students are likely to pause in the middle of a lab to ask themselves what the blue color in the flask means

about the potential chemistry that is occurring. Most are content to marvel at the color and consider the process magic. (To which you can respond “You know what else is magic? The way you’re making your A+ disappear.”) A well-placed, well-conceived question (“Why do you think the flask is blue?”) can jump-start their thinking and turn the attitude of “What’s the next step?” into one of “Neat-o! Why did that happen?” (Students might not be equipped to answer your queries at the beginning of the semester, but that’s okay – you can help them arrive at the right answer with more specific leading questions.) These sorts of questions don’t need to turn into a mini-lecture, but their frequent and constant appearance subtly establishes the lab as a place where doing something leads to learning something.

Students can often arrive at the correct answers to your questions by involving their colleagues in the conversation. Encouraging communication among students (about the experiment!) early in the semester will make them more likely to consult each other if something goes wrong or to discuss differing or unexpected results. This is good news for you, since it’s usually much easier for students to ask the TF their questions, and it’s usually easier for the TF to take the path of least resistance and simply give them an answer rather than helping them figure out the answer on their own. That’s hardly ideal, though. It’s frustrating to answer the same question twenty times in an hour, and it leaves the students no closer to being independent thinkers than when the lab started. On the other hand, requiring that students consult with each other before they approach the TF with a question, or asking a student who is a step ahead to explain the next step to the rest of the class, will increase students’ independence, morale, and communication skills.

### *Cleaning Up*

Emphasize cleanliness during the experiment. It’s not only essential for the safety of the lab, but also for a successful experimental result (just don’t mention the train wreck on your own lab bench). After the lab is finished, make sure that students clean up the bench and other working areas before they leave. Carefully monitor the waste disposal. Mixing biological, radioactive, and normal waste with chemical reagents and sharps is, like the state of New Jersey, a safety hazard, so everyone in the lab should be responsible for properly disposing each type of waste. If you’re not strict about your cleaning policy, you’ll be cleaning up by yourself.

## **After the Lab**

It can be a real help to you to have students fill out brief evaluation forms after each class or experiment, either on paper or via email. You might simply ask what the most difficult or confusing part of the experiment was, or what you (as the TF) could have done differently or better. Commenting on the feedback at the start of the next lab will help keep communication open between you and your students. See Chapter 5 for more information on student evaluations.

## **Lab Reports and Teaching Scientific Writing**

Lab reports need not be just a recipe and a short commentary – they are an opportunity to help improve your students’ writing abilities and communication skills. Science is often thought of as the place where good writing goes to die, and many undergraduates therefore assume that they don’t have to pay any attention to the quality of their writing when they take a lab course. As a lab TF, you’re on the front lines of the battle and have the opportunity to repel the advancing phalanx of these myths. Emphasize that developing scientific writing skills is important for all students taking the class, not only for those who envision a career in science.

Improving students’ scientific writing requires substantial effort on the part of the lab TF, whose comments and feedback are imperative to each student’s progress. This can be frustrating for the TF not only because of the time commitment, but also because students will reap only as much as they sow, and you might often feel that your helpful commentary falls on deaf ears. The trick is to avoid spending your every waking minute grading lab reports – keep in mind that you’ll probably have about twenty-four ten-page reports each and every week – while still providing feedback that students can use to improve those reports. Indeed, the difficulty of teaching scientific writing is among the most pressing challenges facing TFs in the sciences, but this is one of those (rare) cases in which scientists might learn something from their colleagues in the humanities, who have long been charged with teaching undergraduates how to write. A few tips:

- Indicate early on whether reports will be written individually or in groups.

- Distribute a handout that states clearly what you expect in a lab report. Provide examples of A-level reports, B-level reports, and so on, and explain in detail what is good and bad about each.
- Be explicit about how you'll grade reports: state how many points a given section is worth, and what will cause points to be deducted.
- If it seems necessary, prepare a handout on scientific writing, and bring in publications from journals that illustrate the principles of good writing. If possible, take a few minutes to discuss them together.
- Likewise for posters: if making one is part of the grade, bring a few in early on for students to admire and keep in mind as they work on their own.
- Don't feel obliged to fix every flaw in every lab report, in part because you don't have the time but also because most students will not be able to fix every flaw in a week's time. Instead, pick one or two points to focus on. Rewrite one or two sentences, fix the first few its/it's snafus, correct a glaring omission or misunderstanding. Small steps, baby. Small steps.
- You might consider giving students the opportunity to rewrite one or two lab reports early in the semester so that they have an immediate opportunity to learn from their mistakes. This can mean more work for you for those few weeks, but probably less than you think, since not everyone will take advantage of the opportunity. Consider too that improved lab reports early on means better lab reports later on. It's an investment.

In short, you can make the task of grading lab reports a whole lot easier by making expectations clear at the beginning of the semester. And stick to 'em!

## REVIEW SESSIONS

In addition to regularly scheduled discussion sections and labs, many TFs will run review sessions for their students, particularly just before exams. Students come to these sessions ravenous. Run a good review session and students who failed to take advantage of your wisdom all semester will hang on your every word. They'll beg you to stay beyond the allotted time. They'll scream *encore!* each time you try to walk out of the room. You've got it, and they want it. Run a lousy review session and, well, you remember that time

Sinead tore up the Pope's picture? Review sessions matter and they're not easy to run, so here's some advice.

### Avoid Chaos, Have a Plan

TFs have a tendency to let students plan this one: "I'll just show up and answer their questions." This is tricky for a couple of reasons. First, if every student shows, it's unlikely you'll be able to answer all their questions unless you plan to stay for three days. Second, it helps to have made decisions about what you'll answer and what you'll not. If you've seen the final (or at the very least some version of the final), you can plan to solve questions that approach the major themes without giving away the farm. If you haven't seen the final, you should still identify five or six problems that together do a good job of addressing the themes you think students will need to know.

### Getting Started

Start the review session by laying out an agenda, then stick to it. Here are a couple of strategies. Start by polling the audience as to what question or problem students would like you to do. Write each response on the board, putting similar requests together (or whatever organizational system works best). Then prioritize your approach starting with the most common request. Eliminate any requests that you feel comfortable eliminating, and there's your session. "D" is for "done!"

Another idea is to start by telling students which problems or issues you plan to cover, ask what additional problems they might want, add as many as possible, and then begin. The overall point here is simple: set the agenda from the beginning, tell them what you'll do, and then do it. Everybody's happy.

### Reviewing

#### *Good: You Do It*

You've got your agenda so it's time to start going over the material. A standard approach is to do the problems or talk through the issues yourself while students listen and write. Should you choose this approach, make sure you talk to students as you use the board, highlighting key points and important choices. Take the opportunity to articulate your rationale and to describe important links to other problems or issues in the course. While orderly, this approach can be time consuming, especially if students interrupt you (rest assured, they will) with questions.

### *Better: Do It Together*

This strategy is like the one above except that it's more interactive. As you cover the material, ask the students questions about why you're doing what you're doing. Toss in a "what if?" question to get students thinking about different versions of the same question. This way you can actually address issues in two or three types of problems while actually completing only one. With this approach you are more likely to help students discover what they do and do not understand. And because it requires more of them, they'll learn more than they would just listening or copying.

### *Best: They Do It. You Help.*

If you're feeling plucky (ask yourself: do you feel plucky, punk?), you can really shine in review sessions by using pairs or small (very small) groups. Once you've set the agenda, divide the class into pairs or triads. Ask each unit to begin working on the first problem as you roam from group to group. Listen in. If students are making progress, move on to the next. If a group is stuck, give them enough information to get them unstuck and move on. Continue this way until everyone has the problem solved. If a group finishes quickly, give them the next problem or make the current problem harder by changing a variable or adding a "what if?" If you see that nearly everyone is forgetting a certain principle or is making the same mistake, stop the action, review that point, and put them back to work. The advantages of this strategy are that students get real practice, and you get to address real problems in their understanding.

### *Final Thoughts*

Teaching Fellows often bring handouts and learning aids to review sessions. Students are very grateful for these, so it's a good idea. But here's a better idea. Develop those materials before the review session. Give them to students at the start of the semester and whenever appropriate after that. Students can use them to prepare for section, attendance will rise, learning will happen, and you may not have to wait for a review session for that encore!

# CHAPTER 4: Increasing Critical Thinking and Motivation

As you gain confidence in the classroom you will naturally want to try new ways of reaching students and making class interesting. Think about what you really want to accomplish with your students and consider some of the strategies in this chapter (but make sure to check with the supervising faculty member to get the green light). *ACTIVE AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING* discusses some different ways of thinking about teaching as well as some ways to incorporate these ideas into the classroom. *INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY* is devoted to an issue of increasing importance: the use of technology to enhance learning.

## Different Perspectives

Think for a moment about how you got here. Presumably you like doing what you do; you were probably naturally better at it and more interested in it than anything else you studied in college. You might think of “Yale” almost exclusively as the department in which you study. You probably enjoy spending long hours alone, reading and writing about your subject. Maybe you’re one of those people who are incapable of discussing anything other than dissertation topics. And that’s all fine... for graduate school and graduate students. When you enter the undergraduate classroom, however, you need to keep the bigger picture in mind.

For undergraduates, Yale is a smorgasbord of opportunities and experiences (only a fraction of which are academic in nature). Undergraduates fill their plates from the chafing dishes of macroeconomics, poetry, organic chemistry, French, field hockey, and improvisational comedy. As a graduate student, you’re apt to think that your field is the tastiest dish on the buffet—it’s the most interesting and the most important. As a result, you’re likely to think about—and, consequently, teach—your subject in the way you first encountered it.

If your teaching philosophy is “There is one tried and true way to learn this material, and it is the best way,” then your teaching is laid out for you. You are carrying on a tradition. However, if you are willing to consider that there might be other ways to teach the subject, and other (possibly better) ways for students to learn it—if, in other words, you are open to experimenta-

tion—then you may want to consider the strategies presented in this section.

All of the strategies described here have one thing in common: they move the focus of attention away from the teacher to the student. Rather than focusing on what you’ll say in class, you’ll have to think more deeply about what your students will do and learn in class.

## ACTIVE AND EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

### Active Learning

Perhaps the simplest way to transform your class in a powerful way, Active Learning strategies get students working with course material in the classroom either individually or in groups. Active Learning strategies, unlike open class discussion, are timed, structured, and designed to give students a chance to learn by acting on a specific piece of content in a specific way. Students learn material better when they engage it actively rather than absorb it passively. Decide on a set of goals for an activity—what you want students to learn or be able to do at the end—and structure the activity to reach those goals.

A well-designed Active Learning Strategy has the following characteristics:

1. Every student is acting on the material either individually or with others.
2. The timeframe is clear and relatively short.
3. The goal of the activity is clear, meaningful, and uncomplicated.
4. The task of the activity itself is clear, feasible, and uncomplicated.
5. The nature of the end product—be it a list, an answer, a choice, or a structure—is described unambiguously.

### Active Learning: An Example

Twenty minutes into a discussion of evolution you realize that you're hearing some fuzzy thinking in your students' understanding of the concept of natural selection. This is an important concept that has major consequences for their understanding of the material in the remainder of the course. You stop the discussion and ask each of your students to spend two minutes writing a response to the following question: "If we accept the assumption of constant natural selection, what statements can we make about the state of the human race?" After two minutes, you say "Now turn to someone near you and, in three minutes, tell them your statements. If your statements agree, discuss them and choose the stronger. If you disagree, see if you can convince each other that you're right." Two minutes later you say "OK, let's hear some of your statements." You then write the statements on the board and discuss their accuracy.

What has happened in this six-minute exercise?

*Students...*

- are actively engaged with the material, first by writing and then by explaining.
- realize if they don't quite grasp the concept, either as they try to write and can't or as they encounter the superior arguments of their peers.
- who are clear on the concept have their thinking reinforced and deepened.
- get practice in making and justifying arguments.
- come to expect that they will have to take a more active role during class and will come to class better prepared.

*You...*

- get a clear assessment of how your class is doing.
- get an assessment of individual students' progress and understanding.
- can focus the remainder of the class discussion on a key concept and misconception.

### Collaborative Learning: Using Group Activities

Doing activities in groups can be a good way to mix things up. Students generally like them (since it's something different) provided that you make the task clear and take safeguards against freeloaders and slackers. On a small scale, you can arrange group work as one activity you do during a single section ("Get in groups of three, and take ten minutes to list all the ways that X is related to Y"). On the other end of the spectrum, you can form long-term teams that work on a larger project for a month or the whole semester. Set students up to work on a long-term project and reap the benefits of collaborative learning – you might be surprised at how hard they'll work and how much they teach themselves when given the right context.

There are three basic principles that make collaborative learning work. If you're using groups only in the short term (one task, one time), follow the principles of Active Learning on the previous page. If, however, you want students to work in groups over a period of weeks to accomplish a substantial task, you'll want to take the following strategies into account.

1. Eliminate the possibility of slacking by creating a team contract to which all of the group's members agree. Eliminate negativity and competition by encouraging relationships of helpfulness and respect. You might require that each student take responsibility for one aspect of the larger task.
2. Smooth the way for group interaction by providing clearly defined goals and frequent feedback. Work on social skills with in-class mini-tasks and meetings. This also helps with the typical problems of "When do we meet?" and "I don't know the people in my group."
3. Group projects, especially those whose products are presented to the entire class, generate their own motivation, so there is less need to use grades as an incentive. Instead, give students control over their own grades by making the tests and papers (or other assessments) graded on an individual basis and not as a group.



### Examples of Collaborative Learning

- Students in a class on the American presidency were divided into four committees. Each committee was assigned a president (one from each of the time periods the class had covered) and asked to determine how they would get their candidate elected, the role played by political parties, and the qualities that would make their candidate electable. The idea was to illuminate the changing electoral systems and the types of candidates encouraged by these changes.
- Students in a social psychology class were placed into groups of five or six and given thirty minutes to compose an eight-line poem. The poems were read aloud and the class voted, by applause, on their favorite. In a class discussion, students talked about their own satisfaction with their group's poem and the steps they took that allowed their group to produce a poem of such high (or low) quality. Finally, students discussed whether they thought they could produce a superior poem on their own. The activity was used to build interest in a chapter on problem solving and creativity.
- Students in a course on the Gothic novel spent a class period in groups writing their own short Gothic tales using the themes, subjects, and conventions found in the novels they were studying. The teacher spent time with each group, clarifying concepts and posing increasingly sophisticated questions. Weeks later, each group presented its tale to the class.

