

Sociology 301: GSI Training Seminar

Fall 2012

Fridays, 2-3:30pm

Barrows 402

Facilitators:

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This seminar for new GSIs provides training, resources and a discussion forum to assist in teaching sections in undergraduate lecture courses. Each class has an organizing theme, but there will be time to discuss other issues that come up as you teach. We will draw on readings and the expertise of experienced GSIs, faculty and campus staff to develop your teaching skills.

Evaluation

This course is evaluated on a satisfactory/ unsatisfactory basis.

Students will complete the course satisfactorily if:

- You attend seminar and have no more than two unexcused absences. (10%)
- You participate thoughtfully in seminar discussions. (20%)
- You hand in 3 short memos (two paragraphs) of lessons learned and questions remaining for any three class sessions below. (30%)
- You hand in a one-page memo summarizing what you learned from your mid-term teaching evaluations. (10%)
- You hand in either (i) a statement of teaching philosophy or (ii) a 600-800 word “teaching effectiveness” essay at the end of the semester. (30%)

Reflection Memos

You can pick any three class sessions to write up a short two paragraph memo. The first paragraph should outline one or two ideas based on readings (and, if you wish, other resources related to the week’s theme) that you would like to implement in your section, and why. The second paragraph should raise remaining questions or disagreements you have with the readings. These memos will start off class discussion. Post your memo to bSpace by 3pm, Thursday.

Mid-Term Teaching Evaluations

You will design, distribute and evaluate mid-term teaching evaluations for your sections. Hand in a one-page memo summarizing what you learned: what do you do well, and what do you need to improve? In two paragraphs, explain how you will address students' evaluations in class and how you plan to improve your teaching. This should be handed in, in hardcopy format, the week after you distribute your midterm evaluations.

Statement of Teaching Philosophy (one single-spaced page)

Many people include statements of teaching philosophy when they apply for academic jobs. For your final assignment, you can choose to develop such a statement and begin to articulate a personal teaching philosophy. Toward the end of the class we will devote one session to teaching statements. A final copy is due the last day of class, November 30.

"Teaching Effectiveness" Essay (600-800 words)

"Learning by doing" is the most helpful technique to improve your teaching, but all of us can gain from the wisdom of other teachers; this is what we will do as we read articles and "tip sheets" for teaching. For your final assignment, you can choose to write a short piece on one particular teaching technique that you found useful in section, or one strategy that you developed to deal with a difficult teaching moment. Write this up in the style of the campus's Teaching Effectiveness award essays (explain an issue you identified, the technique you developed to deal with the issue, and how you assessed the effectiveness of the technique). Due November 30, in class.

Readings

All course readings are available on bSpace. Readings with an asterisk are required. Other readings are additional resources. Students should also become familiar with:

- *Teaching Guide for GSIs* (GSI Teaching and Resource Center, Berkeley)
<http://gsi.berkeley.edu/teachingguide/tghome.html>.
- *Instructor's Guide to Writing for Sociology* (Dept of Sociology, Berkeley)
http://sociology.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/documents/student_services/writing_guide/Instructor%27s%20Guide_3.1_June2011.pdf
- *Writing for Sociology*, 2nd Edition (Department of Sociology, Berkeley)
http://sociology.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/documents/student_services/writing_guide/Writing%20for%20Sociology%20Guide%20Second%20Edition.pdf

Course Schedule

August 24

Week 1 – Introduction: Getting Ready for your First Class

In our first meeting, we'll orient you to how this course will work, talk about the planned certificate in teaching, discuss logistics associated with running sections, introduce some key resources for GSI-ing, and strategize about starting off your discussion sections.

Suggested Readings:

Teaching Guide for GSIs: "Pre-Semester Preparation"

Teaching Guide for GSIs: "Teaching Discussion Sections"

August 31

Week 2 - Strategies for Leading Discussion

The job of an instructor seems straightforward: effectively communicate class material. But what, exactly, is academic "discussion"? What should you do in section? How can you best engage – and teach – your students?

*Davis, Barbara Gross. "Discussion Strategies" in *Tools for Teaching*.

*Roehling, Patricia Vincent, et al.. 2010. "Engaging the Millennial Generation in Class Discussions." *College Teaching* 59(1):1–6.

Suggested Readings:

Teaching Guide for GSIs: "Teaching Discussion Sections"

Gose, Michael. 2009. "When Socratic Dialogue Is Flagging: Questions and Strategies for Engaging Students." *College Teaching* 57(1):45–49.

