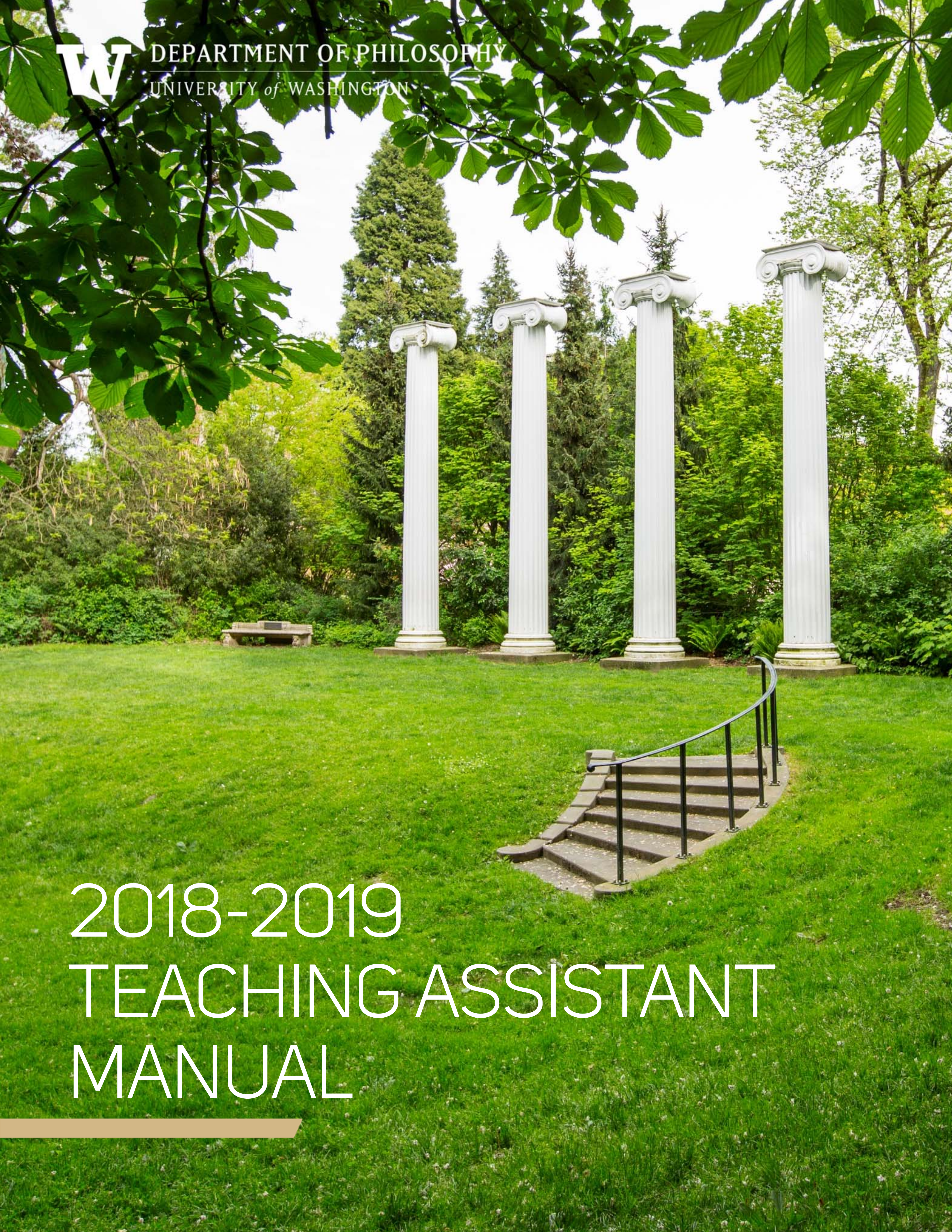

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY
UNIVERSITY *of* WASHINGTON

2018-2019 TEACHING ASSISTANT MANUAL

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

At some point in their graduate education, most graduate students become teaching assistants (TAs). These days, being a professional philosopher usually requires a teaching position at a college or university. Thus, your graduate school career involves not only training yourself to enter a community of scholars, but also training yourself to enter a community of teachers. Becoming a TA is the first step in this process.

The Department of Philosophy at the UW has a strong commitment to continually improving the quality of the undergraduate education it provides, and TAs are an important part of this process. The faculty is aware of and respects the contribution that TAs make to teaching undergraduate courses, and are always willing to help you improve your teaching. Faculty members are an excellent resource for you in learning how to teach – after all, they've been teaching for a while themselves.

Like any other skill, teaching is something that one typically gets better at with experience, but it can be somewhat overwhelming at the beginning, particularly to a new graduate student, with a host of other things to worry about as well. The material in this handbook is designed to make this initial stage of teaching go more smoothly for you.

The purpose of this handbook is to tell you what to expect when you start teaching, explain available training and resources, convey department and university policies and procedures related to teaching, as well as to provide you with general guidance in learning how to teach. This document contains departmental policies and procedures governing Teaching Assistants in the Department of Philosophy as well as general guidance on serving as a Teaching Assistant.

The advice in this handbook is the result of the accumulated common experience of TAs and faculty in the department, who have worked together and shared information about teaching. Experienced TAs are another excellent resource, and you should never hesitate to ask them questions or for advice. There is no point during your tenure as a TA at which you are expected to have no more questions about teaching. Even experienced TAs and faculty are constantly consulting with one another about various aspects of teaching.

EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION

Union Contract

All graduate student teaching assistants/instructors are classified as Academic Students Employees (ASEs) and are represented by the UAW 4121 union and covered by the UAW Contract. This contract lays out the obligations of both the University and ASEs. You should familiarize yourself with this contract.

Employment Documents

There are two employment documents that you will receive and will need to sign in order to be hired as a TA. The content and timing of these documents are governed by **Article 4** of the UAW-UW union contract.

Appointment Letter

TA appointments are typically awarded on an annual basis in the spring for the following academic year (Autumn, Winter, and Spring quarters). Continuing students who request funding via the annual funding survey and to whom the department offers funding will receive appointment letters by June 1st each year describing the details of the following year's appointment. In rare cases, a contract may be offered on a quarterly basis to students without an annual contract, as opportunities arise.

Once the appointment letter is signed, it becomes the employment contract for the following academic year. An ASE has the right to be released from any quarter(s) of an appointment provided that the ASE gives at least 30 days' notice prior to the beginning of the quarter and the nature of the job duties does not require continuity of service by the ASE.

This letter contains general information about dates of appointment, title, salary, benefits, and information about the union. It does not provide information about each quarter's specific teaching assignments.

Job Description

Each quarter that you teach, you will receive a job description for the specific course you teach, approved by the instructor of that course (or the course supervisor, if solo-teaching). The general requirements of teaching will be similar of course, but different instructors may have different requirements for their TAs. You will receive your job description 3 weeks prior to the start of the quarter in which you will be teaching. You are expected to meet with the instructor to review all requirements of the particular course and the tasks included in the job description, addressing any questions or concerns before the course gets underway. The TA must sign the job description, obtain the instructor's signature on the job description, and return to the Graduate Program Adviser (Britta Anson) by the end of the first week of the quarter.

Salary and Benefits

ASE positions of 50% FTE include the following:

- **Monthly Salary** (effective July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019) - $2,341 for Premaster; $2,516 for Intermediate; $2,703 for Candidates (passed General Exam)

- **Tuition waiver** – A quarterly tuition waiver covering the operating fee, building fee, and technology fee. (Students are responsible for remaining fees, currently set at $322 per quarter—See Quarterly Tuition and Fees 2018-2019.)
- **Health insurance –** For each quarter hired as an ASE, employees are automatically covered by the Graduate Appointee Insurance Program (GAIP). Students who are covered by GAIP for the *entire academic year* (Autumn, Winter, and Spring) are also covered in Summer quarter.

Eligibility

Graduate students must be enrolled full time (registered for at least 10 credits) in order to be eligible for ASE employment and benefits. (In summer quarter, only 2 credits are needed to be "full time.)

Pay Dates & Appointment Periods

University of Washington employees are paid twice per month, on the **10th** and **25th** (or closest business day if these dates fall on a weekend) for work done in the previous pay period.

Each month is divided into two pay periods: the 1st through the 15th, and 16th through the end of the month. Salaried employees receive half their monthly salary for each pay period worked.

Quarterly ASE appointments cover the following dates (Note that these dates do not align exactly with the dates of instruction:

- Autumn: September 16 – December 15
- Winter: December 16 – March 15
- Spring: March 16 – June 15

Therefore, an ASE who works a full academic year will receive their first paycheck on **October 10** (for the September 16-30 pay period) and will receive their last paycheck on **June 25** (for the June 1-15 pay period).

Workday (UW Payroll)

Workday is the tool used by the UW's Integrated Service Center to manage HR, Payroll & Benefits Support. Log in to Workday to access your paystubs, update direct deposit, and get tax documents.

EVALUATIONS & TEACHING REPORTS (REQUIRED)

Teaching Evaluations (by undergraduate students)

For the Professor:

One part of your job as a TA is to assist in administering teaching evaluations of the professor by the undergraduate students in your class (unless the professor has opted to use online evaluations). Evaluation forms are ordered by Annette ahead of time and come from the Office of Educational Assessment (OEA). There are two separate forms: one is a Scantron form, and the other is a Comments form (a "yellow sheet"). The students must fill out the Scantron form with a #2 pencil. The department keeps several boxes of these in the supply cabinet in the department office. Take several dozen of these on the day you need to do evaluations, and find a student volunteer to collect the pencils and to return them with the evaluation forms to the department office.