### Problem-Based Learning

Problem-Based Learning (PBL) is based on both active learning strategies and collaborative learning principles. Instead of giving students solutions or problem sets with no context or connection to reality, the teacher allows students to work on complex, real-world problems. Students apply what they know and what they've learned from class readings; when they don't know something, they go find it. PBL often involves case studies with ambiguous solutions that are

designed to replicate the sort of poorly structured, multi-faceted problems that students will face in life or on the job. PBL tends to be more popular in advanced courses in which application is a primary goal, but proponents argue that PBL is superior even in basic classes because students learn facts in context and therefore learn them more deeply. In addition, students using PBL gain important skills in communication and reasoning in social situations. Before you try writing your own PBL cases, try using one of the many pre-tested cases available on the web. You can find some PBL links on the GTC website.

### Experiential Learning: Keeping It Real

Most faculty members who use experiential methods would agree that experience is in fact not the best teacher. After all, people have experiences every day from which they learn absolutely nothing (drink ten beers, feel awful in the morning, repeat next weekend). Zesty or vivid experiences can raise interest and capture attention, but learning requires another step: reflection. When you commit to using Experiential Learning methods, you commit to asking two new questions of your teaching:

1. What experience or activity will capture my students' attention and reach them in a meaningful way?
2. What kind of reflective experience can I create to help my students make sense of that activity?

Experiential learning is particularly powerful because it helps students raise questions rather than simply find answers.

### Service Learning

Service Learning is a broad term applied to projects that involve students in community-based initiatives as part of a class assignment. A course on the Digital Age, for example, had students design web sites for student organizations; an American history class had students do oral history interviews of participants in the Civil Rights movement; a political science class had students interview recent émigrés about their views on building an expatriate community; a psychology class had students observe the learning behavior of toddlers at a day-care center and report to teachers at the center. As with any kind of teaching, set your goals and define what you want students to produce as a result (a web page, an edited video tape of interviews, a term paper, etc.).



### *Field Trips*

After that catastrophic fourth-grade trip to the petting zoo (who knew monkeys would mate with humans?), you might not think that field trips are particularly useful. Think again! You may even find that there are ways to explore the subject of your class in field trips right around Yale. One medieval history class had a field trip to map the Gothic architectural elements of Sterling Library and then sort them into the categories of “true historical Gothic” and “anachronistic.” A literature course had a scavenger hunt in the library in which students had to find items such as a sonnet written after 1950.

### *Holding Section in Galleries and Special Collections*

Discussion is great, but nothing puts the “cat” back in “education” like seeing the real thing. Yale’s museums and special collections are loaded with the art, objects, manuscripts, and scientific paraphernalia that you want students to discuss, so why not bring your section to the library or gallery? Too time consuming, you think? Too much hassle? Not so! In most Yale galleries there’s someone whose job it is to help you out. Not only will this person provide a room for you and your students, he or she will also fill that room with the objects you request. It’s like having a special exhibit just for your

class. Not sure what you want students to see? No problem—you can get help with that too. This is a terrific service, but it does require some advance planning—we’re talking about several weeks here, folks, not forty-eight hours. See Appendix B for a list of the people you need to call to make this dream a reality; if you’re interested, get on the horn now.

## INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY

### **Greetings, Professor Falken: Why Use Technology?**

Why use technology? A legitimate question. There’s no doubt that technology cannot replace a good, real-life, sentient teacher, as anyone who’s ever tried to learn a foreign language via CD-ROM has no doubt discovered. But today’s undergraduates enter college with a high degree of computer literacy, and tapping into this trend by using various technological resources really can enhance classroom learning. However, merely dabbling in web design or setting up a chat is not enough; you need to integrate these tools into the class in meaningful ways. The all-important first step is to figure out why you’re choosing to teach with technology at all.

Here are some reasons teachers choose to integrate instructional technology:

- As a marketing strategy. There are a number of cases at Yale in which classes that had been poorly attended became very popular because of a snazzy, high-profile website. If you want more students, this is an option. Then again, you could also bring donuts to every class and achieve the same thing.
- To make your life easier. Websites (and other information technology) can ameliorate certain logistical problems that have plagued teachers for years. A well-designed site can facilitate distributing the syllabus and handouts, collecting written work, and posting last-minute announcements.
- To make their lives easier. In a world where content is king, this may be the only reason you need to put up a website—giving students easy, possibly annotated, access to larger and larger amounts of material. Save them from having to make potentially futile and aggravating trips to the library, not to mention the terror of interlibrary loan!

- To let students talk. Many educators believe in the value of discussion among students, but most of us struggle with the issue of time: “If I use class time for discussion, how in tarnation can I cover material?” Newsgroups and chat rooms create out-of-class opportunities for students to interact. They also allow students to become more alienated and, therefore, great artists – or at least more likely to give online dating a shot.
  - To let students practice. An increasing number of faculty members are building websites or using pre-made software packages that are interactive and allow students to practice skills or test their own understanding.
  - To deal with the complex. Books and lectures are often incapable of adequately reproducing processes or concepts that have multiple dimensions or are extremely complex. You can use computers to visually represent complex processes as dynamic (even interactive!) diagrams. These can give students another way to understand difficult concepts that may otherwise be beyond their reach.
  - To construct knowledge and test hypotheses. At the very highest levels of computer-assisted instruction, teachers are using technology to give students the opportunity to replicate the kinds of thinking, creating, and problem solving that are at the core of the discipline. They are using technology that allows students to “do” history, psychology, sociology, and chemistry, rather than simply learning about it. If this is your reason for using technology, you will probably want to integrate the technology into the classroom using some of the Active and Collaborative Learning techniques mentioned above. In two words: synergy, baby.
2. Start simple, start small. Use your teaching experience to come up with a simple problem-solution project. You don’t need a flashy Flash intro and elaborate 3-D graphics to make an effective web page. Do something manageable before you head for the big leagues.
  3. Remember that not all students have the same technological skills. A quick assessment of your students’ technical proficiency at the beginning of the semester can help you figure out what technology will work and what will not.
  4. Always keep in mind what students will actually do, produce, and learn with the technology. Instructional technology falls flat when it’s unconnected to what students should be learning. At best, students should be able to say that the technology – be it a website, chatroom, or newsgroup – helps them to learn more.
  5. Consider training or lab support for your students, particularly if they’re unfamiliar with the technology you’re using. If they can’t use it, they’ll get frustrated and – surprise! – not use it.
  6. Assess along the way. People’s reactions to technology, like technologies themselves, are unpredictable. Create opportunities for students to let you know how the technology is working and whether it’s actually helping them learn.
  7. Have a Plan B. Until you’re more confident with the technology and how it’s going to work, have a backup plan, be it books or alternative opportunities for discussion. Don’t build the entire class around a technology that you’re not sure of.
  8. Don’t go it alone. People at Yale are experimenting with instructional technology in increasing numbers. Contact the GTC to find a group that’s working on technology in your discipline.
  9. Experiment and take risks. Technology is a great way to augment your current teaching and develop new skills if you work in incremental steps. Give it a try. It’s one of the best ways to keep your teaching fresh for your students and for yourself.

### **Making Technology Work in the Classroom**

Regardless of your motives, here are some tips for helping your students get the most out of your instructional technology efforts.

1. Have a plan. Ask yourself four questions: What is my goal? What is the best technology available? How am I going to integrate this into the rest of the class? How will I assess its effectiveness?

# CHAPTER 5: Grading and Evaluation

## GRADES AND GRADING

### The Problem With Grades

Grading is a perpetually thorny issue. No one likes to assign grades, but virtually everyone acknowledges the necessity of doing so. Grading can be the cause of sleepless nights for students and teachers alike, as well as the source of frustration and dispute when two parties disagree over the appropriateness of a grade. Why this strife?

Grading is about standards, and standards imply judgment. Quantitative disciplines are somewhat advantaged in this area because people who teach these subjects use judgments like “right and wrong,” while people in the humanities and other argument-oriented disciplines are stuck with “better and worse.” No one gets off easy in this grading game. Many students will flee quantitative subjects convinced that such disciplines are tyrannical and uncreative. Those same students run back after a semester in the humanities, hissing all the way that grading is subjective, personal, and unfair. Scylla, meet Charybdis. Rock, meet hard place.

But maybe this predicament is caused not by the standards but by the way we apply them—or fail to apply them—throughout the semester. In quantitative subjects, running through a series of problems without giving students the opportunity to consider the whence, whither, and wherefore doesn’t exactly inspire them to think, excite their curiosity, or make them feel like they’re part of the game. No wonder they’re peeved when the questions on the test require original or high-level thought. Conversely, we may be setting students up for disappointment and frustration in the humanities when their contributions in section—no matter how far afield, poorly argued, or lacking in evidence—are greeted with a smile of approval, only to be skewered when that same level of thought appears in a paper.

The point is, standards aren’t just for tests. They’re for learning, thinking, discussing, the whole shebang. View grades not solely as big red letters written atop each assignment and quiz, but within the larger context of feedback. So explain the standards to your students, apply the standards (nicely) during discussion and problem solving, and show your students that you,

your section, and their hard work are the ticket to meeting them. You’ll be a lot better off at grading time.

But your students are not the only ones who should be getting feedback in the classroom. A person’s teaching, as with any other activity, only improves with practice and constructive criticism. The practice will come with time; the latter half of this chapter will suggest ways to elicit that constructive criticism.

### Why Grading is So Hard: The Jekyll and Hyde Effect

Most TFs begin their semester with the hope that they will be great teachers: the students will be inspired, they will learn the material, they will do the work, and they will get good grades, all because we, as teachers, will guide them through. But eventually they hand in an assignment and we suddenly transform into the merciless hand of an impersonal standard. No longer are we the friendly, helpful TFs that we once were. We are the Grim Grader, slashing at the fields of undergraduate effort with the sharp scythes of A- and B+. We shift hats; we shift loyalties. No wonder there’s some emotional fallout.

### Easing the Pain

The best way to alleviate some of the tension between your roles as helper and evaluator is to set clear expectations and standards at the outset, preferably in writing. Students need to know what constitutes an A paper, what constitutes a B paper, and, heaven forbid, what constitutes an F (yes, Virginia, there are grades lower than C). Are students graded on attendance? Class participation? Will papers be graded on style as well as content? You don’t necessarily have to come up with these guidelines on your own, though: check with the supervising faculty member to see if any standards or grading strategies have already been set.

With such explicit expectations in place, students will be far more understanding when you make the leap from Joe Smiley the TF to judge, jury, and executioner. (Don’t worry, there haven’t been any real executions at Yale since the 1950s.) By setting clear standards at the outset, you’ll avoid a lot of student complaints about your grading. Here are some suggestions for making those standards clear.

### *Have All the Answers*

In grading exams, lab reports, and problem sets, consider preparing an answer key (or some clear indication of what made for an average/better/excellent answer) and making it available to your students—perhaps posted outside your office or on the class web site. Provide the correct answer to each question and indicate which responses earned partial credit and how many points you've deducted for certain errors. You can then have students compare their work to this model before coming to you with complaints or questions about grading.

### *Samples of Brilliance*

Weaker writers often have no idea what a strong paper would look like, and they will have great difficulty improving their writing if they don't see what to change. Consider distributing sample papers to let students know what you consider to be worthy of an A (or lower). You might also find that a few of your best writers would be willing to have their papers made available (anonymously, of course) for future students to read and learn from.

### *Put That Preaching into Practice*

Make reference to the written guidelines you give students when you comment on their work so that they can see where their performance does or does not measure up to your expectations. In the course of your first semester of teaching, you may find that you develop a new set of instructions (written or unwritten) for preparing a good term paper, problem set, or lab report. The next time you teach, write up these standards and discuss them with students before the first assignment is due.

### **Keeping it Fair**

Clear expectations serve a useful purpose only if they're fairly and consistently enforced. In other words, you can't run a classroom in which attendance counts against you only if you're a registered Republican. In a course where all students complete identical problem sets, papers, or exams, the same criteria must be applied in grading each student's work. Here are some suggestions for increasing consistency, which can be applied in many different situations.

### *Grade the Question, Not the Student*

When grading an exam or assignment with multiple sections, grade all responses to the same question (or set of related questions) together. This makes it less

likely that a student's overall level of performance on the exam or assignment will cause you to give a grade for a particular section that is undeservedly high or low. Naturally, this approach is about as exciting as an evening with C-SPAN, but the good and poor performances will stand out much more clearly this way than if you alternate among topics or question formats, and it will be easier for you to develop and adhere to consistent scoring criteria. The item-by-item approach also works well if there are multiple TFs for the same course. If each of you grades a particular question or group of questions on every exam, you'll be in a better position to assure students that everyone's work has been evaluated in the same way.

### *Waiting for Godot*

As you begin grading a particular assignment or exam question, read through several students' answers without marking grades. At the very least, restrict yourself to tentative marks in pencil. This will give you a sense of the overall range of students' responses before you start inscribing final grades in indelible red ink. Although you'll probably think about the components of a good answer before reading any exams at all, students will occasionally surprise you by interpreting the question very differently from what you or the professor had in mind. Similarly, a question will sometimes prove to be much more difficult than you anticipated. Because such problems are often the fault of the testing instrument rather than of the student, it's important that you understand how students are actually approaching the question before you begin to grade.



*"Why can't you be more like little Hester Prynne? She's getting straight A's."*

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### *Take Two*

After you finish grading, review the first few assignments you graded. You will often find that you were much nastier with the red ink at the beginning of the grading process than at the end, and you may be pleasantly surprised to find that some of the first assignments you graded made points other students failed to mention. You will also have developed a more refined sense of a “good” as opposed to an “average” or “weak” performance over the course of your grading, and you may realize that the first assignments you read were better (or worse) than you initially thought. For these reasons, you may not want to mark any grades in pen until you’ve finished with the whole set of exams or papers and are happy with the distribution of grades as a whole.

### *Grade Blind*

If you’ve come to know your students well in section or lab, you may have definite expectations, hopes, or fears about their performance on major assignments. In order to avoid being influenced by what you know or anticipate about a student’s work, you might want to keep the grading as anonymous as possible: just fold back the cover sheet of each paper or exam so that you can’t see the student’s name. (If you want to do this with papers, you should make a point of asking students to include their name only on the cover page.)

Grading without regard to students’ identities does not prevent you from commenting on how students’ work has progressed (or degenerated) over the course of the semester. Once the actual assigning of letter grades is complete, you can always go back to your written comments and praise students who have made notable improvements (or caution students who have done the reverse).