September 7

Week 3 - Teaching Students How to Read Effectively

It is impossible to succeed in college, and in sociology, without knowing how to read effectively. Many students struggle with the amount and complexity of academic reading. Instructors' ability to facilitate discussion is also hindered when students struggle with reading. How can we teach students to read better?

* Chapter 1: "Thinking and Reading for College," in *Writing for Sociology, 2nd edition*

* Chapter 2, pp. 19-22: "Understanding the Assignment," in *Writing for Sociology, 2nd edition*

* Chapter 3: "Teaching How to Read," in *Instructor's Guide to Writing for Sociology*

* Bloemraad, Irene. "Helping Students Read and Understand" (for GSI Teaching & Resource

Center)

- * Elcioglu, Emine Fidan. Teaching Effectiveness Award Essay. "Reading Theory with Courage: One Way to Teach Critical Reading Skills."

Suggested Readings:

Teaching Guide for GSIs: Teaching Critical Reading

September 14

Week 4 - Learning from Veteran GSIs: Active Learning and Keeping Students Engaged

Experienced Soc GSIs will share their trials, tribulations, tricks and accumulated wisdom. We will first focus on keeping students engaged during section and techniques to encourage active learning. We'll end with a broader discussion of advice and a Q&A session.

- *Purser, Gretchen. Teaching Effectiveness Award Essay. "Theory as a Map."
- *Villa-Lobos, Ana. Teaching Effectiveness Award Essay. "How to 'Show' Sociology in an Academic World of 'Telling.'"
- *Westbrook, Laurel. Teaching Effectiveness Award Essay. "Drawing to Learn: One Way to Teach to Multiple Learning Styles."

Suggested Readings:

Davis, Barbara Gross. "Collaborative Learning: Group Work and Study Teams" and "Role Playing and Case Studies." In *Tools for Teaching*.

Auman, Corinne. 2011. "Using Simulation Games to Increase Student and Instructor Engagement." *College Teaching* 59(4):154–161.

Tsui, Ming. 2010. "Interteaching Students as Teachers in Lower-Division Sociology Courses." *Teaching Sociology* 38(1):28–34.

September 21

Week 5 – Grading and Assessment

We will discuss how to grade efficiently and effectively, and answer your questions about grading and related issues. How do you determine grades? How do you assess whether students understand concepts? How do we standardize grading across sections? How do you provide enough and useful feedback in an efficient manner? How do you deal with students wanting a better grade? Should you read rough drafts? How do we deal with suspected plagiarism?

- *Davis, Barbara Gross. "Grading Practices." In *Tools for Teaching*.
- *Teaching Guide for GSIs: "Grading Rubrics," "Tips on Grading Efficiently," "Writing Comments on Student Work," and "If You Encounter Student Misconduct."

September 28 – [Irene is AWAY]

Week 6 - Designing and Understanding Teaching Evaluations

You evaluate students, but you should also ask them to evaluate you. If done well, this can help make you a better teacher, and quickly address emerging problems. We will look at how you can solicit student feedback in the classroom: on an informal basis by checking in with individual students, as a more formalized process during discussion section and through a traditional, anonymous teaching evaluation. All 301 students will be expected to create, administer and analyze a set of mid-term teaching evaluations for their sections.

We will also discuss how to deal with the responses you received on your midterm evaluations. What comments are important? How do we deal with conflicting suggestions? How can you further develop strengths and fix weaknesses in your teaching style?

*Teaching Guide for GSIs: “Conducting a Midterm Evaluation”

Suggested Reading:

Davis, Barbara Gross. “Fast Feedback” in *Tools for Teaching*.

October 5

Week 7 - Teaching Students How to Write

The Sociology Department has invested heavily in producing a guidebook to help undergraduate students write better, in encouraging faculty to incorporate a substantial writing component into course that are assigned GSIs, and in producing a guide for instructors on how to teach writing. Nevertheless, many undergraduate students (and instructors!) struggle with academic writing. How do you teach people to write clearly and more effectively in a sociology course?

* Chapter 2: “Bringing Writing into the Classroom,” in *Instructor’s Guide*

* Chapter 4: “Creating Writing Assignments,” in *Instructor’s Guide*

* Chapter 5: “Low-Stakes Writing Assignments,” in *Instructor’s Guide*

* Chapter 6: “High-Stakes Writing Assignments,” in *Instructor’s Guide*

Recommended:

Chapter 1 in *Instructor’s Guide*

Chapters 3, 4 and 5 in *Writing for Sociology* (students’ guide)

Teaching Guide for GSIs: “Working with Student Writing.”

October 12

Week 8 - Assessing and Improving Student Writing

As we approach the end of the semester, students will be spending more time on final papers and longer writing assignments. Should you read rough drafts? How do you provide enough and useful feedback? How do we deal with suspected plagiarism? This class meeting will follow up on the discussion of the week before.

