

Guidelines for Teaching Assistants

Pratt School of Engineering
Duke University

Presented by Maggie Mbugua
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(originated by Dianne Hendricks)

Welcome



Piled Higher and Deeper
by Jorge Cham

www.phdcomics.com

title: "Reasons for TA'ing" - originally published 10/17/2008

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PhD Teaching Assistant Requirement

- As part of your Ph.D. education, you are required to TA two courses.
- TA assignments are made by the Director of Graduate Studies Administrator (DGSA) for your respective department (ECE, BME, CEE, & MEMS).
- Conflicts over TA assignments need to be resolved with the DGS, and not with the DGSA.

Grad Program Contacts

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Basic Requirements of TAs

- Perform all duties in a timely and professional manner
- Become familiar with course material
- Attend all preparatory sessions
- Interact with students in an appropriate and respectful manner
- Know safety and emergency procedures
- Acquire appropriate safety training or training for specific skills
- Uphold the Duke Community Standard

Communicate with the instructor

Understand the course instructor's expectations of TA duties and responsibilities before the semester begins.

Verify with the instructor that you understand the course policies stated on the instructor's syllabus, and ask if there is anything else that is not included in the syllabus that you need to know.

Determine the instructor's preferred method for you asking questions or expressing concerns.

Discuss with your instructor how to handle student inappropriate behavior or misconduct, academic or otherwise.

Report any problems during the semester to instructor.



Duke Community Standard



Duke University is a community dedicated to scholarship, leadership, and service and to principles of honesty, fairness, and respect for others.

Students share with faculty and staff the responsibility for promoting a climate of integrity. As citizens of this community, students are expected to adhere to these fundamental values at all times, in both their academic and non-academic endeavors.

- I will not lie, cheat, or steal in my academic endeavors;
- I will conduct myself honorably in all my endeavors; and
- I will act if the Standard is compromised.

<http://www.integrity.duke.edu/standard.html>

Report any violations of the Duke Community Standard to the instructor

TAs are often the first to identify cheating by students

- In 2011-2012 year, 43 Pratt students (grad & u-grad) were referred to their Judicial Board for possible academic dishonesty.
- As a TA, you will see everyone's lab reports and be likely to recognize copying or unlikely lab results.
- The first day of lab, clarify appropriate and unacceptable collaboration, with examples of each (and consequences).
- Do not confront a student with your suspicions. Discuss them with the course instructor.

Possible TA responsibilities include:

Holding office hours and/or being available to students by appointment

Running lab or recitation sessions (including brief introductory lectures)

Attending preparatory sessions for labs

Attending course lectures

Grading (pre-lab quizzes, lab reports, exams, etc.)

Collect selected grades for ABET review

Posting course material to Sakai or other course website

Maintaining clear records of students' grades

Designing homework problems, lab report questions, exam questions, etc.

Tracking student attendance

Attending regular meetings with instructor

Presenting review sessions before exams

Presenting a guest lecture

TA Conduct with Students: Learn Names!

Learn names at the beginning of the semester to facilitate good communication and rapport with students.

A class roster with student pictures is available from DukeHub. To obtain a roster, contact the instructor of the course or your department office or DGSA.

Always bring a roster to class for attendance.

TA Conduct with Students: Communication

- Clearly state how and when students can contact you. Provide your email and campus phone information, but not your personal phone number. (Check the Duke directory to see what information is available to students.)
- Let students know acceptable times to contact you and how quickly they can expect you to reply.

Student and TA: Roles and Expectations

- At the beginning of the semester, it is very important that you state in detail what students can expect from you as their TA and what kind of behavior and performance you expect from students.
- To avoid any confusion, give students a handout and/or post this information on Sakai.

The first day of class:

Discuss general course information

- When and how students can contact TA
- TA office hours (time and place) or availability
- Student attendance policy
- Assignment due dates, where to turn in assignments
- Late policy
- Individual work vs. group effort
- Format of assignments
- Grading policy
- This information should be available for students in writing (Sakai, handout, instructor's syllabus)

The first day of class: Discuss general course information



Piled Higher and Deeper
by Jorge Cham

www.phdcomics.com

title: "The first day of class:

Discuss general course information" - originally published 04/01/2013

TA conduct sets the tone for student behavior and performance

Engage students and always act in a respectful and professional manner.