### *Partners in Crime*

No TF is an island. Cooperation with other TFs can take different forms, each of which has its own advantages and disadvantages. One possibility is for the TFs in a course to grade an exam or other assignment together, dividing the questions among themselves and conferring in unusual or borderline cases. A second alternative is to exchange exams or papers with other TFs, ensuring that nobody grades their own students’ work. Third, TFs in the same course may seek to standardize their grade distributions even if they do the grading individually. This might involve attempting to equalize (roughly) the percentage of students in each

TF’s sections who receive a particular grade, or having TFs share student work they feel exemplifies each grade category with the others (an A paper, a B paper), or some combination of these strategies. After conferring with your fellow TFs, you might then need to go back and adjust borderline students’ grades up or down to ensure balance across sections. Finally, the professor may have instructed all TFs to adhere to a certain grade distribution. This can bring problems of its own, but it does eliminate the issue of consistency across sections.

### **When Students Challenge Your Grade**

A common scenario: you return students’ papers and, after the usual period of sighs and moaning, a student approaches you with the dreaded “I’d like to talk to you about my grade.” What then?

#### *Wait a Minute*

The first thing to do is stall for time. No joke. Don’t be pressured into hearing a case and making a decision on the spot. There will probably be other students around, and you might be in a rush to get out of the classroom. Unless the grade change is truly minor and unquestionable, set up another time when you can give the student your full consideration (within a few days, to be fair). Then, before you meet the student, take some time to remind yourself what your grading standards are. Also, if you have the student’s paper available, reconsider how the paper fits those standards (it’s always a good idea to make copies of your comments for future reference).

Another option is to have the student write out his or her side of the story and turn it in with a copy of the exam or paper. That way, you’ll have time to review the case before meeting to discuss it. If the case really is clear-cut and simple, it won’t take long to explain it, and it won’t take you long to make a decision on the merits of the student’s case. Let students talk during such conferences. In fact, let them talk a lot. Resist the temptation to jump in with your defense. Shouting, “Zip it! You failed!” will only exacerbate the situation. Many students take getting a bad grade very personally, so don’t escalate things by making the grading process personal as well.

Why do students complain about a grade? There are several possibilities.

- The student is just trying to get a higher grade.
  - The student is trying to figure out how to get a better grade in the future.
  - The student is genuinely trying to learn how to write better papers or do better on exams.
  - The student is embarrassed about getting a low grade and is trying to win your approval as a person, or perhaps trying to show you that she is smarter than the grade reflects.
- You might start throwing out A's like a clown with a bag of candy—everybody gets one. The truly exceptional work is mixed in with the mediocre.
  - Because C is considered a bad grade, you might be reluctant to give out D's and F's even if the student truly deserves it.
  - You might get crazy and start inventing new grades like "Super A+++." These grades, while appropriate on eBay, will not be recognized by the Registrar.

Dealing with the first possibility can be frustrating, but don't assume that that's the reason when in fact any of the other possibilities might be the case. (We don't have to tell you what happens when you assume, do we?) Always imagine that your student has higher motives, and aim your conversation at that level. You can always give the student the option of having the supervising professor read and re-evaluate the paper or exam. Just be sure to remind the student that the grade could go down even further.

One last thing: if you allow a student to rewrite a paper, make sure that you allow every student that opportunity. In this case, it can't be only the squeaky wheel that gets the grease. You gotta grease 'em all.

## **UGH!**

Once upon a time, in universities far, far away, getting a C meant that your performance was average. A was at the top, F was at the bottom, and C was cleverly placed right in the middle (don't ask what happened to E). But now we live in the world of Upward Grade Homogenization (UGH, commonly called Grade Inflation), where most students, TFs, and professors consider C to be a bad grade—not the worst possible grade, mind you, but certainly less than average. So, the question is, what are the possible effects of UGH on your grading procedures?

- If you reserve A's for truly excellent work and give out C's only for truly terrible work, you might end up cramming all of your students into an overcrowded B/B+ range that doesn't really differentiate between their levels of work.

There are diverging, strongly-held beliefs about grades and grade inflation, and the grading policies of individual TFs are unlikely to be the catalyst for any institutional change. In short, there's not a lot to be said about UGH except that it exists. Bummer, dude. About the only thing we can say is that there is still a distinct spectrum of grades. If a student is blowing off the class or handing in terrible work, don't be afraid to give out D's or F's. If a student hands in a term paper three pages long, poorly written, and smelling suspiciously like cheap beer, give it the grade it deserves: B-, of course.

### *When a Student Is Failing*

Before midterm, the Registrar sends each faculty instructor or PTAI copies of a form that requests information about students doing unsatisfactory work, particularly those who are in danger of failing the course. However, it's not always clear by midterm whether a student is on track to fail the course. Nevertheless, if you suspect that a student is in danger of failing, or even in danger of getting a D, let your supervising faculty know; if you're a PTAI, you can contact the student's residential college dean directly.

Unsatisfactory grades—D's and F's—are taken very seriously. If you give a student a D or an F for a final grade, there is a chance that the grade will be challenged. This is another reason to have crystal clear standards for how you plan to grade student papers, exams, and assignments. It's also a reason to keep copies of assignments and exams and detailed records of each student's performance for future reference.

### **Grading Student Writing**

Grading student writing, especially for a first-time TF, can be a nerve-racking experience. Let's face it, some of us have gotten to the point where we don't ever think about the mechanics of writing papers anymore.



*"Big deal, an A in math. That would be a D in any other country."*

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Here are some suggestions that might help you get gooder at dealing with student writing.

#### *Check in with Others*

If you're concerned about grading written work, share a few student papers with the instructor or other TFs in order to compare their responses with your own. TFs in some courses routinely exchange essays they feel are particularly good examples of each grade level. These can be accompanied by stale gum to give them a real collector's feel: "I'll give you a B+ from my Shakespeare course if you give me an A- from Contemporary Lit."

#### *Read Me, Please*

Getting students to read your comments is one of the most difficult challenges in the grading process. Almost all students turn first to the grade, and some barely glance at the marginal comments, much less re-read the essay and reflect on how it might have been improved. This is less of a problem if every paper assignment includes the opportunity for consultation and revision, but that process can be very time-consuming and impractical. One partial solution is to require small revisions for every paper. You might ask students to rewrite an introduction or conclusion, or to rework a key paragraph, which they would hand in at the next meeting. Students are more responsive to feedback when it is ongoing, focused, and clear.

#### *Don't Overdo It*

It's usually a massive waste of time to overhaul a paper until it works well. Most TFs do want to point out basic grammatical and stylistic mistakes but don't feel obliged to cover every last detail in the paper. You don't want a situation in which you hand back a paper with more red ink on it than black (not that you should necessarily use red ink, but you get the point). In most cases there is a limit to the amount of constructive criticism a student can absorb. Consider choosing a few major points to emphasize instead of trying to be comprehensive. Also, be sure to respond to some positive aspects of the writer's work (however much of a stretch this is) rather than only pointing out negatives.

#### *Splitting the Atom*

If it's appropriate for your class, you might consider using split grades (e.g., B/A-) to indicate separate evaluations for style and content. Students who make great arguments but write their papers like VCR instructions might get an A for content and a C for style (averaging out to a B for the final grade). On the other hand, students who write beautifully but with an argument so obvious that it doesn't need arguing ("Metallica rocks hard") might get an A for style and a C for content.

#### **Other Grading Issues Not to be Dealt With in this Section**

There are a number of Yale policies and procedures that have a significant influence on grading that are not discussed in this section. These include issues such as "cut restriction," Dean's Excuses, withdrawals from a course, temporary incompletes, reading week, and Credit/D/Fail. For more on these fascinating topics, see Chapter 7.

## **THE TABLES TURN! STUDENTS EVALUATING YOU!**

Here's a common scenario. You get through your first semester of teaching without any serious problems. Nobody failed the course, nobody complained out loud, and nobody sued you for gross negligence. In general, everyone seemed to get through section with a polite level of attention and there were a number of students who really appeared to enjoy themselves. Yet when you get back your standard, end-of-semester evaluations, you find a bunch of mediocre reviews. Some of them are even outright nasty. You feel like the Kevin Costner of the Grad School. Among the students' criticisms are the following: you weren't avail-



able enough outside of class, you should have involved more people in group discussions, and you didn't do a good job of relating the material to "real life" issues. You can't believe that none of these things were brought to your attention. In a fit of despair, you drop to your knees, clutching the evaluations, screaming, "Why? Why? Why didn't they tell me?"

As you've probably guessed, the moral of this story is that you shouldn't wait until the end of the semester to solicit evaluations from your students. There are many different ways to get feedback, and it's always a good idea to get some when you can actually use it. End-of-semester evaluations are helpful as a summary of student reactions to the course, and they can be useful for future classes, but it's far more helpful to get some input from your students while you're still in the thick of things. Some students might approach you with problems, but it's incredibly rare for anyone to actually tell you to your face that they think you're unorganized, confusing, foul smelling, or overly controlling. In some cases you can pick up on this just by gauging their reactions in class, but you'll find out more if you ask in writing.

### **Mid-Semester Evaluations**

A number of sample mid-semester evaluations are given in Appendix D. Think about the things you want feedback on. These can be very specific ("do you think we spent too much time talking about Guernica?") or very general ("should we spend more time in small groups?"). Then devise an evaluation that suits your own needs. Better still, write questions that focus students' attention on what's helping them learn. Ask them to rate, rank, or otherwise assess three or four approaches you've used for their contribution to their understanding, comprehension, motivation, or whatever else you're trying to achieve. What students like isn't as important as what's helping them learn. Sometimes they forget that. Sometimes we do too.

Evaluations do not necessarily require a special form; you can get valuable feedback in a very informal manner. Some TFs use the "KQS" method: simply give the students a blank piece of paper and ask them to write down one aspect of the course that they would like to keep (K), one they would like to quit (Q), and one they would like to start (you guessed it, S). Other TFs just wait until the end of class and ask the students to write down questions they'd like to see addressed next time. Whatever your method, just make sure that any

evaluation you use is kept anonymous. It's not easy for students to tell the truth if you're staring over their shoulder, especially if you're whispering cryptic comments about their future at Yale College.

Another excellent means of soliciting anonymous feedback from students is [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com). This free site allows you to create an online survey that you can email to students, and even track who has responded and who has not. Pretty sweet.

### **Some Common Concerns**

#### *The Fear Factor*

Many TFs don't want to find out what their students think because they're afraid it's going to be bad news. Though this is quite reasonable, it shouldn't stop you. First of all, there's a good chance that the students will actually say something nice. Also, if they do have problems, it's far more likely that they will give constructive criticism rather than spiteful, personal attacks, particularly with a mid-semester evaluation—no matter how anonymous you make it, most students probably won't get too nasty for fear that you'll know who they are. Second of all, you can control what you ask for on an evaluation. If you're worried that the students don't think your jokes are funny, don't ask a question like, "Do you think I'm funny?" Remember, mid-semester evaluations can deal with very neutral topics. Questions like, "What do you think of the homework so far?" or "Are there any topics that you want to review?" probably won't generate scathing criticism.

#### *Never Let Them See You Sweat*

Some TFs fear that they'll look weak if they solicit evaluations in the middle of the course. Sure, this can be a problem if you overdo it. A TF who constantly solicits student feedback will probably come off as neurotic and insecure (especially if you include questions like, "You think I'm an OK teacher, right?"). Nevertheless, giving out one or two mid-semester evaluations is something that most students will very much appreciate. The fact that you actually care about what they have to say can go a long way.

### **After You've Read Them**

Your mid-semester evaluations can help you make the last five weeks of section more productive; the end-of-semester evaluations can help you plan your next course. But what do you do with them after you've read them? Some TFs burn them, some bury them,

and some frame them and send them to their parents. Here are a few of our suggestions.

### *Summarize!*

Typing up a summary of comments prevents you from focusing on the extremes. Sure, one evaluation suggests that you're the pedagogical antichrist, but another thinks that light and truth shine from your fingertips. Don't let this hyperbole blind you to the more reasonable comments, like the ones that say you were clear, organized, and very helpful outside of class or that you weren't always good about letting every student talk. If you write up a summary, every voice will be heard and you'll begin to realize that the extreme evaluations are far less important than the many similar ones.

### *Tell Them About It*

In the case of mid-semester evaluations, let the students know that you've read them and have given them some thought. Summarize the general thrust of the comments, and let your class know if you plan to change your approach as a result of their thoughts. They'll respect the fact that you took their suggestions seriously.

### *Get Some Advice*

A constructive response to constructive criticism may not be at your fingertips, particularly if student comments amount to "section is boring." If you feel comfortable discussing problems and solutions with your professor or fellow TFs, do so. But if you'd rather not, give the GTC a call. All consultations are strictly confidential, and you'll get some very good advice. Promise.

### *Copy 'Em And Keep 'Em*

Evaluations are often an important part of your teaching portfolio and are sometimes requested in grant applications. It's also helpful to give them to faculty members who are writing letters of recommendation for you. Make copies of all of your evaluations and keep them on file.

# CHAPTER 6: Developing and Marketing Your Teaching Skills

Teaching is not a discrete toolbox of skills that you quickly acquire and then use as needed. Becoming a good teacher is a long process of trial, error, and success, of talking with others about their teaching, of learning how others learn. Learning how to teach happens like any other kind of learning: you acquire some knowledge, then get feedback on how well you've applied that knowledge. Learning how to teach, in short, is a collaborative project.

No matter how many years or how few weeks you've been teaching, you can always stand to learn something about your teaching. DEVELOPING YOUR TEACHING discusses some resources that can help you to think about and observe your own teaching as a way of developing the skills you've already acquired.

In addition to being rewarding for its own sake, teaching is playing an increasingly important role in higher education hiring decisions. These days, you can't necessarily land a plum job by being just a stellar researcher—an applicant's teaching abilities can be the deal-maker. THE JOB MARKET AND THE TEACHING PORTFOLIO addresses the role of teaching in academic hiring and gives some advice for creating a teaching portfolio that will highlight your pedagogical strengths.

## DEVELOPING YOUR TEACHING

### It Takes a Campus

Developing as a teacher at Yale is not like writing a dissertation at Yale. While your advisor may demand steady progress on your thesis research, rarely is anyone going to hound you to be a great TF. This doesn't mean that there aren't plenty of people around to help you improve your teaching if you want to improve—there are. Many faculty members take the teaching of their TFs very seriously. Some will provide extensive explanations about their pedagogical choices and actions. Others will want to discuss your section and teaching with you and offer you the benefit of their classroom experience. Some may allow you to give a lecture during class, observe you, and give you feedback on different aspects of your performance. The Yale faculty are a great source of help and inspiration

with teaching; sometimes they come to you, but sometimes you have to seek them out.