Both kinds of evaluation forms come in one large manila envelope, which contains a sheet of instructions on how to organize the forms and return them to the OEA. They can be returned through any branch of campus mail, but the easiest thing to do is just to bring them to the Philosophy Department office and leave them in the outgoing mail box.

For Yourself:

TAs in the Department of Philosophy are required to have their own classes evaluated at least twice a year (see "Required Observations/Evaluations Summary Sheet at the back of this manual, page 26). Evaluations of your teaching are placed in your file, and serve as a source of information about your teaching abilities to the faculty. These evaluations assist the faculty in deciding on TA re-appointments. Many TAs prefer to do evaluations every term, or every time they TA a different course.

Annette Bernier will email the Philgrad list partway through each quarter in order to solicit requests to order teaching evaluation forms. You will have a choice between paper forms on an online evaluation. The department recommends paper forms, in part due to greater rate of response when you make students fill them out in class. If you order paper evaluations, Annette will place them in your mailbox once they arrive from OEA.

There are two kinds of forms for TA evaluations, just as there are for evaluations of the professor: a Scantron form, and a yellow Comments sheet. You will need to take #2 pencils with you to section on the day you administer evaluations. There is an instruction sheet included in each manila envelope of evaluation forms containing a statement that you should read aloud to the students explaining the evaluations. After distributing the forms, you must leave the classroom while the students fill them out. You need to ask one of your students if they will collect the forms for you and drop them in campus mail (or bring them to the philosophy main office). Some students will already be familiar with this procedure; for those who aren't, refer them to the sheet of instructions in the envelope.

Most TAs administer evaluations during the last two weeks (often the last week) of the quarter. You should reserve 15-20 minutes of your section for administering evaluations. It is often helpful to administer evaluations at the beginning of class. Doing so will encourage students to take the time to be thoughtful.

When students are given evaluations to fill out at the end of class they often rush through them so they can leave early.

It typically takes several weeks to get the results back from the OEA; you will receive them early in the following quarter. What you will find in the returned envelope are the 'yellow sheets,' with the students written comments, and a gray sheet which summarizes the results of the Scantron forms. There are instructions on the back of the gray sheet on how to interpret the different results. The 'yellow sheets' can be particularly helpful in identifying specific aspects of your teaching that were more or less successful, e.g., talking too fast, availability outside class, enthusiasm, clarity, etc.

Student evaluations can be helpful to you in determining which areas of your teaching need more work, and which are successful as they are. However, you shouldn't be surprised by comments that seem extreme, either positively or negatively. You can probably expect some small percentage of extreme comments every quarter. Moreover, the tone of the comments sometimes depends on the course itself; students in a logic course may not be as appreciative of your efforts as students in a contemporary moral problems course might be (though the converse could be true as well).

Faculty and Peer Teaching Observations

Each year a TA should have at least one teaching observation performed by a faculty member. Ordinarily, this will be done by the professor of the class you are TAing at the time. This observation is performed in order to help you, by getting some feedback from a more experienced teacher. It is important to remember that the professor is observing the class more to help you than to judge you.

You should schedule a time and a section for observation with the professor with whom you are teaching. Often, a TA will want the professor to come to a "problem section", a section that the TA finds difficult to run for some reason. By having the professor of the course observe this section, you will have an opportunity to get some teaching tips or suggestions on new things to try to make the course run more smoothly.

The professor will fill out an observation comment form, which you should include with your teaching report in the fall. Forms are found on the Forms page (under the Resources menu) of the department website.

In addition to faculty teaching observations, a TA should have at least one peer observation. New TAs might want their peer mentor to observe their sections. The purpose of peer observations is similar to that of faculty observations. A peer observation will help you correct problems and difficulties that you might have in sections. In addition, the graduate student who observes your sections may learn some new teaching strategies for her own teaching.

When you have a peer observe your sections, you should make sure that he or she fills out a peer evaluation comment form (also found on the Forms page online)

In addition to being observed, you will be asked by your fellow TA's to observe their teaching. It is useful to do this early and often in your time as a TA to get ideas for your own teaching.

For most TA's, the main use of the written document is to help with departmental evaluations of your teaching (such as the Departmental Teaching Award and the teaching portfolios that go out with job applications). It is often thought that the peer evaluator should give the reader a sense of what it is like to sit in on the TA's classroom. So, as your write a peer observation, note the best aspects of the teaching. Also jot down one major suggestion, because it can be nice for the TA to be able to demonstrate improvement in teaching over the years.

Yearly Teaching Report

In the fall, the graduate advisor will call for teaching reports from all 3rd, 4th, and 5th year graduate students who had teaching appointments for three quarters during the previous year. THESE REPORTS ARE REQUIRED. (2nd and 6th year, or higher, students are also welcome to turn in reports, but is not required of these students). Your teaching report has to include ALL of the following:

- complete sets of student evaluations, both the printout and the handwritten comments, from two quarters (for each quarter you provide evaluations, include evaluations *from all sections* in the packet);
- the syllabus that goes with the student evaluations, if you wrote it;
- at least one faculty observation comment form;
- at least one peer observation comment form;
- a statement of your teaching philosophy.

The most difficult aspect of putting together your teaching report will be writing the statement of teaching philosophy. This is a one-page statement of theories or methods that inform your teaching strategy. The purpose of this document is to give TAs a framework in which to reflect upon their teaching methods. In addition, it gives students practice writing this kind of self-reflective statement that will come in handy when it comes time to look for an academic job.

The faculty will review the teaching reports of all TAs in order to award the annual teaching awards. However, this is not the main purpose of these reports. These reports are extremely valuable practice for becoming (and being) an assistant professor. These report are also used by the Department in determining whether you are making "satisfactory progress." These reports are also used in deciding who should get support in any situation in which support funds are short.

Yearly Self-Evaluation

At the end of spring quarter, you will be required to turn in a completed self-evaluation form. This self-evaluation covers your teaching and your progress in the graduate program. You then will meet with the director of the graduate program, and/or your graduate advisor to discuss this evaluation and all aspects of your graduate student career.

AT-A-GLANCE: REQUIRED OBSERVATIONS/EVALUATIONS

SUBMITTING EVALUATIONS: All evaluations (with the exception of student evaluations submitted directly to OEA) should be submitted *both* to the graduate student/TA being evaluated *and* to the Graduate Program Adviser, Britta Anson (brittama@uw.edu).

FOR TEACHING ASSISTANTS (EMPLOYMENT EVALUATION)

EVALUATION TYPE	DESCRIPTION	FREQUENCY REQUIRED
Faculty Evaluation of TA Job Performance*	General job performance evaluation – written feedback about TA's performance of the duties outlined in the job description	Every quarter in which TA duties performed
Faculty Course Observation Report*	Completed "Class Observation Report" (see Forms) or narrative on particular TA teaching performance	First 2 quarters that student TAs At least once annually thereafter
Peer Course Observation Report	Completed "Class Observation Report" (see Forms) or narrative on particular TA teaching performance	At least once annually
Student Evaluation of TA	Students complete written and scantron evaluations of all instructors/TAs	Every quarter of teaching

*This evaluation has minimum requirements according to Graduate School policy. Department of Philosophy requirements meet and/or exceed Graduate School requirements (see Memo 14: Departmental Responsibilities Regarding Instruction by TAs).

FOR ALL GRADUATE STUDENTS (ACADEMIC PROGRESS)

Faculty evaluation of graduate student course performance	Narrative evaluation of general performance in seminar setting (including, but not limited to written assignments)	Every quarter until Master's papers are passed
End-of-Year Self Evaluation & Adviser Assessment	Both graduate student and faculty adviser complete respective forms assessing general academic progress during the year (see Forms)	Once annually, usually in the spring

POLICIES

University and UAW/UW Rules to Keep in Mind

Vacation Time

Article 10 (Holidays), Section 2 states that Academic Student Employees (ASEs) employed 50% FTE for three or more quarters during the 12-month period starting Sept 16th shall be entitled to one personal holiday during that 12-month period. Personal holidays must be requested in advance and require that the ASE find an acceptable substitute for scheduled work activities, if any.

Article 31 (Vacation), Section 1 states (in part) that ASEs employed 50% for twelve months will have a minimum of four weeks (20 business days) of vacation time off during those 12 months. **Section 2** states that **vacation time off shall be taken during academic quarter breaks** or as otherwise mutually agreed to by the ASE and a supervisor.

Teaching Stand Alone Courses

Article 17, Section 2 states that the University has the sole and exclusive authority to make all decisions involving academic matters, including, but not limited to, who is taught, what is taught, how it is taught and who does the teaching. All matters including academic judgment shall be made at the sole discretion of the University.

This means that when you are assigned to teach a course on your own, you will also be assigned a faculty supervisor for your course. This faculty member will work with you on the content and schedule of your course. **At least 3 weeks prior to the start of the quarter, you are required to have your course syllabus (and course schedule) approved by this supervisor**.

It is very important to note that although you are teaching on your own, you are still an apprentice, and as an apprentice, you need to get approval from your course supervisor, and the Director of the Graduate Program (or Chair of the dept.) to be absent from a class (even if you have found a substitute to teach for you), to cancel a class, or to make **any** changes what-so-ever to your approved syllabus.