Establish behavior and performance expectations on the first day of class. Provide this information in writing.

Classroom Management Tips:

- Do not allow students to disrupt class by using cell phones, checking email, listening to distracting music, etc.
- Be sure that all students are participating.

TA Conduct with Students: Professionalism

- Be prepared and on time
- Demonstrate respectful and ethical behavior at all times
- Interact with all students in a fair and consistent manner
- Provide constructive criticism in a respectful manner
- Do not speak poorly of other TAs, students or instructors
- Maintain confidentiality of student grades
- Apply course policies and expectations consistently
- Grade in a timely manner
- Be available to students as promised
- Report any infractions of Duke Community Standard to instructor

Be actively involved with students during lab or discussion sessions!

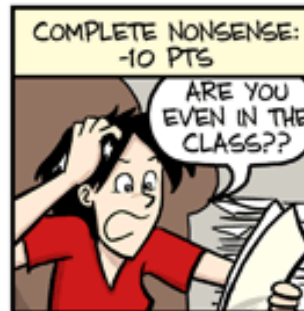
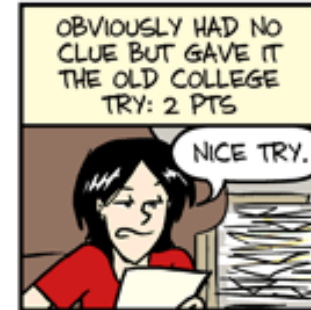
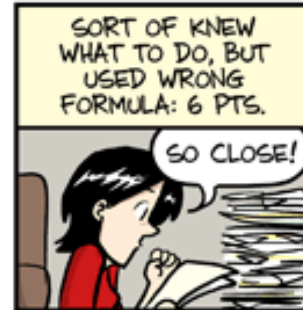
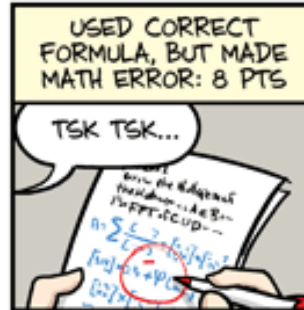
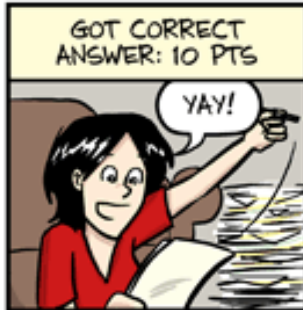
- Circulate among students; ask questions to be sure they understand the lab technique or concepts
- Identify students who are struggling and give guidance when needed or requested
- Do not conduct personal business during class
- Do not check email, surf online, read newspaper, etc.

...but be careful when interacting with students outside of class!

- Do NOT date students
- Do not behave in a manner that can be perceived as inappropriate
<http://www.duke.edu/web/equity/harassment.html>
- Facebook Friend Request?

GRADING RUBRIC

PROBLEM 1 (TOTAL POINTS: 10)



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Piled Higher and Deeper by Jorge Cham

www.phdcomics.com

title: "Grading Rubric" - originally published 5/19/2010

Grading

Consistently follow all grading policies established by instructor.

Grade assignments and return them to students as soon as possible. Let the students know your estimated grading time.

When students are given an assignment, provide grading rubric in writing. This is helpful for both students and TAs:

- allows students to know what is expected
- ensures TA fairness and consistency in grading
- serves as a reference so TA can address any student questions or disputes about grades

FERPA rules!

Students' grades are confidential.

Family Educational Right to Privacy Act.

- Keep graded assignments secure until you hand them to the particular student.
- If possible, mark grades on the second page rather than the top page.
- Refer all emails and/or calls from parents to the student's academic dean.
- More information is on the Pratt TA training web page.
<http://pratt.duke.edu/undergrad/students/policies/3503>

Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology ABET

ABET is an organization that accredits engineering programs. To prepare for the ABET site visit, you will be asked to help collect ABET assessment data. Your tasks may include:

- Collect students' grades for selected problems in exams, homework, and lab reports
- Maintaining a separate record of ABET assessment grades and problems
- Ask your course instructor which assessments should be collected for ABET review
- Emphasize lab safety to students
- Reaccreditation through 2021

Safety and Emergency Procedures

Be sure to cover these procedures on the first day of class!