You may find that your department provides discipline-specific workshops and courses on teaching. These sessions can be enormously helpful because they give you access to the best teachers and the best strategies in your department and discipline. Departmental sessions also provide you with an opportunity to find a teaching mentor among a group of faculty members whom you might not already know.

The Graduate School provides another set of teaching resources through the McDougal Graduate Teaching Center (GTC). Its services and expertise are available to all registered graduate students, though it's also open to faculty members and professional school students. The office includes a full-time director and associate director (coming soon!) and a staff of graduate-student teaching consultants who lead workshops and departmental programs and offer personalized consultations with individual TFs. Whether you have a specific problem or concern or just want to be a better teacher, take advantage of the services below.

### Graduate Teaching Center Services and Offerings

#### *Courses and Workshops in Teaching*

Multi-session courses and one-session workshops on effective teaching are offered every semester through the GTC. Taught by trained, experienced graduate students, GTC courses are designed to give TFs a chance to talk about their teaching while introducing participants to new and more effective teaching methods.

GTC courses and workshops are organized into three broad categories. Beginning Teaching programs are intended for first-time teachers. These include the Teaching at Yale Days, held at the start of each semester, and the four Fundamentals of Teaching series run each fall, one each for the Humanities, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, and Foreign Languages. Participants in Intermediate Teaching programs refine their teaching skills and learn new strategies. The Advanced Teaching programs focus on designing courses and preparing for the job market; these include Course and

Syllabus Design, Preparing a Teaching Portfolio, and Talking About Teaching in the Academic Interview. Each semester you'll receive from your registrar or DGS a list of GTC courses being offered. You'll also receive flyers in your mailbox and email notices through the McDougal Teaching Notes.

### **A Sample of GTC Courses Offered in the Past**

- Teaching with Technology
- Course and Syllabus Design
- Gender and Power in the Classroom
- Basic Teaching in the Humanities, Sciences, Social Sciences, and Languages
- Teaching Literature in the Foreign Language Classroom
- Working with Student Writing
- Teaching in America
- Teaching "Hot" Topics in the Humanities and Social Sciences
- Mysteries of the Unknown: A Science TF's Guide to the Undergraduate Mind
- Becoming a Faculty Member in the Sciences
- Preparing for an Academic Interview (in conjunction with Graduate Career Services)
- Giving Critical Feedback that Inspires Students to Improve their Writing

### *Teaching Events*

Every year, the GTC office sponsors teaching events that are open to the entire campus. Teaching at Yale Day is held a few days before classes start each fall and spring and is designed to provide preparation for first-time and international TFs. The Spring Teaching Forum and Teaching Innovation Fair, held every year in February or March, brings faculty members, alumni, and national experts together to explore an important theme. Recent themes include "Teaching Complexity" and "Lecture, Section, and Learning."

### *The GTC Web Site*

Visit the GTC web site ([www.yale.edu/mcdougal/teaching](http://www.yale.edu/mcdougal/teaching)) for up-to-date listings of workshops, events, and GTC courses. Check out the searchable database of books and other teaching resources.

### *Departmental Consultations*

Any student or group of students can request a workshop or series of workshops for their department. The GTC will involve students and faculty members in your department to develop workshops on topics such as teaching, mentoring, grading, and discussion. Contact any GTC staff member for more information.

### *Individual Consultation*

You can have an individual, confidential meeting with the director or one of the teaching consultants about any aspect of teaching. This is a good opportunity to discuss a variety of concerns, from specific interpersonal conflicts to problems with presenting difficult or controversial topics.

The GTC also provides a classroom consultation service that helps graduate students become better teachers through the increased self-awareness that comes from having their teaching observed. The GTC is committed to providing graduate student teachers with the tools to assess their own teaching performance and raise their sensitivity to the interactive nature of classroom teaching. Although the prospect of being visited by a trained observer may be a bit scary (okay, terrifying) for many new teachers (not to mention many experienced teachers), it can be a great opportunity to brush up on your skills and prepare for other kinds of observation in the future. After all, supervisors and administrators will observe your classroom teaching from time to time throughout your career, and their evaluations will be the basis for important decisions about hiring and promotion. Isn't it much less scary to have a sympathetic visitor whose only job is to help you improve your teaching? Isn't it? Answer me, Tlaloc, you accursed demon!

Best of all, a GTC consultant can even videotape your class (free of charge!) so that you can review the class session and decide for yourself how things are going. Seeing yourself on video is a great way to identify your strengths and weaknesses. It is also truly cringe-inducing, but if you watch it by yourself with a cold beer you should make it through mostly unscathed.

### *Observation, Not Evaluation*

The role of the classroom consultant is not to evaluate your teaching. Rather, the consultation process should provide you with information that will help you assess your own teaching according to your own goals. A GTC consultant's job is to pay attention to things that

you don't have time to think about while you're teaching, to be an extra set of eyes in your classroom, and to answer any questions that you might have.

Each consultation has three stages:

1. A pre-observation briefing. The briefing is your opportunity to tell the consultant what to look for during the observation. In other words, you train the consultant to be the kind of observer that you need, providing the necessary background and context for the consultant's classroom visit. You will likely be asked the following:

- What will a successful class meeting look like?
- What issues are you particularly concerned about?
- What skills are you trying to develop right now?
- What are your primary objectives for your students?

2. The classroom visit and observation. The observation should represent a normal class session as much as possible; the presence of the consultant (and the video camera, if desired) should be, like outpatient surgery, minimally invasive. If the session is videotaped, the tape is handed directly to you at the end of the class; no one else views the tape except at your invitation. Consultants will ask themselves the following questions while observing your class:

- How does the teacher present the material?
- How do the students interact with the teacher and with one another?
- Who speaks when?
- How is class time organized?
- Did I take the lens cap off the camera?
- What seems to be the objective of the meeting?

3. A post-observation consultation. During the consultation you and the consultant meet to discuss the class and, if you wish, review the

videotape together. In addition to reviewing the data collected during the observation, you and the consultant can have a general discussion of style and technique.

### *Getting in Touch with the GTC*

If you have any questions about a GTC classroom consultation, or if you would like to make an appointment with a consultant, call the GTC at 432-7702, stop by the consultants' office at HGS 120, or go to the GTC web site at: [www.yale.edu/mcdougal/teaching](http://www.yale.edu/mcdougal/teaching).

## THE JOB MARKET & THE TEACHING PORTFOLIO

### **A Nice Package**

A teaching portfolio describes your teaching to a hiring committee or anyone else who wants to assess your skills in the classroom. Like the portfolio of an artist or photographer, the teaching portfolio contains examples of your work, organized to highlight its very best aspects. By putting together a teaching portfolio during your time in graduate school, you not only prepare yourself for the job market but also reflect on your teaching in a critical and beneficial way. Having a portfolio might help you get a better teaching job, but building it will definitely make you a better teacher. Not all hiring committees will request a portfolio, but with increasing frequency job ads are asking for "evidence of effective teaching" or direct requests for portfolios. Even when a portfolio is not requested, preparing one can greatly enhance your performance in interviews.

### **Be Prepared**

Though the job market and interviews may seem a long way off, you should start collecting materials for your portfolio as soon as you start teaching: you may not have a large amount of teaching experience by the time you graduate, so make the most of the experience you do get. Here are some things you'll want to do during every semester you teach:

- Save everything. Save every piece of material from the course: syllabus, exams, assignments, in-class exercises, labs, handouts, study guides, and notes, as well as special examples of students work.
- Keep notes. You may want to keep a diary that includes insights and observations for each day's

class. If a diary seems too time consuming, make sure you take notes after memorable classes, particularly those during which you did something great that you want to remember. Think you'll remember without writing it down? You won't.

- Keep a list of highlights. At the end of the semester, go over your notes or memories and jot down events that show you to be a great teacher. Maybe a student successfully revised a paper because of your help, or perhaps you made a particularly powerful comment that clarified a very muddy point for your students. Write down whatever you did that was outstanding or that taught you something about teaching.

Once you're feeling good about your teaching, make sure that a professor from your department visits your class and observes you. Many professors will do this automatically, but if yours does not, then request it. You might also suggest the pre- and post-observation structure used by GTC consultants (see above). Using that model the professor will come to understand you as a teacher, and you might even learn something about your teaching. At the very least, the letter of recommendation will contain specific references to your teaching.



*"You were kept after school to review multiplication and division. This is not a date."*

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## Constructing the Portfolio

The organization of your portfolio is up to you: it depends on what you've done and what kind of material shows you in the best possible light. The important thing is that the portfolio be filled with things that you've created, or things that speak about you as a teacher.

### Possible Teaching Portfolio Contents

#### *Things You've Created:*

- assignments
- tests or test questions
- paper topics
- in-class exercises
- handouts
- review sheets
- comments on student papers
- syllabi that you have taught or would like to teach
- feedback forms
- labs
- study sheets

#### *Things That Speak About You As A Teacher:*

- students' evaluations
- comments from faculty members
- comments from consultants, peers, or anyone who has seen you teach
- evidence of participation in teaching improvement activities
- awards

There is no standard format for a teaching portfolio, but they tend to take roughly the following form:

1. One- to two-page statement of teaching philosophy
2. Table of contents
3. The meat of the portfolio, arranged perhaps by:
  - a. course (one section for each course you've taught)
  - b. type of material (one section each for syllabi, tests, assignments, student feedback, examples of your feedback on student papers, comments from students and faculty)

- c. theme (you may indicate in your teaching philosophy that your main goals in teaching are critical thinking and citizenship; you can then organize your portfolio around these two themes)
4. Appendixes (these may include certificates or awards that don't fit easily into the rest of the portfolio)

### **You Need Help**

A teaching portfolio is not easy to construct, even if you've been vigilant about collecting materials. Lucky for you there are plenty of resources on campus to help you: every fall the GTC organizes workshops on teaching portfolios, and Bill Rando, director of the GTC, will meet with you individually to go over your teaching history, figure out the best organizational strategy for the portfolio, and refine your teaching philosophy statement. In addition, the McDougal Center Resource Library contains a number of guides to teaching portfolios.

# CHAPTER 7: Teaching in Yale College

Who teaches in Yale College? You do, friend. Yale College is but one of Yale University's twelve schools – it's the one that grants undergraduate degrees, the Bachelor of Arts and the Bachelor of Science. Yale College is one of the oldest in the country, and it has more than its fair share of rules, regulations, and quirks. This chapter is designed to help guide you through some of those. **YALE COLLEGE: AN INTRODUCTION** is, obviously, a brief description of the institution. **BEGINNING AND ENDING THE SEMESTER** describes the intricacies of the Shopping and Exam Periods. **GRADING AND OTHER ACADEMIC ISSUES** discusses a number of important matters, from Dean's Excuses to submitting grades to writing letters of recommendation. Finally, **STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR** goes over what is expected of TFs and delineates relevant University policy.

## YALE COLLEGE: AN INTRODUCTION

### The College

There are about 5,400 undergraduates in Yale College, about the same population as Phoenix, Arizona in 1900. Does that put things in perspective? It's also about the same number of students as in the graduate school and the ten professional schools combined. Each of these bright-eyed, bushy-tailed undergrads belongs to one of twelve residential colleges, to which they're randomly assigned upon admission. The colleges form an integral part of the social and academic life of Yale undergrads: students generally live in their colleges for at least three of their four years at Yale, and even those who choose to move off campus remain closely affiliated. Each residential college has a master, who is responsible for establishing the social atmosphere of the college, as well as a dean, who advises and oversees the academic curriculum of each student. You will likely have some contact with one or two of the residential college deans, since they have the authority to grant Dean's Excuses for late work and must be contacted if a student is in danger of failing your course. Want to hear more? Stow that wan smile and read on!

### The Residential College Deans

The relationship among residential college deans, students, TFs, and instructors is often misunderstood. The deans live in the colleges, and it's their responsibility to look after their students' academic and personal well-being. As a result, they can be an invaluable asset to you and your students. For instance, if a student appears to be having serious academic or personal difficulties, you can contact the dean, who will likely know more about the student and be in a better position to provide tutors, counselors, and other services. The deans are a resource underutilized by TFs, a sad fact given how much they know about the students in our classes. One reason that TFs may not make better use of the deans is the Dean's Excuse (see Late or Postponed Work below), which can put TFs and college deans at odds unnecessarily. This is unfortunate, because the college deans, like TFs, have the students' best interests in mind.

### Requirements for the B.A. or B.S. Degree

Yale undergrads must fulfill three different sets of requirements in order to graduate.

1. They must earn a total of at least 36 term course credits. (Keep in mind that most colleges require only 32 credits.) This means that your students will be taking five courses in at least half of their semesters here, rather than the norm of four.
2. They must fulfill the distributional requirements. Courses at Yale are classified into four groups: Group I covers the languages and literatures, Group II the other humanities, Group III the social sciences, and Group IV the natural sciences. Students are required to take a number of classes outside their majors, spread across each of these groups. In addition, they must fulfill a foreign language requirement, either by taking courses or passing a proficiency exam.
3. Students must fulfill the requirements of a major. The official selection does not take place until the beginning of junior year (sophomore year for science majors). Thus, it's perfectly normal for a freshman or a sophomore to be undecided – at least when it comes to their major.



### *Why Does It Matter?*

It's important for you to keep these requirements in mind when you consider the mix of students in your class or section – students are probably taking your course for a number of different reasons. This is especially true for introductory level courses, in which you will likely have students taking the course out of academic curiosity, to fulfill a distributional requirement, or as a requirement for the major. Don't be surprised to find that students will balance the workload in your course in accordance with their individual priorities, which go beyond academic interests to include social, athletic, and community organizations. You're teaching only one course, so it's all-important to you; students, however, are juggling a lot, so don't take it personally if the course you're teaching isn't the center of their universe.

### **Getting the Book Thrown at You**

Each summer undergraduates receive a huge envelope filled with pretty colored forms to fill out and a big fat book to peruse. The latter is formally titled Yale College Programs of Study: an apt label, but a tad unwieldy. Hence its more common name, the Blue Book. Why "the Blue Book?" Because it's blue. Or rather, it was blue. Nowadays its glossy cover is usually adorned with a lovely photograph of an instantly recognizable piece of Yale architecture, but in a stunning example of catachresis it has retained its colorful sobriquet.

Listed therein you will find all the classes taught in Yale College during that academic year, including the one you'll teach. The Blue Book also contains valuable information such as a list of important dates and deadlines, exam times, and academic rules and regulations. It used to be that TFs were forced to plow through the Blue Book themselves, adding to the massive reading that they had to complete before they could start to work on their dissertations. But behold! What follows is a summary of the most salient parts of the Blue Book, as well as the hard facts that every TF should know before entering a Yale classroom.