Final Examinations

You also need to remember that the University of Washington requires that, “Final Examinations be administered in accordance with the examination schedule. See http://www.washington.edu/students/reg/examguide.html

FERPA (FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS & PRIVACY ACT)

As a teaching assistant, you have access to certain information about your students that are protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. As a graduate student, your own records are also protected under this act. In your role as a teaching assistant (or instructor) you will need to be familiar with and ensure compliance with FERPA regulations.

The UW provides FERPA guidance “for Faculty and Staff” that applies to you when you are working as a teaching assistant:

FERPA (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act) was enacted in 1974. It is a set of regulations that applies to those institutions that receive funding from the Department of Education. FERPA was written specifically for students and guarantees them the right to inspect and review their education records, the right to seek to amend education records, and the right to have some control over the disclosure of information from those education records.

An **education record** is defined as any record that directly identifies a student and is maintained by the institution or educational agency or by a party acting for the institution or educational agency. A key distinction of education records is that education records are shared. Education records can exist in any medium including the following: handwritten, typed, computer generated, videotape, audiotape, film, microfilm, microfiche, e-mail, and others.

How Does This Regulation Affect You?

1. If the student has **not** restricted access to directory (or public) information you may release the following:
    - Name
    - Address
    - Telephone number
    - E-mail address
    - Enrollment status
    - Major
    - Degrees & awards received
    - Most recent previous school attended
2. If a student **has** blocked release of directory information, you may not release any information about that student. We recommend you say, **"I have no information about that individual."**
3. Departments may not release non-directory or personally identifiable information about a student to a third party (parents included) without the student's written authorization. You may have the student fill out a consent-to-release form if the student wants you to speak with a third party. The student must sign a new form each time s/he allows you to release non-directory information. (You can download a PDF of the consent form.)

Do Not Release Without Written Authorization:

- Student number
- Grades/Exam Scores
- Grade Point Average
- Social Security Number
- Parent Address/Phone
- Detail of Registration Information (i.e., courses, times)
- Race, Ethnicity, or Nationality
- Gender
- Date of Birth
- Total Credits
- Number of Credits Enrolled in a Quarter
- Emergency Contact

4. The **public posting of grades** either by the student's name, student number, or social security number without the student's written permission is a violation of FERPA. This includes the posting of grades to a class/institutional website and applies to any public posting of grades in hallways and in departmental offices for all students including those taking distance education courses.

Notification of grades via e-mail is in violation of FERPA. There is no guarantee of confidentiality on the Internet. The institution would be held responsible if an unauthorized third party gained access, in any manner, to a student's education record through any electronic transmission method.

5. The student has a right to inspect and review any departmental or college records you maintain on him/her except for 'sole possession records.' A sole possession record is a record you never share with anyone else and that is maintained solely by you. Sole possession records are not subject to FERPA.
6. **FERPA considers Teaching Assistants to be an extension of the faculty member.** Faculty members may even share their sole-possession records with their TAs. However, if other faculty and department members can inspect those notes, they are no longer sole possession and become education records. Students have the right to inspect and review those records.
7. Employment records are not education records, unless employment is conditional upon the individual being a student. Since you have to be a student to be a TA, TA employment records are education records.

Contact Helen Garrett in the Office of the University Registrar, 206-685-2553, helenbg@u.washington.edu, if you have any questions about this information.

You may also want to review the FERPA page for students for further information.

TRAINING & RESOURCES

TA Conference [required at orientation]

Each autumn, the Center for Teaching and Learning hosts a TA Conference for new TAs. All newly admitted philosophy graduate students are required to participate in this conference as part of orientation, regardless of when they will start teaching.

Students are required to register for at least five total sessions at the conference, including training on the Canvas learning management system, a session on Equity & Access: Teaching Practices in the Diverse Classroom, and at least three electives.

PHIL 505 – Seminar in Teaching Philosophy *[Required in Autumn & Winter of 1st year]*

This is a 1-credit course (graded CR/NC) on preparing to teach, sharing experiences with other TAs, and gaining practical tips to use in the classroom. Student are required to take this twice in the first year, but may register for additional quarters throughout their graduate studies in order to continually improve their teaching.

GRDSCH 501 – TA Preparation (and other Graduate School teaching courses)

The Graduate School offers graduate credit for attending the TA Conference (and completing a few additional exercises online) for students who register for GRDSCH 501 in their first quarter. The Department does not require students to do this, but students interested in teaching often elect to take this additional 1 credit in their first quarter.

The Graduate School offers additional courses on teaching under the GRDSCH listing in the Time Schedule. Students may wish to continue exploring topics in teaching this way.

TA Resources from the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL)

The UW Center for Teaching and Learning provides resources online on their page Information and resources: Just for TAs.

Useful Links – Department Teaching Resources page

See the Department's Teaching Resources page for links to campus tools (i.e. help with Canvas) and the Center for Teaching and Learning on campus.

Department Resource Sharing – Canvas Teaching Site

Ian Schnee has created a Phil Dept Teaching Site in Canvas with folders for each course taught in the department where faculty and TAs may upload any documents they would like to share with others preparing to teach that class. This site was newly created in 2018.

BECOMING A TA & GETTING ASSIGNED TO CLASSES

First Year Students

First year students will receive information about their full funding package and first year of funding in their initial offer of admission letter. Accepting the offer of admission includes accepting the funding package and the offer letter serves as the appointment letter for a student's first year of funding.

Annual Funding Application (Survey)

Each year, typically in the Winter quarter, all graduate students will be required to request funding (if needed) for the following year via an online survey. This is necessary for the department to know how many students would like TA appointments the following year. *Students who have guaranteed funding packages that cover the year still are required to complete the request for funding*, but are guaranteed to receive a TA appointment (or equivalent ASE position) for the quarters requested. Students beyond their funding packages are still eligible to apply for funding, and it will be awarded based on the student's good standing and funding availability.

Getting Assigned to a Course

Before the beginning of each quarter, every TA is sent an email which lists the classes that will require TAs for that quarter. You are asked to list the courses (in order of preference) that you are willing to TA for. In addition, you are asked to be sure NOT to list any courses/sections that will conflict with the courses that you will be taking and/or sitting in on. This is very important for you to do as the director of graduate studies does not check for these scheduling conflicts.

Once everyone has responded to this email, the director of graduate studies assigns TAs to the various courses. You will then receive notice of which course you are assisting, and who the other TAs are for that course.

Choosing Section Assignments

Once you receive your course assignment for a quarter, you and your fellow TAs must work out the division of sections between you. Each TA is typically responsible for two quiz sections (or three quiz sections for PHIL 120 – Intro to Logic). The largest courses in the department (Philosophy 100 and 120) usually have more quiz sections, and thus more TAs for the course; other courses have fewer quiz sections and fewer TAs. The time and location for each section are listed on the UW Time Schedule for that quarter. Sections are listed in alphabetical order (AA, AB, AC, AD,... and so on).Once you've agreed on who will take which section, delegate one TA to email the list of who is taking each section to *both* Annette Bernier (abernier@uw.edu) and Britta Anson (brittama@uw.edu). Annette will then enter your section assignments into the Time Schedule, thereby giving you access to your course in Canvas.

Summer Teaching

To be eligible for summer teaching, students must have passed their qualifying paper and completed their MA course work. Preference is given to students in years 3-5 who have completed their general exam. Students who have not yet completed their general exams or who are beyond year 5 are eligible (though assigned a lower priority), and will be supported as circumstances allow. As always, curricular needs usually help to determine who is supported.

We seldom have enough teaching to support everyone who requests it, but we do manage to support the majority of students who desire it. Unlike other quarters, summer quarter is self-supporting. The summer quarter office reserves the right to cancel low enrolling classes. To minimize the likelihood of this happening, the department's summer quarter course offerings are limited to those with a solid enrollment history. However, we cannot guarantee that a particular course will not be cancelled. (Low enrollment for summer 2015 was under six students).

PERFORMING THE DUTIES OF A TA

Primary Duties of a TA

As a TA, you will be expected to:

- Run discussion sessions, typically twice a week, for a large lecture course and attend all lecture sessions for that course. If you must miss section for any reason, you are responsible for emailing **all** staff members (philstaff@uw.edu) and the professor who your work for
- Assist with the grading for the course. You may also be asked to write exams or exam questions for the course
- Hold office hours 2 hours per week
- Work an average of 20 hours per week
- Maintain full-time graduate student status (you must be registered for at least 10 credits every quarter, except Summer. If you teach in the summer, you must register for 2 credits)
- Make satisfactory progress toward your degree. (See the Philosophy Graduate Student Handbook for standards of satisfactory progress.)

If You Are Sick

It should go without saying that if you are going to miss lecture, or quiz section, or a stand-alone course for any reason what-so-ever, you need to let your **professor/supervisor** and **the staff** know about this (even if you have found someone to "cover" for you!). That said, here is how to proceed if you are sick.

The first thing you need to do if you are too sick to attend your quiz sections, (or your stand-alone course) is to make this decision at least a few hours before your section starts. This gives the office staff the best chance of handling the situation in the most efficient manner possible.

The next thing you need to do is to email philstaff@uw.edu AND the professor that you are TAing for to let them know that you will be absent. You must use the philstaff@uw.edu address, rather than emailing just one person on staff, as this address will go to the entire philosophy staff. Thus, if someone is not in, someone else will still get your message. By sending this email, there is a record of what happened (required by the Union contract), and your professor will know that your students are going to miss their quiz sections. Some professors will want to fill in for their sick TAs. Others will attempt to get your fellow TAs to cover your sections, so it is very important that you include your professor in this email.

Many TAs also email their students to let them know that they will be out sick. If you are up to that, great. If not, your students will just have to go to class and read the class canceled signs that the office staff has posted in your classroom.

