

The Relationship between Course Directors and Teaching Assistants

The Department of Communication depends on both its faculty and graduate students to accomplish its undergraduate teaching mission. We view graduate students and faculty as members of a quality team.

Goals:

- Teaching Assistants receive valuable experience in both teaching and course development courses to undergraduate students
- Mutual feedback and adjustment of behaviors to benefit the course, undergraduate students, and the course team
- Both Teaching Assistants and Course Directors contributing to a quality teaching team which successfully delivers course materials to undergraduate students

Norms:

- Organizational meetings should occur sufficiently in advance of the commencement of the course to allow team members to begin the course prepared in their respective duties
- Team members for a course should plan consistent and regular course meetings
- Specific dialogue should occur between the team members concerning mutual expectations for the course and the team relationships
- Regular supportive feedback should be given among team members which is consistently designed to enhance course performance, self-esteem and professional development
- Teaching assistants should keep course directors informed as mistakes occur or problems arise with students or in sections
- There should be consistent maintenance of professional standards of timeliness, preparation, organization and accessibility to undergraduate students by all teaching team members
- All team members should be open to constructive critique
- All team members should contribute to the development and maintenance of an atmosphere which makes it apparent to undergraduate students that the team members respect and support one another
- Course directors will respect the hourly time commitment of the teaching assistants, which should not regularly require more than 20 hours per week.
- Team members' relationships with undergraduate students should be professional at all times, both in class and outside of class
- Observation of sections should not be intrusive, the timing of observations should be mutually negotiated, and the resulting feedback should be delivered in a supportive, constructive manner
- An equal opportunity for learning and access to resources should be created across different sections for the same course

Situations that May Signal a Problem:

- Frequent or regular lecturing by the Teaching Assistant in the place of the Course Director
- Significant work added to the Teaching Assistant's load which was not anticipated and discussed at the commencement of the course
- Criticisms by teaching team members of each other, delivered to third persons before they are delivered to team members
- Criticisms by teaching team members of one another to or in presence of undergraduate students
- Unequal teaching loads for Teaching Assistants who are similarly situated

- Unequal access to resources and opportunities for learning given to different undergraduate students in the same course
- A feeling of fear on the part of any team member to perform or freely communicate in their professional capacity