* Chapter 7: "Evaluating Student Writing" in *Instructor's Guide*

* Chapter 6: "Handling Other People's Writing" in *Writing for Sociology* (students' guide)

***Elliott, Rebecca. Teaching Effectiveness Award Essay. "Maximizing the Impact of GSI Feedback through Reflections on Writing."**

October 19

Week 9 – NO CLASS – good luck with mid-term exam grading!

October 26

Week 10 - Diversity and Power Dynamics in Teaching

We will discuss several topics related to diversity and power dynamics in teaching. How might Berkeley's diverse student body effect classroom dynamics? How can we be sensitive to student differences? How do our own backgrounds effect how we teach and interact with students? What should we do when difficult topics come up in class discussions? How do we deal with power dynamics between GSIs and faculty?

*Davis, Barbara Gross. "Diversity and Complexity in the Classroom" and "Teaching Academically Diverse Students." In *Tools for Teaching*.

*"Walking on Eggs: Mastering the Dreaded Diversity Discussion"

Suggested Reading:

Mueller, Jennifer C. 2012. "Tracing Family, Teaching Race: Critical Race Pedagogy in the Millennial Sociology Classroom." *Teaching Sociology*.

Pitt, Richard N, and Josh Packard. 2012. "Activating diversity: the impact of student race on contributions to course discussions." *The Sociological quarterly* 53(2):295–320.

November 2 [Note – Irene AWAY]

Week 11 - Using Technology and Other Teaching Aids

There are many technological tools you can use both in and outside of the classroom to make your teaching more efficient and effective. What technologies are worth using in teaching? How can you incorporate technology into your teaching? How can students use social media and course management sites to effectively communicate with each other outside of class? How can you structure this communication? We will discuss a variety of technological teaching tools such as bSpace, powerpoint, blogs and using videos in teaching. Additionally, we will take some time to talk about what you should do if a student sends you a friend request on facebook or another social network.

*Teaching Guide for GSIs: "Using Instructional Technology"

*Caldeira, Chris. 2012. "The Sociological Cinema: Teaching and Learning Sociology through Video." *Teaching Sociology* 40(2):191–193.

Suggested Readings:

Davis, Barbara Gross. "Instructional Media and Technology" in *Tools for Teaching*.

D'Arcy, Cleora J., Darin M. Eastburn, and Bertram C. Bruce. 2009. "How Media Ecologies Can Address Diverse Student Needs." *College Teaching* 57(1):56–63.

Hanson, Trudy L., et al. 2010. "Cell Phones, Text Messaging, and Facebook: Competing Time Demands of Today's College Students." *College Teaching* 59(1):23–30.

Hill, Andrea, et al.. 2012. "'I'm Ambivalent about It' The Dilemmas of PowerPoint." *Teaching Sociology* 40(3):242–256.

November 9

Week 12 - Teaching Portfolios, Statement of Teaching Philosophy, and Writing about Teaching Effectiveness

What is a teaching portfolio? Why is it necessary? What does it include? What is a statement of teaching philosophy? How do write such a statement?

We will discuss what goes into a teaching portfolio and the characteristics of a strong statement of teaching philosophy, and we will look at examples. With colleagues, you will discuss your ideas for your own statement of teaching philosophy. For those planning to write a Teaching Effectiveness essay, we will discuss the format for doing this, and brainstorm ideas. We will also discuss venues for publishing or distributing your teaching essays.

*Montell, Gabriela. 2003. "How to Write a Statement of Teaching Philosophy." *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 27.

Suggested Readings:

*Davis, Barbara Gross. "Self-Evaluation and the Teaching Dossier" In *Tools for Teaching*.

November 16**Week 13 - Next Steps: Letters of Recommendation and Teaching your Own Class**

Now that you have taught, students might come to you for a letter of recommendation. When should you agree to do this? What do you write in a letter? We will look at some examples and discuss strategies to simplify the process of writing letters.

*Teaching Guide for GSIs: "Writing Letters of Recommendation"

Suggested Reading:

Davis, Barbara Gross. "The Course Syllabus." In Tools for Teaching.

Fink, L. Dee. "Self-Directed Guide for Designing Courses for Significant Learning."

November 23**Week 14 – no class – Happy Thanksgiving!****November 30****Week 15 - Wrap-Up and Final Reflections**

During our final session we will reflect on what you've learned in your first semester of teaching. We will discuss ways to improve your teaching and consider the ways in which you may integrate the things you've learned from this course in your future teaching.