Office Hours

Shortly before the start of the quarter, you will receive an email asking you for your office hours for that quarter. You need to respond to this email by the third day of classes.

TAs are required to have two office hours per week; some TAs have three. In deciding on office hours, you should bear your own schedule in mind (make sure you don't create a conflict with your office hours).

Remember that many students take courses in the morning. You should also avoid scheduling office hours on Friday afternoons as that time is usually when the department has colloquia that you will want to attend. It is, of course, impossible to schedule office hours that everyone in your sections can attend, and for this reason you should inform your students that you are also available by appointment. You may prefer to have your office hours on different days (e.g. one hour on Wednesdays, and one on Thursdays), or you may prefer to have a large block of time one day a week. **You are expected to be at the official location of your stated office hours for the entire duration**. If for some reason, you need to leave your designated office hour location during your stated office hours, you need to let staff know this, and you need to post a note for students stating when you'll be back.

When students ask you for an appointment, make sure that it is because they cannot make your office hours. Sometimes students forget when office hours are, or that you have any at all. Announce your office hours several times at the beginning of the quarter. When making appointments with students, bear in mind that you also have work of your own to do, and keep outside appointments within reasonable limits. The number of outside appointments, and the number of students who come to office hours, typically increases around exam time. This is an inevitable fact of teaching undergraduate courses. Encourage students to come see you the minute they have problems with the material, rather than waiting until just before an exam. It also helps to encourage students to come in groups, since many of them have the same questions.

There is space set aside in Savery 300H (the big table) and Savery 372 (graduate library) for office hours and small meetings. You can also use Savery 359 and 408 for overflow if nothing else is scheduled there. Check with the office staff for the schedule of that room.

Meeting with Professors

Sometimes professors meet with their TAs before the quarter begins, but since people are often not around during breaks between quarters, the first meeting with the professor you are TAing for is often on the first day of class, immediately following the lecture. (Please note: sometimes quiz sections will meet BEFORE the first lecture. In this case it is helpful for TAs to email the professor to see what he/she wants you to cover during this first quiz section). During this meeting, everyone decides when, and how often, the TAs will meet with the professor. Once or twice a week is usual. Some of the matters you may discuss at an initial meeting include: exam information (e.g., how many there are, formats, whether they are comprehensive or not), how grades will be determined, policies on late homework and making up exams, and grading your own sections vs. team-grading. When students ask you this sort of "policy" question, and you don't know or aren't sure of the answer, tell them you will check with the professor. It's better to appear unsure than to have to retract something later. These policies vary from professor to professor, so be sure to ask.

These meetings also provide an excellent opportunity for you to give the professor feedback regarding how things are going in your sections. The professor can teach the course more effectively if s/he is aware of what material students are having a hard time with, what they seem to grasp fairly well, whether more examples are needed to illustrate a particular concept, and so on. As a TA, one of your jobs is to serve as a liaison between the professor and the students, and in courses with 150 or more students, this role is a very important one. You will have a better idea than anyone else of how your students are dealing with the material in the course. Sending emails to the professor (ccing your fellow TAs, of course) as soon as problems/questions arise is important. Don't wait to ask questions. Establishing yourself as an open line of communication between the students and the professor helps the course go better for all involved.

There is some information that is of particular help to professors. If the students have difficulty understanding a particular argument or concept, despite your best efforts (and this happens to all TAs at some point regardless of experience), you need to ask the professor if s/he can spend a few minutes in lecture talking about the issue, or perhaps suggest some strategies for you to use in section.

However, the information provided to the professor about sections need not be wholly negative. If your students seem particularly excited about a certain issue, or a certain argument, you should inform the professor of this as well. This helps the professor to see what material is particularly engaging to the students.

Keeping mental track of your students' grasp of the material is particularly helpful to the professor when it comes time to make up exams. Typically, professors will give the TAs a copy of the exam they plan to give, and you will have an opportunity to discuss individual questions. Take advantage of this opportunity to let the professor know which questions work better than others. If you didn't spend much time in section on the subject matter of a particular question, or if your students had a difficult time with some part of the material, let the professor know. You will need to be able to say something like, "my students won't be able to answer this question." If you think a certain topic would be particularly good as the subject of an exam question, let the professor know.

You will be in a better position to provide this sort of feedback to the professor if you get in the habit of writing exam questions yourself. There are several reasons for this in addition to assisting the professor. First, the TAs and the professor may work as a team to create the exam, so you need to be prepared with questions. Second, even if a professor prepares the exam, s/he is happy to look at your exam questions and discuss them with you. You are training to be a teacher yourself, and this training extends beyond the particular requirements of the course you are currently a TA for. If you have an idea of what works and what doesn't regarding test questions, then you are in that much better of a position to teach a course of that sort on your own**. We cannot place enough emphasis on the fact that the professors are a resource for you, both as a TA and as a graduate student.** Take advantage of your opportunity as a TA to learn as much as you can about teaching a particular course.

One helpful way to take advantage of the accumulated wisdom of the professor is to ask her or him to sit in on your sections during the term. Some professors do this more or less as a matter of policy, but all of them are willing to do so if you ask. It is often helpful to your own teaching to have an experienced teacher observe you. You must have a faculty member observe your sections at least once a year (see the summary of required observations & evaluations on page 9). Many TAs find it helpful to have a faculty member observe their sections for each course they assist.

Attending the Course you TA

You are expected to attend the lecture sessions of the course you TA. You aren't required to take notes. However, it is important to remember that "modeling" appropriate behavior is a critical part of your job in lecture. Be quiet, be interested, and show the students how a good student behaves and learns by being a good example in lecture. Taking notes on the lecture also puts you in a better position to relate lecture material to section discussions. Your notes are also a record of what the professor discussed during lecture, which can be helpful when a student claims to have never seen particular material before. Be aware of the themes or concepts or questions that are emphasized in a particular lecture, and start thinking of discussion questions and examples that will get those points across to your students. Occasionally, the professor will say, "this is something you can discuss further in your quiz sections" or "you will go over problems of this sort in section." Make notes of these topics, and then do discuss them (or solve problems of that kind) in section.

You should also listen carefully for anything that might be particularly puzzling to students, and think about ways it can be made clearer. Sometimes students will ask a lot of questions in lecture about a particular topic, or they will come up to you after the lecture and ask you something. Paying close attention to these sorts of things is immeasurably helpful in preparing for sections, and sometimes it is the only preparation (aside from reading the text and/or selecting problems) you will need to do.

The goal to have in mind is to make sure that sections and lecture overlap and "match up" to each other as best they can. It's always handy to be able to start a discussion in your section by saying, "Yesterday, Professor X was discussing the problem of evil. Let's discuss why this is a problem, and how we might solve it," or "Yesterday, Professor X went over indirect proof. Let's go through some examples of this strategy." Unless explicitly requested by the professor to do so, TA's should never get ahead of lecture in their sections. Sections, with rare exceptions, will not introduce new material not yet covered by the professor in lecture. Attending lecture will enable you to keep pace with lecture.

Proctoring Exams

In large undergraduate introductory courses, which typically have at least 150 students, part of your job will be to help administer exams. It's a good idea to be a couple minutes early to lecture or section on the day of an exam; that way, you can get the exam passed out, and announce whatever particular instructions you need to, without significantly cutting into the students' exam time.

When you are administering an exam to an entire class (rather than just your own sections), you should walk around the room and keep an eye on the students. You also might need to answer questions about the exam. Remind students to put their name and their TA's name on their exam; this makes it easier to separate the exams by section. Collect the exams of students who finish early, but resist the temptation to look at them (or to start grading them) – this makes the remaining students nervous. If you are in a classroom that doesn't have a clock, or has one that the students cannot see easily, write the time on the chalkboard every 10 or 15 minutes.

If you should catch a student cheating while proctoring an exam, you will have to make a judgment call. Most cases of "in-class exam" cheating can be stopped simply by approaching the student and making it clear that you are watching him or her. If the professor is in the room at the time, let her/him know about the situation. Ultimately, the professor is responsible for resolving issues of cheating, so always consult them.

Class Lists, Attendance, Calling Roll

You will need to go to MyUW to print out class lists for yourself for each of your sections: There is a First Day and a Tenth Day list. The Tenth Day class list is the permanent list of students in your sections. The Tenth Day list should show which students have added or dropped the course.

You should call roll on the first day of section, using the First Day class list, and again when you receive the Tenth Day list. Other than that, how often you call roll depends on you and on the course. Whether participation (and hence attendance to some extent) in section makes a difference will be something the professor will decide, or perhaps the TAs and the professor together. Other than that, the decision about roll call is up to you. Some TAs call roll for the first week or two, others call roll until they know their students by name, some call roll only twice (with the First and Tenth day lists), and learn their students' names when they hand back assignments and exams. Unless there is a reason that attendance makes a difference, the choice of procedure is essentially up to you.

The sooner you know all your students by name, the better; this is something that TAs get better at with practice. Being able to call on students by name, and giving individually named students credit for a point they raise in section is an invaluable teaching aid. The students appreciate your taking the time to know their name; at a university the size of the UW, a TA who knows their name makes them feel less like a random number.

Miscellaneous attendance complications: Occasionally, a student who is registered in one section (either one of yours, or another TA's) will want to attend another. In general, this is not a problem, as long as both TAs are aware of the students who are doing this. The student is not required to drop the class and then re-register for it, although students do register for classes by quiz section. Since this sort of change doesn't make a difference to the total number of students in the class, the TAs can accommodate these students by making a note on their class list next to the student's name, or by adding a student's name to their list.