### **Feelin' Blue**

TFs usually receive a copy of the Blue Book in their mailboxes. It's a good idea to look through it and hold on to it. Find your course and make sure that the correct meeting time has been printed. In order to do this, you will have to decipher the course listings, which are rife with numbers and numerals, Arabic and Roman. The key to the course listings is on one of the first pages. Note too that there are no classroom assignments listed. These are listed separately in the "Course Supplement," which students receive with their registration packet just before classes start in the fall. TFs usually receive a Course Supplement in their mailboxes, but you should be notified of your room assignment either by the department in which you are teaching or by the professor who's heading up the course.

## **BEGINNING AND ENDING THE SEMESTER**

### **Shopping Period**

Most universities require students to pre-register for courses, meaning that students create their schedules far in advance of each semester by relying on written descriptions and hearsay. Yale does not do this. Instead, each semester kicks off with a seven- to ten-day Course Selection period, uniformly known in this age of mass consumerism as "Shopping Period." During this period, students "shop" courses by attending lectures, perusing syllabi, and scrutinizing instructors. Only at the end of this time must they submit completed course schedules (approved by an academic advisor). Once their schedule has been submitted, a student may not add any courses, although any course may be dropped until the last day of the term.

Shopping Period is widely hailed as a positive experience that allows students to think through their choice of courses each semester, but it can turn into a logistical nightmare for a TF caught unawares. During Shopping Period, students commonly enter a classroom and leave immediately after picking up the syllabus or, worse yet, halfway through lecture. (Fortunately, the recent availability of online syllabi has

helped to alleviate these kinds of disruptions.) The size and make-up of your class or section will likely be unstable until after schedules are due, so don't pout. Because of this fluctuation, section meetings do not begin in most courses until the second or third week of class, when student schedules have more or less stabilized.

If you do have to teach during Shopping Period, simply treat the first days of class as regular weeks. Come to class prepared to teach important material from the start, and take it in stride when students walk in and out in the middle of class. Do not hesitate to assign reading right away. Students are aware that they are fully responsible for catching up with any work they have missed while shopping other classes, and you shouldn't feel compelled to waste valuable class time repeating information for newcomers. Ask that students with administrative questions see you after class or email you.

That said, it behooves you to prepare your first sections keeping in mind that many students will have missed one or two lectures. Remind students that they are responsible for catching up on any missed work, but don't assume that each of your students will be immaculately prepared during this first week. It's best not to rely solely on your students to lead discussion during these first few weeks, as you may be faced with fifty very long and quiet minutes.

### **Reading Period and Final Exams**

Reading Period refers to the week between the end of classes and the beginning of the Final Exam Period each semester. During this time, students are expected to complete term work and study for exams. (What students actually do during this time is probably not appropriate for discussion here.) Instructors are free to require that course work be due during this week. However, this course work cannot include any sort of final exam, as finals can be administered only during the week designated as Final Exam Period. That's the whole point, really.

Most courses—introductory language courses being the big exception—do not meet during Reading Period, but that decision belongs to the course instructor. The Blue Book indicates those that do with the phrase “Meets RP.” Clever, no?

### **Scheduling Final Exams: And You Thought You Had Time Management Issues**

The Registrar assigns a specific time and date for the administration of final examinations in most courses in Yale College according to strict kabalistic principles known only to a secret body of Knights Templar. And by that we mean that the date and time are pre-determined by the scheduled meeting time of the course. Your course has probably been assigned an Exam Group number (not to be confused with its Distribution Group!) that determines the exam date and time. You can find this number, as well as the Exam Time Table, in the Blue Book. If your course does not have a group number, a separate time during the Exam Period may have been set up by the course instructor or the Registrar.

#### *AlternaFinal: Hour Exams and Take-Homes*

Instructors occasionally choose to forego the usual three-hour final (everyone! “a three-hour final..”) in favor of another kind of evaluation. Huzzah for change! Ideally, the take-home exam should be due on the date the Registrar had set for the usual final exam, but to protect the sanctity of Reading Week a take-home final cannot be due before or during the first three days of the Final Exam Period. If you are teaching a section of a course with a take-home final, make sure that you discuss any time limits and due dates with the course instructor early in the semester.

In lieu of a three-hour final at the end of the term, some courses will choose to schedule three one-hour tests during the course of the semester. In these cases, an instructor may choose to administer the last test either during the last week of classes or during the Final Exam Period. The test may not be scheduled during Reading Period unless the course is scheduled to meet during that week.

## **GRADING AND OTHER ACADEMIC ISSUES**

### **Grading**

There is no official University-wide policy that dictates how instructors should evaluate students. Instructors decide the distribution of student grades in their courses based on their own policies. At the end of the semester, only the course instructor is allowed to complete and sign the grade sheet and submit it to the Registrar. If you're TFing for a large lecture course, you submit grades for your section to the course head, who takes

care of the paperwork from there. PTAs receive their own grade sheets for their courses.

The Registrar informs all course instructors of the deadline for the submission of final grades each term. Spring semester grades for seniors are due 48 hours after the last exam during the Final Exam Period; all other grades are due seven days after the last exam.

#### *A Special Note on Fs:*

If you submit a failing grade for a student, you will have to fill out a special end-of-term report in which you describe in exquisite detail exactly why the student's work deserves an F. Therefore, you should take extra special care to document all of a student's emails or communications with you. In addition, photocopy failing papers and exams.

#### *A Special Note on A+s:*

Alas, they don't exist. However, if you have students who do truly exceptional work and by all accounts actually deserve an A+, then you should fill out an end-of-term report on them too (it's the same form used for failing students). In it you can sing the praises of such students. These forms are forwarded by the Registrar to the appropriate residential college dean and placed in the student's file. The deans refer to these when writing recommendations for students, so if you're truly blown away by a student, consider taking ten minutes at the end of the term to fill out one of these forms (available from your department DUS).

#### **Special Marks: They're Not Airport Codes**

Sometimes special marks must be reported to the Registrar in place of the usual letter grades. These marks, most of which may be submitted only by a dean, include SAT (satisfactory), TI (authorized temporary incomplete), ABX (authorized absence from final examination), and W (withdrew). The Registrar provides additional information about these marks along with the end-of-the-term packet. If you just can't wait that long, read on.

#### *A Touch of Brown: Credit/D/F*

Undergrads may take up to two courses a semester on the Cr/D/F option. (This is known as "Pass/Fail" or "Sat/Unsat" at other universities.) Yale adds the little twist of making a grade of D an option for students who neither fail nor merit a majestic "Cr" on their transcript. Not all courses offer this option, but many of the more popular ones do. A course instructor has

no way of knowing if a student is taking the course Cr/D/F or not. Moreover, neither a professor nor a TF may ask students whether they're taking a course for Cr/D/F or a grade; students may volunteer this information if they choose, but you cannot inquire.

Students indicate that they wish to take a course as Cr/D/F when they hand in their schedules at the beginning of the semester. Instructors assign a letter grade as they would normally, and the Registrar then converts a letter grade of A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C or C- into a "Cr" and records grades of D+, D, D-, or F as they stand.

#### **Grading**

Final grades must be reported as letter grades according to the system formally approved by Yale College below:

A	Excellent
A-	
B+	
B	Good
B-	
C+	
C	Fair
C-	
D+	
D	Passing
D-	
F	Fail

In the first few weeks of the semester, a student enrolled in a course as Cr/D/F may suddenly exclaim "Hey, Rocket Science 101 ain't so bad! I'm a natural!" The student may choose to change the course from Cr/D/F to a letter grade, and can do so until the eighth week of the semester. It is therefore important to give students appropriate feedback on their work from early on in the semester so that those who wish to change from the Cr/D/F option to a letter grade may make an informed decision. However, the reverse change is not an option. A student who has enrolled in a course for a letter grade option may not switch to Cr/D/F after bombing the midterm. Life truly is unfair.

### *Withdrawal Symptoms*

Students who decide that their performance in a given course is fatally flawed may choose to drop the course. If this is done before midterm, that course will not appear on the transcript at all. After this date, the transcript will record a “W” (for “withdrew”) for that course. This is meant to be a neutral designation, but many students are convinced that a W will inevitably reflect badly on their performance (possibly because students rarely withdraw from courses in which they’re getting an A). Once again, in order to avoid unnecessary connotations and angst-fests that will wreak havoc on a young person’s personal development, it is important that you give feedback on students’ performance early on. If you can, meet with your students individually before midterm to discuss their progress.

### **Shape Up:**

#### **Midterm Reports on Unsatisfactory Work**

Students should get fair warning if they’re doing poorly enough by midterm that they’re in danger of failing the course. To this end, the Registrar sends each PTAI or course instructor several copies of a form that must be filled out if a student is doing unsatisfactory work (D or F level). It should be returned immediately to the residential college dean (or to the Registrar, who will forward it to the appropriate dean). Section leaders should discuss these cases with the course instructor, who may then decide to fill out the form personally, or (more likely) ask you to do it. The residential college deans consult with the students and may refer them to the Yale College Tutoring Program for special assistance.

### **Changing a Term Grade**

A grade cannot be changed once it’s submitted to the Registrar except by action of the Yale College Committee on Honors and Academic Standing, unless the submitted grade was due to a clerical error or miscalculation on the part of the instructor. In such a case, only a course instructor (not a TF) may submit a corrected grade.

### **Late or Postponed Work**

#### *Due Dates*

No matter how much time you spend agonizing over due dates and stressing them in class, sometime, somewhere, somehow, someone will miss a test or ask for an extension. In reality, you can guarantee that many will. Give careful thought to the due dates that you set for

your students. While you’re at it, you should also meditate on your late policy. Will you dock students one full letter grade for each hour their paper is late, one-third a grade for each week it’s late, or something in between? Avoid confusion by stating your policy on late work clearly at the beginning of the semester and again as due dates approach. During the semester, granting extensions is usually done on an individual basis at your discretion, but on some occasions a student’s residential college dean may intervene with a Dean’s Excuse.

#### *Dean’s Excuses*

Here’s how it works: if the need for an extension arises, students will generally approach the instructor first. However, in certain cases—illness, family emergency, observance of religious holidays, and “specific intercollegiate events” (read: away games)—a residential college dean may give permission for a student to make up missed work. In these cases, the student speaks to the dean and gives the instructor (or the TF) the form commonly known as a Dean’s Excuse. You must honor these excuses and cannot penalize late work accompanied by them. The excuse will specify a new due date for the missed work. Deans normally only grant such excuses in the circumstances listed above, though anecdotal evidence suggests significant variation in the strictness with which individual Deans construe these guidelines. While the Dean’s Excuse is designed to save you and the professor from having to collect doctor’s notes and letters about family emergencies, having a student hand you a Dean’s Excuse can feel intrusive, even pandering, and you may find yourself resenting this added level of authority in your classroom. In some cases you may suspect that the student has pulled a fast one on his or her residential college dean; in other cases, you simply might not understand the nature or validity of the Excuse. In any of these situations, it’s important to talk to your instructor or course head, and maybe even to give the dean a call yourself. In circumstances that don’t warrant a Dean’s Excuse, the dean might choose to write an unofficial letter to confirm or explain a situation that has caused a student to miss work. You should use this information to help you decide whether or not to grant the extension.

#### *Temporary Incomplete (TI): You Aren’t Authorized*

When deciding on due dates for assignments, remember that no work (including term papers) should be due after the first day of the Final Examination Period. As an instructor, you may decide to accept work hand-

ed in during this period. However, you may under no circumstances extend a deadline past the end of a term. If a serious illness or family emergency arises, a residential college dean may allow a student to submit work after the term finishes. The dean will report a mark of Temporary Incomplete to the Registrar and notify the instructor of the situation and the date on which the student's work will be due (usually no more than one month beyond the starting date of final exams). Once the work has been made up, the instructor reports the final grade to the Registrar, who removes the Temporary Incomplete from the transcript and replaces it with the final grade. If the work is not handed in by the due date, the instructor calculates a grade that reflects the absence of the missing work and reports this to the Registrar; otherwise, the Registrar will convert the Temporary Incomplete to an F. Any kind of Incomplete that has not been authorized by the dean will be recorded as an F by the Registrar. Now pick a card from the Community Chest.

One final note: a Temporary Incomplete applies only to work postponed after the end of a term, not to students who miss a final exam.

#### *Postponing Final Exams: You Can't Do That Either*

Postponing a final exam can be authorized only by a residential college dean. This may be done for the usual reasons (illness, family emergency, religious holiday, "certain intercollegiate events"), but also if a student has three finals scheduled during the first two days of Final Examination Period or has three finals scheduled consecutively.

What does "consecutively" mean? Exams are scheduled at three times during the day: 9am, 2pm, and 7pm. Three exams on the same day are obviously consecutive, but so are a 2pm and 7pm exam on Tuesday and a 9am on Wednesday. Bingo! Alas, that trip to Club Med scheduled in early May because it's off-season and costs about three grand less than in June is not a valid reason to postpone an exam. Well, not most of the time.

#### **Attendance: Be There Or Be Cut**

There is no University-wide policy on attendance, no minimum number of classes that students are required to attend. Students are expected to show up "regularly." Individual instructors, however, are allowed—and encouraged—to require attendance, and some departments and courses do have their own requirements. If attendance is mandatory, you should state this clearly

at the beginning of the semester, and then follow up on any punitive measures you threaten.

Talk to chronically absent students as soon as you notice the problem. Then, if their repeated promises that they will purchase new and louder alarm clocks haven't done the trick, discuss the problem with the course instructor and, if necessary, contact the student's residential college dean. Student who are consistently absent from a course may be placed on Cut Restriction in that course or in all of their courses. If the absences continue, the Committee on Honors and Academic Standing may vote to exclude a student from the course without credit. In two words: wicked harsh.

#### **Returning Graded Work**

All graded work and calculated grades should be given directly to the student. Posting grades on the web or outside your office is not only a breach of the students' privacy, but is also a federal offense. Seriously. Even posting grades by Social Security number or some other "anonymous" means is unacceptable. If you can't hand back graded work personally, leave the assignments or exams with someone who can (another member of your department, for example). Don't leave stacks of blue books lying around for anyone to peruse.