Post safety/emergency procedures to Sakai and give the information to students in a handout.

Identify the location of safety features (eye wash station, emergency shower, fire extinguisher) nearest your lab or classroom.

When appropriate, be sure students wear closed toe shoes, lab coats, gloves, etc.

NO food or drink in any lab!

Report all safety incidents to
teaching lab administrator and/or
course instructor

Emergency Contacts

Duke University Police:
684-2444

Durham Police:
911

In case of evacuation...

Know the appropriate evacuation route from your lab or classroom.

Get everyone out to safety.

Depending on the lab location, the meeting places are:

FCIEMAS – Engineering quad and Hudson lawns, Divinity School circle, Telcom parking lot and Bostock Library stairs

Hudson Hall and Annex - Engineering quad and Hudson lawns, LSRC quad

Teer – Engineering quad and Hudson lawns, Science Drive Circle and LSRC quad

If possible, turn off electronics, be sure chemicals are secure, and close (but do not lock) door before leaving lab or classroom.

In case of evacuation...

AS THE TA, YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR:

- Keeping the students in a group at the meeting place.
- Knowing the number of students present in class that day and the number of students who safely evacuated the building. *This information is imperative for rescue personnel.*

When a student is injured or sick

Duke University Police:
684-2444

- dispatch Duke EMT and/or Duke Police
Emergency: 911
Non-Emergency: (919) 684-2444
- can escort sick student home or to
Student Health Center

Security of teaching labs

- TAs are given the door code to the lab. Do NOT share this code with anyone else or let students see you enter the code.
- Be sure that all electronics are off and all chemicals are stored properly at the end of lab.
- Be sure that windows and doors are securely locked.
- Remember that this is a teaching space, not a stockroom for students or TAs! Do not give supplies to students for non-course projects, and do not take supplies for your own use.

When a student misses a lab

- You may contact a student who misses his/her lab, but it is the student's responsibility to provide a reason for missing the lab and arrange a make-up lab according to the instructor's policy.
- If a student misses a lab for a legitimate reason, the TA should schedule a lab make-up at the student and TA's earliest convenience.
- If a student knows in advance that he/she will miss a lab, encourage the student to make up the lab in another section if possible.
- Note: for many classes, students must perform ALL labs and turn in all lab reports in order to pass the course.
- If a student has not contacted you about making up a lab or has missed more than one lab, contact the instructor.

Class Attendance and Missed Work

The Pratt School of Engineering policies for missing class/labs can be found at:

<http://pratt.duke.edu/undergrad/students/policies/3486>

Note that the policies are for missed work related to class absence. It is important to note that these policies and procedures do not apply during the reading and final exam period.

Acceptable reasons for missed work associated with class absence:

Religious holiday, illness, extraordinary personal circumstance, an event in which the student is representing Duke University (e.g. athletics)

Missing Assignments: Short-Term Illness

In accordance with the revised Duke University Standard, students

must use the official STINF form to inform their instructors about their illness. The TA and instructor should not make any accommodations for students unless the official form is used.

Note that the student may send the form to the instructor but not the TA. If in doubt, verify that the instructor was notified.

(<http://pratt.duke.edu/undergrad/students/policies/3531>)

Missing Assignments: Dean's Excuses

Dean's Excuses are not issued for missing classes, only for missing graded assignments. They do not exempt students from completing assignments, but allow students to make special arrangements with instructors for submitting assignments.

Students may obtain a Dean's Excuse from an academic dean for missing graded assignments for the following reasons:

- Long-term Illness
- Critical family or personal circumstances (e.g. Mother in hospital, but not for weddings, vacations, job interviews, etc.)

When possible, the Dean's Excuse should be obtained before the assignment is due.

(<http://pratt.duke.edu/undergrad/students/policies/3492>)

Accommodating students with disabilities

Students with disabilities who believe they may need accommodations should contact the Student Disability Access Office at (919) 668-1267 or go to:

<http://www.access.duke.edu/students/index.php>

Information for instructors regarding policies for students with disabilities:

<http://www.access.duke.edu/students/faculty.php>

Note: Students requesting accommodations for disabilities must provide documentation and should discuss appropriate accommodations with the instructor of the course. The instructor should let the TA know of any accommodations needed for a student.