It's a good idea for the TAs to meet before any assignments or exams have been given to get clear about which students are attending sections they are not registered in. A good time to do this would be when you meet with the professor, since all the TAs will be there. You will also need to decide at this time which TA will be responsible for keeping track of the student's grades. In general, it is easier if the TA whose section is attended keeps track of the grades (including grading the assignments of those students), since that TA will have a better idea of the student's abilities. At the end of the quarter, or as the quarter progresses if necessary, the TA who officially has that student registered can be given his or her grades.

One other attendance complication you might encounter is a student who is making up an Incomplete from a previous quarter. Typically, these students will not be officially registered in the course, but will request permission to attend the course and do the work. The final grade they receive will then be their final grade for the incompleted course. Usually, the professor in whose course the Incomplete was received will notify the professor of the current course of students who will be attending to make up Incompletes (or the student might do this). When a student makes up an Incomplete, and has received a final grade for a course, the instructor in whose course the Incomplete was received must complete a Change of Grade Form, which is located online on the Registrar's website (also linked from the Department "Teaching Resources" page.

If you use this form, make sure to print a copy of it, bring it to the main office, and correct the grade that you turned in on your original grade sheet (located in the Green Grade Sheet binders).

Overloads: Individual instructors may decide to allow overloads into their courses, and this is information you should get from them as soon as you can. If an instructor decided to accept a certain number of overloads, you will need to discuss the distribution of these with him or her.

Makeup Exams

When a student needs to make up an exam (or is a documented disabled student – see Disability Services), you, and only you, are responsible for proctoring your student's makeup exams. This is part of your job whether you are a TA or are teaching on your own. If for some extraordinary reason you are unable to be present to administer a makeup exam, you need to find another graduate student to do it for you. The Department staff does not proctor makeup exams. They can reserve a room for you for your makeup exam, but they do not hand out exams to students, nor do they collect exams for you. Please don't ask.

Grading Papers and Exams

The degree to which grading is your responsibility, or the joint responsibility of the professor and the TAs is a topic that should be discussed prior to any grading. The degree to which you are required to set conventions, or determine the number of points deducted for particular errors, or to determine general grading strategies can vary depending on the professor you are assisting. The professor and the TAs should all be clear about how these responsibilities are to be shared. A general discussion of grading procedures prior to the grading of any assignment is therefore an important part of assisting a professor with any course. The final decision on grading policies is up to the professor.

The following suggestions are based on the assumption that the mechanics of grading are in large measure up to the TAs:

Before any grading is done, the professor and the TAs will decide whether the TAs will grade their own sections, or whether there will be team-grading, where grading is divided by question, rather than by section. Each method has its pros and cons; neither method stands out as the "easy" way to get grading done. You might use both methods; for example, each TA might grade their own section's homework, but the exams might be team-graded. If you are grading your own sections, you can either grade entire individual exams, or you can grade individual questions; that is, you can grade John Doe's entire exam, or you can grade all the answers to the first question, all the answer to the second question, and so on. The choice is up to you.

Once it has been decided who is going to grade what, you can get down to the actual business of grading. It would be nice if grading were a completely objective task (that is, they either get the right answer or they don't); alas, such is not the case in philosophy. Even grading proofs in logic is much more of an art than a science. Grading essay questions and papers is even harder. However, the following guidelines should be of some help, whether you are grading proofs or essays on your own or as part of a team:

- Set conventions for the problem or the question. To do this, you need to have a fairly good idea of what a full credit answer to that question will be. Once you know that, you can decide how many points should be deducted for each part of the answer that is missing.
- You don't need to set conventions for every error that the students might conceivably make; in fact, it would be impossible to do this. What you need are grading conventions for big or systematic errors; if necessary, you can deduct some additional points for errors that are peculiar

to one exam or another (e.g., you can take off a couple of points for lack of clarity). A good way to figure out what conventions you need for a particular question is to read through a representative sample of the answers before you grade any of them. If you do that, chances are that you will find that the students tend to make the same errors.

- Be consistent. Make sure that you are taking off the same number of points for the same error on every test. This often requires looking again at exams you have already graded. It sometimes happens that a particular convention will evolve as you go through a set of answers, or you change your mind about a convention for some reason. When this happens, go back and make sure that you have consistently applied that standard.

- Some TAs find it helpful to jot down comments on an answer that corresponds to their conventions. For example, if a student is missing a crucial claim in an argument, or part of an explanation, it helps to jot that down on his or her exam, next to the number of points missed. This sort of procedure is helpful for two reasons: first, if you are checking for consistency, it will be easier for you to tell if you have achieved it; second, when you go over the exams with students, the more you can explain to them as a group about conventions, the less you have to repeat things to individual students. If a certain point deduction and its justification is on their exam, they are likely to have fewer questions.

- Ask the other TAs and/or the professor to look at a sample of the grades you have given. Even when you are team-grading, and each TA is grading a different question, it helps to get other people's impressions about the grades you're giving. One way you might approach this would be for the whole team to look at a few samples of answers to each question, in order to help the person who is grading a particular question establish some conventions. If you are grading your own sections, it is often helpful to trade exams (or read answers over the phone) to the other TAs, to make sure that your conventions are largely the same, and that you are giving the same number of points to the same sort of answers. When TAs grade their own sections, it shouldn't be the case that the students of one TA are at a particular advantage or disadvantage in virtue of being graded by that TA. Discussing grades can help with this. You will find, if you grade your own sections, that you are on email with the other TAs fairly frequently.

- When you can, avoid giving only negative comments. If the student has done something particularly well, let them know. Your students need to know what they are doing right as well as what they are doing wrong.

- Grading papers is obviously going to be different from grading essay answers on an exam. You are going to have much higher standards for writing when you are grading a paper, and considerations of grammar, spelling, and punctuation are likely to make a difference. This is generally not the case with essay answers on an exam; the writing criterion there has more to do with coherence than elegance.

- If you are a TA for a course that requires papers, you should let your students know about the Philosophy Writing Center, which is run by undergraduate philosophy majors (under the supervision of Bill Talbott), and is designed for the express purpose of helping undergraduates write philosophy papers.

- Grading proofs in logic: although this might seem much easier than grading papers (and in some ways, it is), grading proofs is still as much an art as it is a science. It's difficult to simply take off points for each error, since some errors are more serious than others, and it's also difficult to simply give points for correctly derived lines, since it is possible to use the rules correctly and yet not get anywhere. Discuss the grading method for handling mistakes in proofs with both the professor and the other TAs.
- Remember that grading takes time, and the more you do it, the more proficient you become at it.

Discussing Grades with Students

NOTE: Sending grades via email (either in the body of the email, or as an attachment) is not allowed at the University of Washington!

As a TA, talking to students individually about their grades is something of an art. Your role is often ambiguous: on the one hand, you are in a position of authority with respect to them (and their grades); on the other hand, you are also a student yourself. Some students think that TAs can be "talked" into changing grades when a professor couldn't be. Be aware of this, and make sure you change a student's grade only when you are genuinely convinced that you should. The number of strategies that undergraduates employ to get you to change their grade are endless.

The following are a few of the attempts we have encountered:

A student might say…	A TA might respond…
"But I'm an A student in all my other classes."	"That might mean that you have some study skills which will be helpful in a philosophy course, but it doesn't automatically mean that you will get an A. Philosophy is hard, and chances are it's a new subject for you. Unlike English, history, or biology, you probably won't have taken a philosophy course in high school. If you haven't cooked a soufflé before, you probably wouldn't expect your first one to be perfect. It will require some practice. The same is true of philosophy."
"I got 4.0's in my philosophy courses at my community college."	"Then you should know how hard philosophy is. In general, however, the standards of excellence at a community college are going to differ from the standards at a major university. The latter are likely to be higher, and the philosophy courses are more difficult. Moreover, different philosophy courses require different skills – the abilities required to do well in a logic course are not the same as those required to do well in an ethics course."
"But that's what I meant. I know what I mean." [Students frequently offer this response when you tell them that they have said something unclear.]	"I can't read your mind, so what you need to do is make clear to me that that's what you meant. It could be that you understand the material perfectly well, but haven't communicated that understanding as clearly as you should have."

"But I have the basic idea right. Why didn't I get full credit?" (Sometimes this is said in conjunction with the previous response)	"There is a lot more to philosophy than simply 'having the basic idea right'. But that is true of other subjects as well. If I add 7 and 5 and get 14, then in some sense I have the 'basic idea' of addition. But that clearly isn't the end of the matter. Often, what distinguishes one philosophical view or claim from another is fairly subtle. You need to be careful to say completely and exactly what you mean, or else you can end up saying something completely different than what you intended."
"I don't understand how you can be critical of what I have said. There are no 'right answers' in philosophy anyway, so what objective standards could you possibly have?"	"There are some things in philosophy that are not a matter of opinion; for example, it is not a matter of opinion that Judith Thomson grants that the fetus is a person in her argument for the permissibility of some cases of abortion. With respect to philosophical issues that are in dispute (e.g., skepticism about the external world), there are standards for what counts as good reasoning. You haven't received a lower grade because you hold a view that differs from mine, or from the professor's; rather, it is the manner in which you argued for your own view. Let's discuss how your argument might be strengthened."

If you have done your best to discuss a grade with a student who remains dissatisfied or upset (or hostile), remember that you **should** refer them to the professor. You are not completely on your own in dealing with the students, and it helps to remember that the professor will back you up to some degree.