#### **Academic Dishonesty (Cheating)**

In a perfect world, no one would ever cheat. Then again, in a perfect world we would all be sitting around in a lush garden sipping fruity drinks with umbrellas. Cheating, or its upper-class relative, "academic dishonesty," can be a strong temptation for the over-stressed, under-slept student. Luckily, most students resist the siren's song, but a few do not. All undergraduates receive copies of the *Academic Handbook* and *Sources: Their Use and Acknowledgment* (which spent three glorious months in 1967 at the top of the non-fiction best-sellers list). These two handbooks provide undergraduates with the rules, regulations, and, yes, punishments awaiting those caught in flagrante delicto. You're welcome to pick up copies of these bad boys from the Yale College Dean's Office. If you're not so inclined, read on; what follows is a summary of the rules on academic dishonesty.

Yale College provides the following definitions for Academic Dishonesty:

1. Handing in the same paper for two different courses without the express permission of the instructors of both courses.
2. Cheating on a test, exam, or any other assignment.
3. Plagiarism of any kind, including the submission of another person's work as one's own.
4. Fabricating or misrepresenting the results of any scientific experiment.

Students are well aware of these rules, but that's no reason for you to tempt them. Always proctor tests and exams carefully. Walk around the room looking alert, even if you're not. If space allows, make students sit with one empty seat between them. All take-home exams and exercises should state in writing how they should be completed, and, if collaboration is allowed, to what extent.

If you suspect that one of your students has been academically dishonest, speak to the course instructor immediately. Be prepared to supply evidence. For the sake of fairness, under no circumstances should you try to resolve a matter of this kind privately with the student. If the allegation of dishonesty is clearly warranted, the course instructor will refer the matter to the Executive Committee. The committee will then proceed with a full investigation.

### Letters of Recommendation

Remember how you had to get all of those letters to get into graduate school? Well, as any good dabbler in Eastern thought will tell you, it's all about karma, baby. It all comes right back at you. Sooner or later, a student will ask you for a letter of recommendation. Guess what? You've got to dish out a little yin for all the yang you got. You're not simply doing your students a favor. It is (believe it or not) your responsibility to write letters for your students if they request them. It's all a part of learning to be an educator, and a way for you to contribute to the feng shui of the Academy.

That's not to say that you should feel compelled to write a letter for the student who came to section twice the whole semester. As a teaching fellow, you are in the privileged position of actually knowing your students

on an academic, and even personal, level. Consider this: the professor with 500 students in her lecture probably has little to say about the freshman in the twentieth row. You, on the other hand, can truly make a difference. So, make sure that you do actually know this student well enough to write something sincere. Then sit down and think about what you want to write. While there is no perfect formula or model, you may want to keep the following in mind while you're deep in thought:

1. You should state how you know the student (let's call him Boethius), and for how long.
2. You should discuss Boethius' academic performance, but also include what you know about his academic strengths in general: Was he always prepared? Focused? Unusually perceptive? Well-versed in the subject? Did he show signs of progress throughout the semester? Was he willing to work hard?
3. Keep Boethius' personality in mind as well: Was he considerate of you and the other students in the section? Did he work well with others? Show strong leadership abilities? Share the milk and cookies with Philosophia?
4. Try to back up anything you say with concrete examples.
5. Make sure that you know whom the letter is destined for. A letter for graduate school should not be the same as one for a summer internship.
6. Only write what you know about students. If you don't know whether or not they would make a good circus clown, don't insist that they would.

Students might also ask you to write letters for their residential college files. These files and letters are consulted by the residential college deans when they are writing recommendations and are forwarded to others at the request of students. Students should provide you with the appropriate forms, which you should send directly to the dean's office.

## STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR

It is difficult to overestimate the close scrutiny that students give to everything they think they perceive about an instructor, and you may be surprised by their eagerness to respect and admire you. “Teaching by example” has many meanings, but one of them is that a student can learn as much from what a teacher does as from what a teacher says.

### **Preparation and Accountability**

All graduate teachers are expected to attend all scheduled meetings of their classes and to be available for consultations with students, course instructors, or departmental officers during the entire term as it is set forth in the Yale College calendar, including the Reading Period and the Final Examination Period. If you're unable to meet a class either because of illness or an emergency, you should contact the course instructor and, if necessary, your department. Drink plenty of fluids.

Just as teachers have every right to expect that their students will arrive for class on time and prepared, so too do students have the same right to expect their teachers to come to each and every class on time and to be fully conversant with the materials. In addition to setting a bad example, tardiness shows a basic lack of respect for your students. While most TFs err on the side of being over-prepared for class, there are occasions in which TFs—especially stressed-out TFs—are tempted to extemporize a class rather than take the time to prepare for it. Like most temptations, this is best avoided.

When it comes to grading, a teacher must be scrupulously and professionally impartial, judging students based solely on the quality of their work; you must resist the frequent (oh, so frequent!) human inclination to be swayed by extraneous considerations, even strong or emotionally compelling ones. The obnoxious over-talker who earns an A will have to get it, just as you will have to give a C to the delightful little munchkin who had a disastrous final exam.

Above all, maintain a professional relationship at all times. A “professional relationship” between a teacher (particularly a graduate student, who is often only a few years older than the undergraduates) and student is always a complicated phenomenon, and it can present special problems to the novice teacher simply

because those problems are new. You'll recall from your own experiences as a student that undergraduates are unusually impressionable, almost always sensitive, and often capable of misinterpreting the implications of what a teacher says or does. On a simple level, this means that your curt comments in the margin of a paper may cause (unintended) emotional anguish to the student who perceives them to be your commentary on her as a person. On another level, however, teachers must be aware in their classroom discourse (and in comments made on papers and exams) of the wide diversity of religious, racial, and economic backgrounds of their students. You should also be aware of the broad range of your students' talents and their personal, intellectual, and vocational expectations.

### **Reliability and Propriety**

#### *Predictability*

Students need and expect predictability in their transactions with their instructors. This doesn't mean that your teaching can't be imaginative and resourceful. However, there are certain routine things in any course that a student has a right to depend on—they should always know what they are expected to do in a course and when they are expected to do it. That can't happen if, for example, you depart substantially from the syllabus, require extra reading without reasonable notice, or assign a paper at the end of the course without warning. Even some seemingly trivial deviations from the expected, such as altering the announced date of an hour test or changing the meeting place from the designated room to a local watering hole in response to a “unanimous” decision, can be risky. There is always the chance that some shy or insecure students will be reluctant to object to the majority's decision to deviate from what had been established. In short, if you are in any doubt about how to carry out the procedural aspects of running a course, stick to the expected and conventional.

#### *Students' Personal Issues*

Through actions or conversation with you, whether inadvertently or intentionally, a student may disclose to you the existence, or possible existence, of a personal problem, sometimes with underlying causes of an emotional nature. In some cases it may be appropriate and desirable for you to talk with the student. In other cases the student should be referred to the instructor and then, frequently, to some other member of the Yale community who is charged with the counseling of students (often the master or dean of the student's college). As a TF, you'll have to use your discretion to

decide whether the problem falls within the scope of your competence. If it doesn't, or if you're in doubt, either consult the instructor or refer the student to the appropriate counselor. Obviously, any urgent personal problem should be brought to the attention of the master or dean immediately.

#### *You Have Enough Friends*

Although it's probably obvious that favoritism, intimidation, or harassment of any student is a serious violation of professional conduct, you might not realize that "favoritism," "intimidation," and "harassment" can take many forms, and that professional standards often proscribe behavior that may appear at first glance to be innocuous.

Without a doubt you should maintain amicable relations with your students. However, your students can never be your "friends" in the usual sense, and you need to balance the genuine need for amicability with the equally important necessity of avoiding preferential treatment or compromised judgment or (and here's the kicker) even the appearance of such behavior. With luck, you already have friends who aren't undergraduates, so you don't need your students to be your friends (or more than friends). Don't date a student currently in your class. If a friend, former date, or anyone else with whom you have a personal relationship is enrolled in the course, confer with the instructor to determine whether you should grade that student's work. Furthermore, you should never give (or appear to give) unusual personal attention to any student, or be particularly familiar with any student, during class or at other times.

You may think your behavior is completely harmless, but remember that the mere perception of favoritism or extra attention can be unwelcome and dangerous. Sexual harassment can involve overt action, a threat, or a reprisal, but it can also be subtle and indirect, with a coerciveness that is unstated. In other instances, behavior may be inadvertently inappropriate or coercive, or it may result from a lack of awareness or from a misunderstanding. This is made explicit in the University definition of sexual harassment. In addition, TFs must comply with the University policy on teacher-student consensual relations.

### **The University Definition of Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment is antithetical to academic values and to a work environment free from the fact or appearance of coercion, and it is a violation of University policy. Sexual harassment consists of non-consensual sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature on or off campus, when:

1. submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a condition of an individual's employment or academic standing; or
2. submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis for employment decisions or for academic evaluation grades, or advancement; or
3. such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance or creating an intimidating or hostile academic or work environment. Sexual harassment may be found in a single episode, as well as in persistent behavior.



## University Policy on Teacher-Student Consensual Relations

The integrity of the teacher-student relationship is the foundation of the University's educational mission. This relationship vests considerable trust in the teacher, who, in turn, bears authority and accountability as a mentor, educator, and evaluator. The unequal institutional power inherent in this relationship heightens the vulnerability of the student and the potential for coercion. The pedagogical relationship between teacher and student must be protected from influences or activities that can interfere with learning consistent with the goals and ideals of the University. Whenever a teacher is responsible for directly supervising a student, a sexual relationship between them is inappropriate. Any such relationship jeopardizes the integrity of the educational process by creating a conflict of interest and may lead to an inhospitable learning environment for other students.

Therefore, no teacher shall have a sexual relationship with a student over whom he or she has direct supervisory responsibilities regardless of whether the relationship is consensual. Teachers must avoid sexual relationships with their students, including those for whom they are likely to have future supervisory responsibility. Conversely, teachers must not directly supervise any student with whom they have a sexual relationship. Violations of or failure to correct violations of these conflict of interest principles by the teacher will be grounds for disciplinary action.

Teachers or students with questions about this conflict of interest policy are advised to consult with the department chair, the appropriate dean, the Provost, or one of their designates. If the issue cannot be resolved informally, a student may lodge a conflict of interest complaint with the dean of the school in which the student is enrolled or where the teacher exercises his or her supervisory responsibilities.

For purposes of this policy, "direct supervision" includes the following activities (on or off campus): course teaching, examining, grading, advising for a formal project such as a thesis or research, supervising required research or other academic activities, and recommending in an institutional capacity for employment, fellowships or awards. "Teachers" includes ladder and non-ladder faculty as well as graduate and professional students serving as teaching fellows or in similar institutional roles. "Students" refers to those enrolled in any and all programs of the University.

# Appendix A • The Teaching Fellow Program

Information in this section explains how your teaching fellow experience is organized and what you can expect in terms of your assignments. If you have additional questions about the program, contact Associate Dean Judith Hackman, director of the Teaching Fellow Program. Her office is located in HGS 138.

## THE TEACHING FELLOW PROGRAM

### Purpose of the Teaching Fellow Program

The Teaching Fellow Program (TFP) is the principal framework at Yale in which graduate students learn to become effective teachers. Learning to teach and to evaluate student work is fundamental to the education of graduate students. The Teaching Fellow Program provides opportunities for graduate students to develop teaching skills, under faculty guidance, through active participation in the teaching of Yale undergraduates. Teaching fellows who encounter problems or difficulties related to their teaching roles are encouraged to meet with the director of the Teaching Fellow Program or their associate dean.

### Types of Graduate Student Appointments

The Graduate School expects that each term, departments will send letters of appointment to graduate students, signed by both the department and the TFP director, indicating the course in which a graduate student is expected to teach and the level of the assignment.

#### *Teaching Fellow Levels*

There are five levels of TFs at Yale. They are distinguished from one another by several considerations, including the kind or kinds of activity required, the approximate hours per week, and the number of students taught. For example, courses in which TFs are expected to provide frequent and intensive writing criticism, to grade problem sets or vocabulary tests frequently, or to prepare especially complicated visual or laboratory materials, may be accorded a higher-level teaching fellowship than courses that do not carry such an expectation. A graduate student's teaching assignment is measured in terms of teaching fellow units (one unit for a term as TF 1, two units for a term as TF 2, and so on).

*Teaching Fellow 1:* The duties of a TF 1 are primarily (a) grading or (b) a modest combination of the following: attending class, reading, advising undergraduates, offering an occasional discussion section, helping to set up a lab, or assisting in the administrative details of a course. A TF 1 does not engage in regular classroom teaching. Approximate weekly effort, 5 hours. The 2004-2005 teaching fellowship is \$1,940 per term.

*Teaching Fellow 2:* A TF 2 typically leads and grades one discussion or laboratory section of up to twenty students in courses in the natural sciences and some social sciences or combines responsibilities (a) and (b) as described under TF 1. Approximate weekly effort, 10 hours. The 2004-2005 teaching fellowship is \$3,880 per term.

*Teaching Fellow 3:* Depending on department policy, the duties of a TF 3 may include leading and grading one or two lab or discussion sections, as in Chemistry. Alternatively, a TF 3 may be appropriate for a combination of duties that might include attending lectures, office hours and consultations, and grading, as in Psychology. Approximate weekly effort, 15 hours. The 2004-2005 teaching fellowship is \$5,820 per term.

*Teaching Fellow 3.5:* This appointment is appropriate for TFs who lead and grade one section in English, History of Art, the Literature major, in any literature course in the national language departments that may conform to the same mode of teaching, in courses double titled with these departments and programs, and in a few designated courses. Discussion section leaders are appointed for lecture courses with 30 or more students; a section size is expected not to exceed 18 students, with 20 the absolute maximum. This appointment is also used for Writing Intensive TFs. Approximate weekly effort, 17.5 hours. The 2004-2005 teaching fellowship is \$6,790 per term.

*Teaching Fellow 4:* This appointment is appropriate for TFs in humanities and social science departments where teaching fellows usually lead and grade two sections. Discussion section leaders are appointed for lecture courses with 30 or more students; a section size is expected not to exceed 18 students, with 20 the absolute maximum. Approximate weekly effort, 20 hours. The 2004-2005 teaching fellowship is \$7,760 per term.

The Graduate School normally limits the size of discussion sections in lecture courses led by teaching fellows to eighteen to twenty students. Enrollments should not exceed twenty students unless an unavoidable circumstance, such as the absence of another qualified teaching fellow, makes it necessary.

#### *Part-time Acting Instructors*

Graduate students appointed as part-time acting instructors (PTAIs) are responsible for the conduct of sections of introductory courses or advanced courses, normally seminars in their special fields. PTAIs are subject to departmental guidance, which, in the case of multisection introductory courses, may entail the use of a common syllabus and examinations. PTAIs who teach advanced courses must have satisfied all predissertation requirements (including the dissertation prospectus) and must be registered full time to be eligible for the appointment. Hours of effort for PTAIs will vary from one individual to another. The 2004-2005 teaching fellowship is \$7,860 per term.