Addressing concerns about a student's well-being

If you are concerned about a student's behavior, physical or emotional health, academic performance or academic integrity, please contact both the instructor of the course and one of Pratt's Undergraduate Academic Deans. A TA may contact a dean to report chronic absence or concerns about a student's health/safety/attendance patterns, and/or suspected STINF abuse.

Undergrad. Education	Advising & Student Affairs	Advising & U-grad Research	Advising & Outreach
Linda Franzoni	Lupita Temiquel-McMillian	Jim Gaston	Carmen Rawls
315 Teer	305 Teer	305 Teer	305 Teer
919-660-5996	919-660-5996	919-660-5596	919-660-5596
franzoni@duke.edu	lupita.mcmillian@duke.edu	Jim.gaston@duke.edu	Carmen.rawls@duke.edu

Giving advice to students

- Students may approach TAs about topics that are not related to the course such as class registration, choice of major, career advice, or even help with personal issues. It is your choice whether to engage in such conversations with students.
- DO NOT get involved in any conversation or relationship with a student that makes you or the student uncomfortable. Dating students is inappropriate.
- If you choose to discuss such topics with students, be sure to clarify that you are giving your opinion based only on your experience or observations. Direct students to campus resources when possible.

Directing students to resources on campus

Duke University Student Affairs

student groups, career center, counseling and psychological services (CAPS),
residence life, mediation, and student health center:

<http://www.studentaffairs.duke.edu>

Duke University Academic Resource Center (tutoring and academic help):

<http://arc.duke.edu/>

Comprehensive list of policies and procedures for Pratt undergraduates:

<http://www.pratt.duke.edu/policies-procedures>

To teach is to learn twice.

~Joseph Joubert, *Pensées*, 1842

Helpful Tips for TAs

Sakai Workshop Sessions

To learn more about using Sakai, go to Duke Center for Instructional Technology:

<http://cit.duke.edu/events/sakai/>

Convert files to pdf format before posting online. Free conversion software is available online, such as

<http://sourceforge.net/projects/pdfcreator/>

Properly cite sources, do not break copyright laws, etc.

PRATTically Speaking Toastmasters Club

<http://prattspeak.toastmastersclubs.org/>

Helpful Tips for TAs

To communicate effectively and engage students:

Begin by asking if there are any questions to assess student preparedness and basic knowledge levels

Be sure students understand by asking them questions

Involve students in discussion

Be prepared to explain concepts in more than one way

Stay on track – if a student asks a tangential question, discuss after class

Helpful Tips for TAs

To encourage participation by all students:

Ask volunteers to show how to solve a problem on the whiteboard.

After a TA or student provides an answer, ask other students to rephrase the answer in their own words.

Present a question and start the answer, then call on a student by name to finish the answer.

When students give a partially correct answer, encourage them by saying that they are on the right track and paraphrase the correct aspects of their answer. Then ask if they can answer the rest of the question.

Do not let a student dominate the discussion.

Helpful Tips for TAs

Different learning styles:

Recognize that individuals have different learning styles (VARK - visual, auditory, read/write, kinesthetic).

See: <http://vark-learn.com/home/>

Identify your own learning style and capitalize on this strength.

Think of ways to teach students using different learning styles. This will help you reach more students and will also improve your teaching abilities.

Helpful Tips for TAs

How to respond when you don't know the answer:

Be honest! Say “I don't know”

Suggest resources for student

Find an answer and get back to student

Don't be nervous. Students appreciate honesty and don't expect TAs to know everything.

Helpful Tips for TAs

How to manage inappropriate behavior:

Tell students that a topic or behavior is inappropriate for class: “Let’s keep on track” or “That is more than you need to share with the rest of the class.”

Decline to answer a personal question that makes you uncomfortable.

As a TA, you should not be subjected to disrespectful or disruptive behavior. Deal with inappropriate behavior as discussed with the instructor at the beginning of the semester.

Report issues or concerns to the instructor.

Resources for College Teaching

The University of Chicago Center for Teaching and Learning
(<http://teaching.uchicago.edu>)

The Chronicle of Higher Education
(<http://www.chronicle.com/article/Teaching-Newsletter-August/240880?cid=FEATUREDNAV>)

National Science Teachers Association
(<http://www.nsta.org>)

<http://collegeteachingtips.com>

Have a great semester!!!