Computing and Posting Final Grades

When you have computed the final grades for your students, the professor has to enter them through the online grading system. As a TA, you might be required to help with this process, or the professor may prefer to do this on their own. You and your professor are required to turn in your "grade sheet(s)", (a document showing how you arrived at your grades, usually a spreadsheet type of record) to the main office.

Final exams, and any other remaining assignments, should be put in alphabetical order, put in the accordion folders located in the main office, and labeled appropriately with a post-it note. If you are unsure of where to put these, please ask the staff for help. Students should be told that final exams and any other remaining assignments can be obtained from the main office. Exams and other course assignments are kept behind the main office counter until the end of the following quarter and then shredded. (Spring quarter course work is kept until the end of the following fall quarter.) Students must be informed that unless they specify otherwise, or make special arrangements (i.e. have their exams mailed to them, or held separately), their exams will be left in the aforementioned spot. It is a UW policy that we cannot leave a student's exams or assignments in a public place without their consent; doing so constitutes a violation of the student's privacy (as does sending grades via email!).

MASTERING DISCUSSION SECTIONS

The First Day of Sections

Sometimes, the professor you are TAing for will have some specific topics s/he would like you to discuss on the first day of sections, but if not, that first 50 minutes can seem like a week. The amount you have to do on the first day of sections depends on the amount of introductory course material (as opposed to official course business—exams, grades, papers, etc.) the professor has covered.

The first day of sections is your students' first impression of you as a TA, and will establish the tone for the quarter. Think about how you want your students to perceive you, what you will expect from them during the quarter, and how you want them to approach the course. It's often helpful to ask other TAs what they have done on the first day of sections.

The first day of sections typically divides into two parts: a review of the official business of the course, and an unofficial introduction discussion. The former essentially consists of reviewing information given by the professor the previous day (e.g., exams, papers, grading, etc.), making sure that everyone has a syllabus, and making any needed announcements about overloads, which is information you should get from the professor on the first day of class. You also need to make sure to announce your name, your email address, where your office is located, the phone number, and your office hours. Anyone who wants to attend another section should come talk to you after class. It is a good idea to tell the students to bring their books to class, so that everyone can participate in the discussion of a passage, or know which proof is being done.

After the official business is taken care of, you can go on to some introductory material, introducing the students to one another and to philosophy. Some general topics for the first day of sections might be: why did the students want to take the course? What are their majors? What do they think philosophy is? Another suggestion is to tell them something about yourself, such as where you are in the program, what your area of philosophical interest is, how you got interested in philosophy.

Particular topics for discussion might suggest themselves depending on the course you are teaching. Talking about arguments, what distinguishes philosophy from other disciplines, how to read philosophy, and (perhaps) validity are some things you might want to discuss.

Preparing for Sections

The most crucial thing to remember in preparing for sections is to read carefully the material you plan to discuss. The degree to which you have to lecture on course material depends on both the professor's preference, and the difficulty of the material, but you will always need to have read anything your students read. It's a good idea to read ahead if you have time (which you won't always), and it's not generally a good idea to skip the reading and try and "wing it" in sections. Even if you have read the material a dozen times, it always helps to review.

The degree to which you write lecture notes on course readings depends on you. Some TAs are more comfortable with just reading the material carefully, and then leading sections fairly spontaneously; other TAs are more comfortable with something written down to which they can refer, if necessary. As long as you read the material carefully, and are open to unexpected but interesting discussions of various aspects of it, then it is hard to make an error here. If anything, new TAs are likely to err on the side of over-preparing, or doing more than they need to. Moreover, if you have taken notes in lecture (or if you are TAing with a professor who gives you his/her lecture notes), then you may already have done a lot of your section prep. With practice, you acquire a better sense of how much you need to do in the way of writing notes.

With this general qualification in mind, here are some more specific tips on writing or preparing notes for sections:

General Themes/Philosophical Motivation

What philosophical issue or question is being raised in the reading, and why is it interesting? How does it fit into the course in general? What is the "payoff" for considering this issue or this argument carefully? If the author is an important figure in the history of philosophy, you might talk about their life, and their conception of the issue; for example, what did Descartes think he was doing in using his Method of Doubt? Why are the beliefs that survive particularly important? What else did the author do in their career that was interesting? Students generally appreciate any amusing or interesting anecdotes you might have about a particular philosopher; it makes the person more "real" to them, and less of just a Famous Dead White Guy (who doesn't have anything interesting to say about their experience).

Arguments and Dialectical Structure

Most (or all) of your students will not have taken a philosophy class before, and so will need your help in figuring out the overall dialectical structure of an essay. You need to be able to set out the main argument carefully (or recapitulate it from lecture), and you need to be able to help students distinguish between (for example) the author's positive arguments for his or her own position, positions similar to the author's but different in some significant respect, objections to the author's position that someone might raise, the author's objections to other positions, and so on. It sometimes comes as shock to students that philosophical essays are not always concerned with arguing for some "big claim" (e.g., that abortion is wrong), but are instead often concerned with a much narrower topic (e.g., that some response to a particular objection to the permissibility of abortion is inadequate).

The clearer you make dialectical structure, the greater the chance your students have of understanding it. It's often helpful to prepare students by telling them what you are going to talk about, talking about it, and then telling them what you just said. Doing this is immeasurably easier if you can introduce certain parts of the material with phrases like: X considers two objections to this view, and has two responses; X wants to distinguish him/herself from philosophers who have this view; X offers the following criticism of the argument for Y, and so on. It helps to draw your students' attention to such phrases in their reading; being familiar with certain kinds of qualifying phrases enables them to see dialectical structure more clearly.

Of course, presenting arguments and general dialectical structure to your students requires that you understand it yourself, and just as this requires practice on the part of your students, it requires practice on your part as well. The responsibility of having to clearly explain a concept, or view, or argument to your students cannot fail to have an effect on your own philosophical abilities. Learning how to teach philosophy makes you a better philosopher, and so you will find that having to present material clearly to your students will help you understand it better yourself.

Cases, Examples, and Illustrations

Since students who are encountering philosophy for the first time generally find it terribly abstract, you will often need to come up with cases or examples that illustrate a particular concept. Sometimes an article in the course readings will contain examples or cases, but sometimes (particularly with historical figures) there won't be any, or there won't be any that the students understand.

Whether you are discussing an example that is in the reading, or coming up with one on your own, there are some general points to consider: first, what is the case supposed to show? Why are the students supposed to think about it? Second, is the case explained in a student-friendly manner? One way to make a case or an example more student-friendly is to construct or explain it in terms of the popular culture they are familiar with: movies, books, plays, political events, and so on. Sometimes students do this on their own: several TAs have found that a discussion of Descartes' Dream Argument begins with a discussion of the movie *Total Recall*, for example. (Come to think of it, this movie is mentioned by students in discussions of personal identity and Experience Machines, as well. On the whole, this definitely seems to be a film that every TA should see.) Other TAs have found *Star Trek: The Next Generation* to be a good source for discussing everything from artificial intelligence to possible worlds. The movie *The Matrix* has also been used successfully by TAs. Finding student-friendly examples not only makes sections more fun for everyone, but it also helps the students see how many of their everyday interests and concerns involve philosophical questions and issues, and making those sorts of everyday, real world connections is immeasurably helpful in engaging their interest.

Presenting Information in Sections, or "Lecturing"

The amount of formal lecturing that you do in section depends in part on the professor you TA for. Some professors don't want the TA to lecture, or don't expect that he or she will have to; other professors think that section involves both more formal lecturing and less formal discussion-leading. Lecturing involves either going over material which has been introduced by the professor, or introducing new material. In general, you will more often be going over material that has already been lectured on by the professor, rather than introducing new material yourself. Whatever lecturing you need to do in section should be secondary to discussion; the purpose of quiz sections is to allow students to discuss philosophical issues, with the professor's lecture as a background. If you have taken careful notes during the lecture, you will probably have already prepared for as much lecturing as you will need to do.

With that in mind, there are several guidelines one might follow in doing such lecturing as is required. One strategy is to give a summary of the lecture (about 5 minutes), and then ask the students if they have questions about anything in particular, or if there is anything they would like you to discuss at greater length. If the previous day's lecture was on a specific argument, you might start by writing that on the board (when that seems feasible), and then going on to discuss it. Still another strategy might be to ask the students some questions about the lecture, which should provide some indication of what they understand and what they don't. These are only a few of the possibilities, and what is most appropriate depends on you, the professor, and the course. The most important thing to remember is that you don't have to have 50 minutes' worth of things to say – the students are supposed to contribute too. After all, it's their section, and they have part of the responsibility for its going well.

Presenting Arguments in Section

To the extent that you do have to do any lecturing in sections, a lot of it will involve presenting (or recapitulating) arguments for your students. Becoming proficient at this requires some practice, but the following tips should help:

- Make the conclusion of the argument clear. The students need to see what the argument is an argument for, and how it fits in to the topic under discussion. So, if you are discussing H.L.A. Hart's argument against Patrick Devlin, you should point out both that the conclusion of Hart's argument is that Devlin's version of legal moralism is false, and that this is part of a general discussion about the degree to which the law can legitimately restrict individual liberty (or something like that).
- Repeat the argument several times. You will have to do this in order for the students to understand it. Tell them first, that you are going to present an argument, then present it, and then re-state the argument you've just given them.
- If some part of an argument is particularly susceptible to misunderstanding, point it out. It's helpful to use phrases like "be careful not to confuse this claim with this other claim, which it sounds a lot like," or "resist the temptation to think that these two claims are the same" or "notice that this isn't a very strong claim, even though it may sound that way" etc.
- Make sure that the students understand the argument before you go on to consider objections to it. If you consider more than one objection, make clear which part of the argument is engaged by each objection. One way to see if your students understand an argument is to ask them to present it to you in their own words. Informal, ungraded writing assignments, or short quizzes in section are a useful evaluative tool for this purpose. You should check with the professor to see if this is an acceptable procedure. Even students who are used to taking essay exams may not be sure exactly what's required of them on a philosophy exam, and writing assignments like these, with comments on them, are very helpful.