#### *College Seminar Instructorships*

The appointment of graduate students as residential college seminar instructors differs from the appointment of teaching fellows in several respects. To begin with, graduate students themselves take the initiative to make a proposal for a college seminar. Proposals are made on a standardized form and include both a general description of the course and a week-by-week syllabus, as well as information about the experience and qualifications of the prospective instructor. The proposed seminar is reviewed by the College Seminar Committee of each of the twelve residential colleges, some of which may invite the prospective instructor for an interview. When a residential college decides to support a proposed seminar, it forwards the proposal to the student-faculty Committee on Teaching in the Residential Colleges for review. If that committee approves the seminar, the proposal is considered next by the Course of Study Committee (which reviews all courses offered for credit in Yale College), and, if its decision is favorable, the proposal then goes to the Yale College Faculty for a final vote.

The appointment forms for those PTAIs serving as college seminar instructors are prepared, reviewed, and processed in the same general way as forms for teaching fellows, described above, except that the appointments are initiated in the office of the Committee on Teaching in the Residential Colleges. College seminar

appointments must also be approved by the dean of Yale College and by the student's associate dean in the Graduate School.

Further information about becoming a college seminar instructor and seminar proposal forms are available from the office of the Committee on Teaching in the Residential Colleges, 493 College Street. Proposals should be submitted to that office by the last week of August for the succeeding spring term, and by the first week of January for the succeeding fall term.

### **Teaching Opportunities in the Professional Schools**

Although most of the teaching done by graduate students is in Yale College courses, in certain departments and programs there are teaching fellowships that involve the instruction of students enrolled in Yale professional schools. Appointment procedures for these positions vary and are often different from those for Yale College teaching, but the process of approval described in this handbook continues to apply. Here as elsewhere, it is the faculty member who has final responsibility for both the final determination and the submission of grades.

### **Becoming a Teaching Fellow**

The award of a teaching fellowship begins at the departmental level. The first step in this process is the department's determination of its teaching opportunities. In the spring of each academic year, departments and programs are asked to submit lists of the undergraduate courses to be taught in the coming academic year that are appropriate for graduate student teaching assistance, describing for each course the teaching structure (e.g., lecture or laboratory with sections, lecture with graders) and the projected number and levels of teaching fellows. Requests are based on standard teaching fellow levels as described in this appendix and in the Graduate School Programs and Policies Bulletin.

Departments and programs are responsible for selecting individual teaching fellows and submitting their recommendations for appointments to the TFP Office. Teaching fellows are selected from the pool of eligible graduate students who have documented their interest in teaching. Specific teaching assignments are made on the basis of academic importance of a particular teaching experience for individual graduate students, the graduate student's fields of specialization and academic

progress, and projected enrollments and teaching methodology for the course. Once the selection process has been completed, the appropriate appointment forms are prepared by the department offering the course and signed by the student's director of graduate studies and the chairman of the department offering the course.

Departments initiate an appointment by delivering an appointment form to the TFP Office. Graduate student appointments are reviewed for eligibility and must be approved by the associate dean for the department and the director of the Teaching Fellow Program. In the event that there are questions about a recommended appointment, a student's director of graduate studies and, as needed, the faculty member involved, are consulted before the appointment is approved, modified, or cancelled.

Responsibility for monitoring and reporting enrollments rests with the faculty member in charge of a class. As enrollments stabilize in the first few weeks of each term, departments are asked to monitor closely course and section sizes, and it is occasionally necessary for departments to change teaching fellow appointments in response to unexpectedly high or low enrollment. For students in their teaching years (as specified in the letter of admission), teaching assignments are not affected by course enrollment and do not change unless the course is cancelled or the student, DGS, and course instructor agree upon a reassignment. At the end of the Course Selection Period (the shopping period), the TFP Office will send each department a list of the appointments processed, and will send teaching fellows confirmation of their appointments, so that students and faculty can verify their accuracy and make any needed adjustments or corrections.

### **Access to Teaching Fellowships**

When departments are considering applications for teaching fellowships, priority is given to qualified graduate students who are expected to teach as indicated in their letter of admission (usually in years three and four in the humanities and social sciences). Students in their fifth or sixth year of study will be permitted to teach as long as they have been admitted to candidacy and do not currently hold a dissertation fellowship. Students who are permitted to register beyond the sixth year of study may be appointed as TFs or PTAs, but only if there is no other qualified candidate available in the first six years of study in any department or

program of the Graduate School. In cases where an appointing department must choose between two or more graduate students who are each well qualified to teach a particular course, the student or students who have not yet had a chance to teach or who have taught the least should be given preference.

### **Conditions of Eligibility and Appointment Letters**

A student must be registered in the Graduate School to be appointed as a teaching fellow (TF) or as a part-time acting instructor (PTAI).

The Graduate School requires that all students who teach be in good academic standing. In addition, they must be fluent in English, except for those who only grade. Graduate students whose native language is not English are required to meet the oral English proficiency standard before they may begin teaching. The standard may be met by (1) passing the SPEAK test, (2) passing the Test of Spoken English (TSE), or (3) having received a degree from an institution where the principal language of instruction is English. (Degrees awarded en route to the Ph.D. at Yale will not satisfy this requirement.) In some instances, a student's director of graduate studies (DGS) may require that students with degrees from English-speaking institutions also pass the SPEAK test to satisfy the language requirement.

It is the practice of most departments to send letters of appointment to graduate students, signed by both the department and the TFP director, indicating the courses in which they are expected to teach and the level and teaching fellowship of their assignment.

Letters of admission inform students of their programs' requirement for teaching. In many programs there are specific years when students teach and when a portion of their financial aid is derived in part from teaching. For example, most humanities and social science students will participate in teaching in their third and fourth years. In the natural sciences, the timing of teaching is earlier or is flexible across several years. When students are teaching as specified in their letters of admission, teaching assignments will not be adjusted in response to changes in course enrollments. Appointments for these students will change only if a course is cancelled or if the student, course instructor, and DGS all agree upon a reassignment.

Upon admission, many students receive financial aid packages that include teaching fellowships. The admission letter sets the minimum annual total stipend (including the teaching fellowship), which will be awarded even if appropriate teaching is not available or if the teaching fellowship is less than the standard departmental stipend. Such funding adjustments are made with the participation of a student's associate dean and DGS.

Teaching appointments outside those specified in the letter of admission are contingent on a graduate student's satisfactory academic progress and on sufficient course enrollment. Because the Graduate School considers teaching experience an integral part of graduate education, every effort will be made to assign students to another course at an equivalent level if enrollments are lower than anticipated. Ph.D. students who teach in their first or second year, or when such teaching is not a departmental requirement, will receive the full teaching fellowship, plus a supplemental fellowship, bringing their combined stipend up to the level awarded in the admission letter. M.A. students will receive the full teaching fellowship; any other financial aid will be awarded according to the policies of their program.

### **Limits on the Timing and Amount of Teaching**

Except in certain science departments, first-year students may be appointed as teaching fellows only in exceptional cases, and only after prior approval by their DGS, the appropriate associate dean, and the director of the TFP. First-year students in the sciences and second-year students in all divisions will normally not be allowed to teach more than eight teaching fellow units in a single year, and not more than four units in a single term. (See "Teaching Fellow Levels" section for definition of a teaching unit.)

After the second year, but before they have completed their qualifying examinations, students are permitted to teach up to a maximum of four TF units or one PTAI in introductory courses per term with a maximum of eight TF units or two PTAIs per year.

Students with outside fellowships are eligible to serve as TFs according to the policies of their departments and the conditions of their outside awards.

# Appendix B • Yale University Art Gallery

## GUIDE FOR TEACHING ASSISTANTS

The Yale University Art Gallery is the oldest college art museum in the western hemisphere. The collections include more than 100,000 objects from around the world, dating from ancient times to the present. The main building, designed by the distinguished American architect Louis I. Kahn and completed in 1953, was the first modern-style building on the Yale campus, and is presently in the midst of its first complete facility restoration. During the renovation and restoration of the Kahn building, the Art Gallery remains open in Edgerton Swartwout's Italian Gothic Art Gallery of

1928. The recently refurbished American galleries, housing one of the world's finest collections of American paintings, sculpture, and decorative arts, are extensively represented; selections of artworks from the Gallery's other departments are on view in the sculpture hall and adjoining gallery.

Faculty and TAs are encouraged to teach Yale classes using original works of art from the Yale University Art Gallery Collection. To organize class sessions in the Art Gallery, please call Pamela Franks, Curator of Academic Initiatives at 203.432.0621 or email [pamela.franks@yale.edu](mailto:pamela.franks@yale.edu) well in advance of the desired session date.

### For more information about teaching classes in the Art Gallery contact:

Pamela Franks, 2.0621 [pamela.franks@yale.edu](mailto:pamela.franks@yale.edu)  
*Curator of Academic Initiatives*

### Curatorial departments and other useful contact information:

African Art	2.0613	<a href="mailto:katherine.sthreshley@yale.edu">katherine.sthreshley@yale.edu</a>
American Decorative Arts	2.0615	<a href="mailto:nancy.yates@yale.edu">nancy.yates@yale.edu</a>
American Painting & Sculpture	2.0616	<a href="mailto:janet.miller@yale.edu">janet.miller@yale.edu</a>
Ancient Art	2.0613	<a href="mailto:megan.doyon@yale.edu">megan.doyon@yale.edu</a>
Asian Art	2.0629	<a href="mailto:ami.potter@yale.edu">ami.potter@yale.edu</a>
Conservation	2.7815	<a href="mailto:natalie.gillihan@yale.edu">natalie.gillihan@yale.edu</a>
Director	2.7802	<a href="mailto:bernice.parent@yale.edu">bernice.parent@yale.edu</a>
Early European	2.2130	<a href="mailto:allison.peil@yale.edu">allison.peil@yale.edu</a>
Education	6.1559	<a href="mailto:jaimie.ursic@yale.edu">jaimie.ursic@yale.edu</a>
Furniture Study	2.0632	<a href="mailto:katherine.chabla@yale.edu">katherine.chabla@yale.edu</a>
Membership	2.9658	<a href="mailto:linda.jerolmon@yale.edu">linda.jerolmon@yale.edu</a>
Modern & Contemporary	2.0612	<a href="mailto:yvonne.morant@yale.edu">yvonne.morant@yale.edu</a>
Museum Store	2.0601	<a href="mailto:margaret.lowery@yale.edu">margaret.lowery@yale.edu</a>
Prints, Drawings, & Photographs	2.0628	<a href="mailto:suzanne.greenawalt@yale.edu">suzanne.greenawalt@yale.edu</a>
Registrar	2.0605	<a href="mailto:jennifer.bossmann@yale.edu">jennifer.bossmann@yale.edu</a>
Rights & Reproductions	2.0630	<a href="mailto:kathleen.mysten-coulombe@yale.edu">kathleen.mysten-coulombe@yale.edu</a>
Security & Visitor Services	2.0606	<a href="mailto:kevin.bradley@yale.edu">kevin.bradley@yale.edu</a>

### Location

1111 Chapel at High Street  
Please call Visitor Services at 2.0606 for wheelchair access.



**PLSC 233a: Constitutional Law**  
**Discussion Section**

*Teaching Assistant:* Vermicious Knid

*Office Hours:* 3:30-5 Wed. in the McDougal Center Common Room (HGS) and by appointment

*Email:* vermicious.knid@yale.edu

*Telephone:* 555-1212 (before 10 PM)

*Mailbox:* 124 Prospect Street

*Section:* Thursday 7-7:50, LC 204

**Due Dates:**

*September 17:*

3 page paper (due Thursday Sept. 16 in section or Friday Sept. 17 by 3pm in my mailbox)

*October 22:*

Take-home midterm (due Thursday Oct. 21 in section or Friday Oct. 17 by 3pm in my mailbox)

*December 15:*

Final (in class) or 10-12 page paper (topic to be approved by professor or TF)

*Weekly papers:*

One or two paragraph responses to the weekly readings (due in Wednesday's lecture or e-mailed by midnight Wed.) are optional (but strongly recommended), and 10 satisfactory responses allow you to write the 10-12 page paper.

*Participation:*

Section attendance is mandatory, and class participation will contribute to the final grade.

*Deadlines:*

Late papers will result in a deduction of a half grade for each day late. In case of illness or dire emergency, you will need a Dean's slip.

*Grading:*

10% Class Participation

10% 3 page paper

30% Midterm

50% Final exam or paper



## History 113a: The American Revolution

Fridays, 10:30 AM–11:20 AM \*\*\* WLH 207

Fridays, 11:30 AM–12:20 PM \*\*\* CCL Seminar Room 3

TF: Mata Hari E-mail: mata.hari@yale.edu Phone: 100-0101 (8 AM–10 PM only, please)

Office hours: Mondays, 3–4 PM, McDougal Center Common Room, and by appointment

Professor Freeman's lectures provide a broad overview of the American Revolution. In section, we will focus on the assigned books and primary sources and consider how they relate to the broad political and social trends of Revolutionary America.

You have two responsibilities in section. First, you are expected to attend section regularly and be prepared to discuss the week's assigned readings. You may miss one section meeting without penalty; additional absences should be made up by attending another section meeting that week or by submitting an extra response to the e-mail group (in addition to the five required responses).

Secondly, you will be expected to participate in a section e-mail group by submitting at least five e-mail responses over the course of the semester. I would encourage you to submit at least two of them before the midterm. An e-mail response should not be a full-fledged response paper; it may be (1) a short paragraph reflecting on the week's readings and/or lectures; (2) a couple of good, meaty discussion questions; or (3) a response to your classmates' comments and questions. \*\*\* E-mail responses must be submitted to h113-list@pantheon.yale.edu by Thursday, 2 p.m. \*\*\* I will use them to plan class discussions. I will usually post a few questions or comments of my own to the e-mail group as well.

Participation in section is mandatory and may affect your course grade, especially in borderline cases. Your e-mail responses will be considered as part of your class participation, so if you're shy about participating in class discussion, try to take an active role in the e-mail discussion.

Please don't hesitate to e-mail me or come to my office hours if you have questions about the course material or assignments. I will be happy to read rough drafts of papers as long as the drafts are submitted at least one week before the paper is due.

