

Seminar for Graduate Teaching Assistants

POLS 7770, Fall 2019

Tuesday 6:50 to
9:50

Instructor: Sam Marcotte
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Room: Jackson St 125
Office: Baldwin Hall 109B
Office hours: by appointment

Course Description and Goals

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

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

Reading

There is one required text for this course:

UGA Teaching Assistant Handbook, drawn from McKeachie’s Teaching Tips: Strategies, Research, and Theory for College and University Teachers.

Available online at: <https://ctl.uga.edu/resources/documents/TAhandbook-rev1-2019-08-12.pdf>

I will post other required readings on ELC.

Students with Disabilities

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

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a core value of institutions of higher learning. All students, upon enrolling, must pledge: “I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others.” It is your responsibility to avoid plagiarism, cheating, and dishonesty. The university policy on academic integrity is posted at: <http://www.uga.edu/honesty/>. To qualify the application of the policy in this course: tests and written assignments should be your own work, while studying and class preparation can (and should) be done with others.

COVID-19 Information

Face Coverings:

Effective July 15, 2020, the University of Georgia—along with all University System of Georgia (USG) institutions—requires all faculty, staff, students and visitors to wear an appropriate face covering while inside campus facilities/buildings where six feet social distancing may not always be possible. Face covering use is in addition to and is not a substitute for social distancing. Anyone not using a face covering when required will be asked to wear one or must leave the area. Reasonable accommodations may be made for those who are unable to wear a face covering for documented health reasons. Students seeking an accommodation related to face coverings should contact Disability Services at <https://drc.uga.edu/>.

DawgCheck:

Please perform a quick symptom check each weekday on DawgCheck—on the UGA app or website—whether you feel sick or not. It will help health providers monitor the health situation on campus: <https://dawgcheck.uga.edu/>

What do I do if I have symptoms?

Students showing symptoms should self-isolate and schedule an appointment with the University Health Center by calling 706-542-1162 (Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.). Please DO NOT walk-in. For emergencies and after-hours care, see <https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies>.

What do I do if I am notified that I have been exposed?

Students who learn they have been directly exposed to COVID-19 but are not showing symptoms should self-quarantine for 14 days consistent with Department of Public Health (DPH) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines. Please correspond with your instructor via email, with a cc: to Student Care & Outreach at sco@uga.edu, to coordinate continuing your coursework while self-quarantined. If you develop symptoms, you should contact the University Health Center to make an appointment to be tested. You should continue to monitor your symptoms daily on DawgCheck.

How do I get a test?

Students who are demonstrating symptoms of COVID-19 should call the University Health Center. UHC is offering testing by appointment for students; appointments may be booked by calling 706-542-1162. UGA will also be recruiting asymptomatic students to participate in surveillance tests. Students living in residence halls, Greek housing and off-campus apartment complexes are encouraged to participate.

What do I do if I test positive?

Any student with a positive COVID-19 test is required to report the test in DawgCheck and should self-isolate immediately. Students should not attend classes in-person until the isolation period is completed. Once you report the positive test through DawgCheck, UGA Student Care and Outreach will follow up with you.

How will COVID affect this course?

Since we meet in an auditorium, we will hold several meetings in-person; however, certain aspects of this course are better suited to an online environment. While there is no attendance policy, I expect your full participation in all activities. All assignments will be submitted online.

Mental Health and Wellness Resources:

- *If you or someone you know needs assistance, you are encouraged to contact Student Care and Outreach in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-7774 or visit <https://sco.uga.edu>. They will help you navigate any difficult circumstances you may be facing by connecting you with the appropriate resources or services.*
- *UGA has several resources for a student seeking **mental health** services (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) or crisis support (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/info/emergencies>).*
- *If you need help managing stress anxiety, relationships, etc., please visit BeWellUGA (<https://www.uhs.uga.edu/bewelluga/bewelluga>) for a list of FREE workshops, classes, mentoring, and **health** coaching led by licensed clinicians and **health** educators in the University **Health** Center.*
- *Additional resources can be accessed through the UGA App.*

Course Requirements and Evaluation

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

Participation: Attendance for this class is not required, but you will be expected to participate in all in-class assignments, discussions, and group activities. Just as you expect your own students to participate fully, so will I expect the same of you.

Lesson Plan: You will design a lesson plan for one class, with direction toward incorporating an innovative or creative approach to teaching political science. Bring enough copies for your classmates, as well as a copy to turn in to me. We will revisit the lesson plans later in the semester. These will be due (electronically) by the September 22 class meeting.

Midterm Evaluation Exercise: Using the sample questions we will devise in the October 2 class meeting, create a midterm evaluation form for your class and implement it. Summarize the responses in a 2-page report, detailing the overall response from your class and how you plan to address your students' concerns for the remainder of the semester. This assignment is due (as a hard copy) at the November 3 class meeting.

Peer Observations: An important part of learning how to teach is responding to constructive criticism. You will observe two of your peers teaching their discussion sections and provide a short written review based on an evaluation form that I will provide to you. You may not observe on a test day or on a day reserved for returning and covering graded tests. These will be due to me in electronic format by December 8.

Revised Teaching Philosophy Statement: By the September 29 class meeting, I expect you to provide a preliminary draft of your teaching philosophy, a document in which you will outline your approach to teaching political science, as well as the principles that will guide you in your instruction. Near the end of the semester you should have sufficient teaching experience to revise and update this teaching philosophy. Revisit your first draft and make changes that reflect your growth as an instructor over the semester. The revised teaching philosophy statement will be due December 8.

Course Schedule

Date	Description
Aug. 25	Introductions and Syllabus Handbook 1.1-1.2.3
Sept 1	ELC
Sept 8	Academic Honesty Handbook 9.1.3
Sept 15	Lesson Plans: Tips for Designing a Successful Discussion Section Handbook 2.3
Sept. 22	Teaching Philosophy Statements Sample Teaching Philosophies Lesson Plans Due
Sept. 29	Dealing with Problem Students Handbook 3.4 Preliminary Teaching Philosophy Statement Due
Oct. 6	Evaluating Students Handbook 6
Oct. 13	Midterm Evaluations
Oct. 20	Diversity and Multiculturalism in the Classroom Handbook 2.2
Oct. 27	Revisiting the Lesson Plan Other TA's Lesson Plans
Nov 3	Helping Students Write and Think Critically Thoms Midterm Evaluations Due
Nov. 10	ELC Part 2
Nov. 17	Group Based Learning Michaelson
Nov. 24	No Class
Dec 1	Classroom Discussion: How Do We Improve? Takayama
Dec. 8	Documenting Your Classroom Experience Revised Teaching Philosophy Due Peer Observations Due

All dates and assignments are subject to change.