Facilitating Discussion in Section, or, Getting Students to Talk About Philosophy

This may the single hardest thing to learn to do in becoming a good TA. It sometimes seems as if one of your sections simply won't discuss things, no matter what you do, and sometimes that really is the case. Keep trying to find ways to engage their interest. Don't give up! Some TAs have a natural talent for getting their students to discuss philosophy; others have to work at it more. But every TA has struggled at some point with this problem. You're not alone. However, at the risk of making this picture seem too bleak, we should point out that on occasion, you will have a section that won't stop talking. When that happens, count your blessings and sit back and enjoy yourself. For sections that are not like that, however, the following tips might help:

- The single most important thing we recommend is to avoid the temptation to fill silences yourself. This temptation can be overwhelming, since you are basically wedged between a blackboard (or these days, it's more often a whiteboard) and a group of silent bodies. You will be overcome by the feeling that **you must say** something**!** This is especially likely to happen if you have posed a question, or asked the students what they think, and gotten no response. **Force yourself** to wait at least 30 seconds or so, before you start talking yourself. One trick is to ask a hard question and then turn away to write something on the board or pass papers out, so that the students have time to think about the questions without the pressure of you looking at them. Another trick is to let students write down their answers first.

- Divide the students into small groups, or divide the class in half, and give them specific tasks; e.g., arguing for or against a certain view, and then have each group respond to the arguments offered by the other groups.
- Try to have some interesting cases in hand that illustrate certain points, or come up with variations on cases in the reading.
- When a student makes a comment or a point, repeat it, and give credit to that student by name. One reason to do this is that others in the class may not have heard it, but it also makes students aware that their contribution is important. This also helps the students learn one another's names, which in turn enables them to talk to one another, instead of just talking to you.
- If most or all of the students seem convinced that a particular view is right, argue for the opposite view yourself. Be careful to do this in a somewhat cooperative, rather than hostile manner, so that it doesn't make the students think they have nothing to say, or that they can't do philosophy. One way to do this is to let them know explicitly when they have made a particularly good point.
- Make an effort to be animated and enthusiastic about the material yourself. Have fun! Your students are much more likely to find philosophy interesting or exciting if they see that you do. Make it clear that the issues they are discussing are important.
- Relate material that's being discussed to ongoing work in philosophy – your own, or that of other philosophers. Students are more likely to think something is worth discussing if they see that there is real debate about it.
- When asking questions about either the reading or the subject of the lecture, don't rely on the question "do you understand?". Students may say they understand when they don't (for a variety of reasons). Have them tell you what the reading is about, or ask other questions whose answers presuppose some understanding of the reading. Ask them specific questions about the reading, or about a particular argument or view in the reading. Not only can this lead to further discussion, but it lets you know who is doing the reading, and how well they understand it. You should also look for particularly controversial passages in the reading, since these can generate lively discussion.
- Whenever they ask you what you think, ask them what they think. You can also tell them what you think, but try to use questions of this sort to generate further discussion. (You will sometimes have to tell them explicitly that the fact that you or the professor thinks something is true or false is not a good reason for them to think so; moreover, you don't want a discussion of your views to come back to haunt you later, as they can when a student charges you with "grading bias" because the student argued for a view that you disagree with.) A good rule of thumb is to try to make them answer their own questions. Let them know when you find something particularly puzzling, and ask them to help you think about it - tell them to put down their pencils and think through

something with you. Show them that philosophy can be a joint enterprise by jointly engaging in it. Think of discussions you have with your fellow graduate students, and have those discussions (with the relevant changes made for degree of philosophical sophistication) with your students.

- Some TAs find that discussion is promoted by having everyone sit in a circle whenever possible. Other TAs sit in one of the desks among the students, or sit on the table at the front of the room (rather than standing behind it).
- Remember your own undergraduate philosophy courses. Why did you find philosophy interesting or exciting? If you can inject that sort of enthusiasm into your sections, chances are many of your students will find philosophy exciting as well. If you had teachers who were particularly good at getting their students to talk, try to remember what they did, and do something of that sort yourself.

Preparing Students for Exams/Returning Exams to Students

If you have time, it's a good idea to devote an entire section to reviewing for an exam. The more thorough the review session can be, the better. Give the students what information you can about the exam (or repeat the information that the professor has given in lecture), but be prepared for the fact that they might try to "pump" you for more information. You should also expect more students at your office hours immediately prior to an exam.

When you return exams to students, be prepared to go over the conventions that were used on particular questions. The more information you can give to your class as a whole about how an exam was graded, the more quickly you can move on to new material. If you are able to devote an entire section to going over an exam, do so. One good strategy is to go over general conventions, and then spend the rest of the section allowing students to talk to you individually.

The preceding suggestions are not intended as an exhaustive list of things to do in sections. You may wish to modify some of the suggestions here, or you may have strategies of your own that work well. If you develop effective methods of your own, we urge you to share them with other TAs.

PARTICULAR COURSES

There are nine courses the department offers that always need TAs. There are occasionally other special courses, which aren't offered on a regular basis, that sometimes also require TAs. However, the nine courses that follow are generally the classes you might TA:

PHIL 100: Introduction to Philosophy

PHIL 102: Contemporary Moral Problems

PHIL 115: Practical Reasoning

PHIL 120: Introduction to Logic

PHIL 160: Why do We Believe...

PHIL 240: Introduction to Ethics

PHIL 242: Medical Ethics

PHIL 243: Introduction to Environmental Ethics

PHIL 338: Philosophy of Human Rights

PHIL 100 – Introduction to Philosophy

This is a popular course for students who have had no philosophy, and either want to satisfy a Humanities requirement, or are curious about what philosophy is, or both. While each professor has his or her own way of doing the course, with certain problems or issues emphasized over others, the course is generally a survey introduction to the major problems in philosophy: free will, the existence of God, the external world, the mind-body problem, and so on.

Tips for TAs:

- The students will be unfamiliar with principles of analyzing arguments, and dialectical structure. You will probably have to spend a lot of time on this. A good thing to do on the first day of section would be to discuss arguments and validity (unless you are given a different specific task by the professor).
- You will need to spend some time motivating each problem or issue for the students. Unlike the other courses listed above, which are more specialized as regards their subject matter, students in PHIL 100 typically encounter a variety of philosophical problems: metaphysical, epistemological, and ethical. Begin the discussion of each problem with a discussion of why we care about it, and why it's important. One good strategy is to start with what "common sense" tells us about that problem, and go from there.
- You might have some students who are particularly excited by an issue, or by philosophy generally, and who would like to discuss something in more detail than the structure of the course allows for. Encourage those students to come talk to you during office hours, rather than devoting time in section. It's likely to confuse the other students if you move from a general discussion of act-

utilitarianism to whether or not rule-utilitarianism collapses into act-utilitarianism (or something of that sort).

- Have as many cases at your disposal as possible. Some of these issues are simply too unfamiliar to these students, and cases or illustrations you can provide will not only help them understand, but will get them more excited about the problem.

PHIL 102 – Contemporary Moral Problems

This is another popular course for students who have had no philosophy, but you might also have students who have taken another philosophy course. The course is essentially what the name suggests: a discussion of the philosophical issues and views surrounding such problems as abortion, animal rights, capital punishment, world hunger, and euthanasia. Each professor may emphasize different problems.

Tips for TAs:

- Be prepared for the fact that students may have some fairly strongly held opinions about these issues (and for some students, these opinions are the result of religious beliefs). Even if they have not had a philosophy course, they may "argue" for a view with more tenacity than you might expect, because the subject is one they have had discussions about.
- Some TAs have discovered that some of their students think that these problems are "too important for philosophy." There are a lot of things they might mean by this, but it generally has something to do with their view of philosophy as abstract and quibbling over small logical details. You might have to spend some time convincing them that clear philosophical thinking is useful with respect to problems of this sort.
- It might be a good idea to use part of one section at the beginning of the quarter to discuss solutions to these problems that depend on religious appeals. This could be part of a more general discussion about how a philosopher would approach the question "is abortion ever permissible?" as opposed to how a historian, a sociologist, an anthropologist, and a theologian might approach the question.

PHIL 114 – Philosophical Issues in the Law

This course does not presuppose any particular knowledge of law (on the part of the TA) or any particular knowledge of philosophy (on the part of the student). Some of the issues covered include: the nature of law and legal reasoning, privacy, the limits of law, the nature of crime and criminal responsibility, insanity defenses, and liability in tort.

Tips for TAs:

- Make it clear to the students that this isn't a course about the content of the law. It's a philosophy course. They should know that you are not a lawyer (unless, of course, you are one), and that you may not have the answers to specific questions about what the law is in some area.
- There are two kinds of material for this course: legal cases, and philosophical essays (either by philosophers or legal scholars). Spend some time discussing with students how to read cases: they need to look for the principle of law that's being decided in the case (called the "holding"), and the

argument for this. Many of these students intend to go to law school, so if they can learn how to extract this sort of information from cases now, it will benefit them later.