Recommended reference books on the American Revolution (for those who have an insatiable thirst for knowledge or need to look up specific details):

John Mack Faragher, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Colonial and Revolutionary America* (New York: Sachem, 1990) SML Starr Main Reference Room E185 +E63 1990 (LC)

Richard L. Blanco, ed., *The American Revolution, 1775-1785: An Encyclopedia* (New York: Garland, 1993) SML Starr Main Reference Room E208 A463 1993 (LC)

### *Vacation reading for Revolution buffs:*

Richard Buel and Joy Day Buel, *The Way of Duty: A Woman and Her Family in Revolutionary America* (New York: Norton, 1984). A lively narrative history of an elite New England woman's life before, during, and after the Revolutionary War. The book was later made into a documentary, *Mary Silliman's War*. Mary Silliman's sons attended Yale College in the 1790s, and her son Benjamin became Yale's first professor of chemistry in 1801.

David Hackett Fischer, *Paul Revere's Ride* (New York: Oxford, 1994). A well-researched, lavishly illustrated narrative history of the beginning of the Revolutionary War.

Esther Forbes, *Johnny Tremain*. A classic novel about an apprentice silversmith in Boston in the 1770s—aimed at adolescents but fun for adult readers, too.

**PLSC 113b: Introduction to Political Philosophy – Writing Intensive**  
**Spring 2001**

*Section leader:* Hollis Hurlbut

*Section meetings:* Thurs. 11:30–12:20, Bingham Hall 013

*E-mail:* hollis.hurlbut@yale.edu

*Telephone:* 999-1112 (home phone; do not call after midnight or before 9 a.m.)

*Office hours:* Wed. 3:30-5:00, in the McDougal Center Common Room (HGS, York St.), or by appointment

Where to turn in assignments: In my box in the Political Science Department, 124 Prospect St.

*Course requirements:*

Draft of midterm paper (due Friday, Feb. 16)	–
Midterm paper of 5-7 pages (due Friday, March 2)	30%
Draft of final paper (due Friday, March 30)	–
Final paper of 5-7 pages (due Friday, April 13)	35%
Final exam (Thursday, May 3, 2 p.m.)	25%
Section participation & discussion questions	10%

*Section participation and attendance:* The purpose of this section is for us to clarify and evaluate the arguments made in the texts by discussing them as a group. Thus, your input is an essential component, and attendance in section is mandatory. (If you must miss a section, advance notification by e-mail would be appreciated. If you must miss another section, don't.) Half of your participation grade will be based on your regular and substantive contributions to class discussion.

*Weekly discussion questions:* In preparation for each section, students will submit two or three potential discussion questions based on the week's readings. Questions may draw on issues raised in lecture (I didn't understand what the professor meant by...; I wish the lecture had mentioned...; I disagree with a point made in the lecture; instead, I think...) or on your own reading of the texts (What I find disturbing about the Communist Manifesto is...; Can Aristotle's argument that ... be reconciled with the Plato from last week?). Questions should NOT be yes/no (Is Locke a social contract theorist?), purely factual (What does de Tocqueville say about local government?), or ill-defined (Is Thomas Hobbes a crazy man, or what?). Your questions may, however, take the form of a statement or reflection on the week's readings. Discussion questions are due, via e-mail, each week by Wednesday evening at 6 p.m and will make up half of your participation grade. Note that participating in section and consistently submitting discussion questions can provide an important boost to your final grade, especially in borderline cases.

*Individual meetings:* It is my goal (not to mention my responsibility) to be a valuable resource for your progress in this course. Please feel free to contact me—via e-mail, during office hours, or at my home phone—for help or advice on the readings, on section discussion, or on your own writing. If my office hours are inconvenient for you, just let me know, and we'll schedule an alternate meeting time.

## **Music 1066 - The Rise and Fall of Wham**

*TF:* Mary-Lou Who

*email:* mary-lou.who@yale.edu

*phone:* 867-5309 (9am-10pm, please)

*Office Hours:* by appointment

### **Basic Info and Things to Know**

Sections will meet on Thursdays at 7:00 and 8:00pm in WLH 210.

*Attendance* is very important. Section will serve not only as a forum for discussion, but also as a means of introducing repertory not discussed in lecture. We'll also go over music terminology that you'll have to know. (This means, basically, that you'll be tested on material that we cover in section - music and information not readily available elsewhere.)

I will take attendance. In addition, there will be *two worksheets* (unannounced) done in section that account for 10% of your final grade, so it's crucial to be there for that.

If you can't make section in a given week, consult me to find out about other section times and meeting places.

There will be two *short papers* assigned during the term. They must be turned in on the appointed dates. If you can't turn the paper in on time, you must talk to me in advance. If you do, I'm sure we can come to some kind of arrangement for late submission. If you don't talk to me ahead of time or have a Dean's Excuse, I will deduct two-thirds of a letter grade (from B+ to B-, B- to C, etc.) for each day a paper is submitted late.

A few notes regarding papers: I can't stand sloppily written work. Regardless of how brilliant your insights may be, poor writing will have a detrimental effect on your grade. Don't write the papers the night before they're due. Proofread them. Check for spelling, grammar, and style. (I'll give you more stylistic specifics when the assignments get closer.)





**Section Leader**

Please take a few minutes to answer the following questions:

What do you like most about section meetings?

What do you like least about section meetings?

What recommendations would you make for improvement?

## Mid-Semester Evaluation

COURSE \_\_\_\_\_ TF Name \_\_\_\_\_

	Strongly Agree					Strongly Disagree		
SECTION:								
1) I understand the purpose of section assignments	1	2	3	4	5		N/A	
2) I feel encouraged to participate in section	1	2	3	4	5		N/A	
3) Sections complement the course well	1	2	3	4	5		N/A	
TEACHING FELLOW:								
1) Establishes objectives for each section meeting	1	2	3	4	5		N/A	
2) Is well prepared	1	2	3	4	5		N/A	
3) Stimulates interest in subject matter	1	2	3	4	5		N/A	
4) Explains material clearly	1	2	3	4	5		N/A	
5) Provides a sense of continuity from section to section	1	2	3	4	5		N/A	
6) Effectively directs and stimulates discussion	1	2	3	4	5		N/A	
7) Answers questions well	1	2	3	4	5		N/A	
8) Provides helpful comments on written work	1	2	3	4	5		N/A	
9) Is accessible outside of section	1	2	3	4	5		N/A	
10) Treats students with respects	1	2	3	4	5		N/A	
11) Encourages participation by all students	1	2	3	4	5		N/A	
12) Helps me better understand the course material	1	2	3	4	5		N/A	
13) Overall, the TF is an effective section leader	1	2	3	4	5		N/A	
STUDENT:								
		NO	YES					
1) I am usually well-prepared for section		1	2					
2) I attend most section meetings		1	2					
3) I do all or most of the course reading each week		1	2					

**Mid-semester section evaluation**

**History 273, Fance Since 1871**

TF: Wilfred Woodworth

What about section has been the most valuable/interesting to you so far this semester?

Have section handouts been helpful? If not, why?

Please describe the quality of class discussion and in particular your opportunity to participate.

What do you think about the balance between my talking and students talking?

In most sections we have concentrated on discussing the book assigned for that week. Has this been helpful to you?

Would you like to spend more or less time discussing the textbook?

Would you like to spend more or less time discussing Professor Legassino's lectures?

Please add here any other suggestions you might have.



## Yale's On-Line Course Evaluation

Responses to all six of the following questions will be made available to the course instructor(s), to the chair and DUS of the department offering the course, and to officials and committees of Yale College for the purpose of evaluating and improving teaching in the College.

1. Looking back on [course name], what is your overall assessment of the course? What are its strengths and weaknesses, and in what ways might it be improved?
2. Please evaluate the instructor of [course name]. What are the instructor's strengths and weaknesses, and in what ways might his or her teaching be improved? (Note: If there was more than one instructor in this course, please specify each instructor's name before entering your evaluation).
3. If your course included instruction by a teaching fellow, please evaluate your teaching fellow here. What are his or her strengths and weaknesses as an instructor, and in what ways might his/her teaching be improved? (Please specify the name of your teaching fellow.)

*Responses to the following three questions may also be made available to other students.*

4. How would you summarize [course name] for a fellow student? Would you recommend [course name] to another student? Why or why not?
5. Overall, how would you rate the workload of this course in comparison to other Yale courses you have taken? (Scale: 1=much less, 2=less, 3=same, 4=greater, 5=much greater)
6. What is your overall assessment of this course? (Scale: 1=poor, 2=below average, 3=good, 4=very good, 5=excellent)

# Appendix E • Useful Phone Numbers

## THE MCDUGAL GRADUATE TEACHING CENTER (GTC)

320 York Street  
[www.yale.edu/mcdougal/teaching](http://www.yale.edu/mcdougal/teaching)

Bill Rando, Director: 432.7702

HGS 125

Robert Lagueux and Candice Mills,

Coordinators: 432.7702

HGS 120

A list of books and articles on teaching that are in the McDougal Center Resource library is now available on-line at [www.yale.edu/mcdougal/teaching](http://www.yale.edu/mcdougal/teaching). Click on "Teaching Resources."

## ACADEMIC MEDIA AND TECHNOLOGY

[www.yale.edu/amt](http://www.yale.edu/amt)

432.3262

Philip Long, University Director, ITS

Web workshops

[www.yale.edu/instruct/classinfo.html](http://www.yale.edu/instruct/classinfo.html)

## TEACHING WITH TECHNOLOGY RESOURCES AT YALE

[www.yale.edu/instruct](http://www.yale.edu/instruct)

The CLASSES course server ([classes.yale.edu](http://classes.yale.edu))

## INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY GROUP

432.6637

Edward Kairiss, Director: 432.9549

Loriann Higashi, Manager, Student Computing Services

## MEDIA SERVICES

432.2650

David Deitch, Director

Peggy McCready, Associate Director: 432.2038

## CENTER FOR LANGUAGE STUDY AND LANGUAGE LAB

[www.cls.yale.edu](http://www.cls.yale.edu)

432.8196

Nina Garrett, Director

370 Temple

## YALE CENTER FOR WRITING INSTRUCTION

432.7237

Alfred E. Guy, Jr., R.W.B. Director: 432.7492

35 Broadway

[alfred.guy@yale.edu](mailto:alfred.guy@yale.edu)

## UNDERGRADUATE COLLEGES AND DEANS

Berkeley Dean Levesque 432.0502

Branford Dean McDow 432.0520

Calhoun Dean Lassonde 432.0744

Davenport Dean Quimby 432.0555

Timothy Dwight Dean Loge 432.0754

Jonathan Edwards Dean Mangan 432.0377

Morse Dean Jones 432.0397

Pierson Dean Dove 432.1006

Saybrook Dean Collins 432.0541

Silliman Dean Flick 432.0701

Ezra Stiles Dean Wood-Nangombe 432.0563

Trumbull Dean Regan 432.0722

## THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

[www.yale.edu/graduateschool](http://www.yale.edu/graduateschool)

Jon Butler, Dean: 432.2733

Diane Hovey, Assistant: 432.2733

## TEACHING FELLOW PROGRAM

Judith Dozier Hackman, Director

Anita DePalma, Assistant Director: 432.2757

## DEPUTY REGISTRAR FOR THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

Stephen Goot: 432.2743

HGS 142

## THE MCDUGAL CENTER

432.BLUE (2583)

Hall of Graduate Studies

[www.yale.edu/graduateschool/mcdougal](http://www.yale.edu/graduateschool/mcdougal)

STUDENT LIFE, Lisa Brandes, *Director*

GRADUATE CAREER SERVICES, Mary Johnson, *Director*

GRADUATE TEACHING, Bill Rando, *Director*

PROGRAM/RECRUITMENT COORDINATOR, Kathryn Douglas

PROGRAM COORDINATOR, Howard El-Yasin

DOSSIER COORDINATOR, Yvette Barnard

## YALE COLLEGE

[www.yale.edu/yalecol](http://www.yale.edu/yalecol)

Peter Salovey, Dean: 432.2902

SSS 110

Online publications, including the Instructors' Handbook

[www.yale.edu/ycpo/ycposite](http://www.yale.edu/ycpo/ycposite)

**REGISTRAR'S OFFICE, FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES**

246 Church Street  
 432.2330  
[www.yale.edu/sfas/registrar](http://www.yale.edu/sfas/registrar)

**CLASSROOM ALLOCATION, OFFICE OF**

432.2335  
[www.yale.edu/sfas/registrar/bldgguidelines.html](http://www.yale.edu/sfas/registrar/bldgguidelines.html)  
[classrooms@yale.edu](mailto:classrooms@yale.edu)

**TRANSCRIPT OFFICE**

432.2331  
[www.yale.edu/sfas/registrar/index.html](http://www.yale.edu/sfas/registrar/index.html)  
[www.yaletranscript.com](http://www.yaletranscript.com)

**DEANS OF SCHOOLS**

Yale College	432.2900
Graduate School	432.2733
School of Architecture	432.2288
School of Art	432.2606
Divinity School	432.5303
School of Drama	432.1505
School of forestry & Environmental Studies	432.5109
Law School	432.1660
School of Management	432.6035
School of Medicine	785.4672
School of Music	432.4160
School of Nursing	785.2393

**LIBRARY RESOURCES**

Online course & help documents  
[www.library.yale.edu/~lso/workstation](http://www.library.yale.edu/~lso/workstation)  
 Technology in the Yale Libraries  
[www.library.yale.edu/instruction](http://www.library.yale.edu/instruction)

Sterling Memorial Library	432.2798
Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library	432.2972
Cross Campus	432.1870
Divinity School	432.5274
Kline Science	432.3439
Law	432.1608
Mudd, Seeley G.	432.3203
Social Science	432.3300

**OTHER RESOURCES****RESOURCE OFFICE ON DISABILITIES**

103 William L. Harkness Hall  
 432.2324  
[www.yale.edu/rod](http://www.yale.edu/rod)

**SPECIAL SERVICES VAN FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

432.2788  
 24 hours a day, Monday-Friday; Saturday & Sunday,  
 6pm–7:30 AM

**GRADUATE & PROFESSIONAL STUDENT CENTER AT YALE (GPSCY)**

204 York  
 432.2638  
[www.yale.edu/gpss/gpscy](http://www.yale.edu/gpss/gpscy)

**YALE PUBLISHING SERVICES CENTER**

155 Whitney  
 432.6560  
[www.yale.edu/ris](http://www.yale.edu/ris)

If you know of a teaching resource for Yale graduate students not listed here, we'd like to include it. Please contact us at the GTC office 432.BLUE (2583). Thank you.



## The McDougal Graduate Teaching Center

Hall of Graduate Studies  
Rooms 125 & 120B  
320 York Street  
New Haven, Connecticut 06520  
203.432.2583  
[www.yale.edu/mcdougal/teaching](http://www.yale.edu/mcdougal/teaching)