- When you are discussing a case, you will have to spend some time discussing the philosophical issue that it raises, which may not be immediately obvious to them.

PHIL 120 – Introduction to Logic

This course introduces the students to the syntax and semantics of both sentential and quantificational logic. This course also satisfies the Q/SR, and many students take it to avoid taking math. Different professors use different texts for this course; there is no "department logic text."

Tips for TAs:

- In this course, more than any other in the department, the students depend on their TA a lot. You can expect students during your office hours from the moment the quarter begins.
- A lot of the students who take this course seem to think that it is an easy way to avoid taking math. Impress upon them that it isn't an easy alternative, but try to do this without scaring them out of the course.
- You will also encounter students here who have math anxiety. There may not be as many in this course as there are in 115, but there will be some. (115 gets a lot of students who have heard horror stories about 120 from their friends.) Tell them to come see you as soon as they start having problems with the material.
- In this course, as in 115, you will have to do a lot of examples of different kinds of problems. Most of your time in section will be spent on this. It's critical here for you to let the students think their way through a problem, instead of just doing a proof for them. Proof strategy may be what you spend the most time on. Let the students tell you how to do the proof, and why they are taking each step that they take. Show them alternative ways of deriving a conclusion from a set of premises.
- Encourage students to try doing the proofs on their own, before they come to section. Make sure they know that following the proof in class isn't enough to develop the skills for doing them on their own.

PHIL 160 – Why We Believe…

As expected for an introductory philosophy of science course, PHIL 160 attracts quite a few budding science students. More surprisingly, the course's free-wheeling title also attracts students with more general gnawing epistemological concerns (even if they don't yet call them that). The course presupposes no substantial background knowledge of science or philosophy on the part of the students, though a willingness to engage both is essential. TAs without much science background may have some trouble motivating the issues at hand or drumming up useful examples, but here the professor is quite happy to help.

The course is largely epistemological in its cast, inquiring into unobservables, the problem of induction, scientific method (confirmation, falsification, holism, etc.) and just what makes for good science. There is also some deliberation on the role of science in society, politics and values in science, and the interplay between science and religion.

Tips for TAs:

- Make clear to students that this course inquires into science and scientific reasoning but is not itself a science class. Don't be afraid to make clear your strengths and weaknesses. The fact that you are a philosopher rather than a scientist is no fault when it's made clear that philosophical thinking about science brings its own merits.
- It can be difficult to handle students with considerable science background alongside those without. Strive to keep the discussion at a level where those lacking specific knowledge of quantum mechanics, say, can still understand the thrust. Invite students to continue more involved discussions with you (or the professor) in office hours.
- Reading philosophers of science and writing their own short papers about philosophy of science presents both science students and humanities students with real challenges. Fruitful discussion can draw upon the strengths of each group to supplement the other.
- Perhaps the biggest challenge presented by the material is to motivate the issues without inviting (too much) despair from students, who may become frustrated by repeated poking at some cherished approaches to scientific reasoning. Be mindful of the tantalizing skepticism waiting in the wings.

PHIL 240 – Introduction to Ethics

This course is a general introduction to moral theory; it does not deal with specific moral problems (except perhaps as far as these might serve to illustrate some more theoretical point). Some of the topics that might be covered include: relativism, egoism, divine command theory, utilitarianism, Kantian ethics, collective action problems and Prisoner's Dilemmas, and virtue theory.

Tips for TAs:

- There are no prerequisites for this course, so you will likely have to spend some time with the students on the principles of analyzing arguments as well as how to construct arguments themselves. This will include providing guidance on how to take a philosophy test and write a philosophy paper.
- Most of the students who take this course are convinced that some form of relativism is not only right, but obviously right, and is in fact the required view for Tolerant Persons Everywhere. Be prepared.
- Make it clear to them that the point of the course isn't to learn a set of moral rules, or a bunch of theories, and then pick one to Live By Forevermore. They won't leave the course with "the answer" about what right action is, or what exactly they have to do to have a good moral character. This is true in any philosophy course (the students become frustrated when there isn't a clear "answer" to various philosophical problems), but perhaps more so in 240 (or 102), because these are subjects that they care about (unlike, say, the justification of induction, which they may never think about after the final exam).

PHIL 242 – Introduction to Medical Ethics

This course combines the rigor of PHIL 240 with the topicality of PHIL 102 and PHIL 114 (though obviously the topics here are different than in those courses). After a brief primer on ethics and moral theory, most of your attention will be on particular topics such as cloning, genetic testing, selective abortion, the metaphysics of disability and disease, justice and equity in health care, and physician-assisted suicide. The course draws on the writings of bioethicists and other philosophers, medical professionals, disability rights advocates, legal theorists, and judges.

You might expect that this course attracts many budding nurses, doctors, and other future medical professionals, and you would be right. Many of these students have little to no philosophy experience and sometimes little experience in humanities courses at all, but they do tend to be more advanced in their academic careers than are students in other introductory philosophy courses. Thus you will have more than a few third- and fourth-year biology/biochemistry students with some real familiarity with the "medical" bit and considerably less with the "ethics" bit of the course title.

Tips for TAs:

- Don't be afraid to work through the guts of the texts during section. Many of your students will be unfamiliar with how to read works of moral philosophy; help them to identify and critically engage the arguments as distilled from the text.
- Make yourself available outside of class to assist in writing papers. For many PHIL 242 students this will be a new experience.
- Make your students' disparate knowledge bases work for you. Be explicit about the fact this is a philosophy class and that you are a philosopher, not a doctor.
- While those TAs with little familiarity with bioethics or medicine will need to bone up a bit on such things, be open about your field of specialization. Admit when you do not have answers to specific empirical questions that may become relevant; distinguish between empirical and moral questions; push your students to identify the moral significance of their empirical observations.

PHIL 243 – Introduction to Environmental Ethics

This is a popular course for students involved in environmental studies as well as the UW's inter-disciplinary Program on the Environment. There are also students without backgrounds in either philosophy or environmental studies who take this course because the material interests them and seems timely. Hence, while many of your students will have some mastery of the scientific issues, most will not have had any exposure to philosophical thinking about ethics. Depending on who teaches this course, it may or may not begin with a week or two of a brief overview of the most prominent ethical theories. Material that has been covered in the past includes: anthropocentrism vs. nonanthropocentrism, individualism vs. holism, monism vs. pluralism, intrinsic value, global warming, the moral status of nonhuman animals, recycling, population issues, deep ecology, ecofeminism, environmental pragmatism, and restoration ecology.

Tips for TAs:

- There are no prerequisites for this course, so you will likely have to spend some time with the students on the principles of analyzing arguments as well as how to construct arguments themselves. This will include providing guidance on how to take a philosophy test and write a philosophy paper.
- Some students enter this course with firmly held views on environmental issues while others will be apathetic. This can create difficulty in class discussions as both these kinds of students will sometimes find the debates discussed pointless (either because they have already made up their minds or because they simply do not care). It is important to motivate the discussion by using timely examples and making clear why there is debate around these central issues. One way to do this is to emphasize how quickly issues about the environment become very complicated once we start thinking about them philosophically. For example, many people take it for granted that nature has intrinsic value, but articulating the source of that value and how it could translate into moral considerability is extremely difficult. This course pushes us to consider precisely these kinds of issues.
- As often happens with introductory ethics courses, students in environmental ethics sometimes become frustrated that they are given arguments for and against a position but no answer as to which is the better argument. In situations where these frustrations are voiced in class, it is important to remind students that this is a class introducing them to philosophical issues related to environmental concerns and that it may be some time before they know which side of a debate they will ultimately endorse. That is a perfectly normal position to be in when first studying any field of philosophy. Presumably these students are in the room because they care about the issues discussed and this course is a very good way to become more adept at discussing and debating these issues even if it does not provide definitive answers.

PHIL 338 – Philosophy of Human Rights

Although this course is listed at the 300 level, PHIL 338 is really an introductory philosophy course designed to give students an initial acquaintance with major issues in the philosophy of human rights. The issues covered in the course include (but are not limited to) the nature and justification of rights, the question of whether human rights are universal or culturally relative, the possibility and moral implications of group rights (e.g., for women, African-Americans, or gays and lesbians), and some inquiry regarding the moral acceptability of various enforcement mechanisms across cultural and geographic boundaries. Since the course has no prerequisites and it serves as a core course in the fulfillment of the human rights minor, it attracts many first-time philosophy students who have a serious interest in the subject matter but no philosophical training. Hence, many of the techniques appropriate for TAing other 100 and 200 level classes are also applicable for this course.

Tips for TAs:

- Although many of the students who register for this course may be completely unfamiliar with philosophical methods, they are generally likely to have more complete or current information regarding the status of human rights issues than you do. While this can be very helpful for generating class discussion, it also brings with it challenges that are rather unique to this particular course. Always be aware that the purpose of the course is to challenge them to think about particular cases (about which they frequently have a good deal of knowledge) in a different and more theoretical way than that to which they are accustomed. Push them to draw premises (or defenses for premises) from the particular cases they share in class and to use their background in the facts about human rights as motivation, or justification, for arguments concerning the larger questions that are at the core of the course.

- Although this is an introductory course, it is listed at the 300-level for a reason, namely, the workload. The students will be expected to process a good deal more reading material in this course than they might be asked to address in a 100 or 200-level course, and they will be asked to provide evidence of a reasonably sophisticated understanding of this material in assignments and on exams. The moral: be both patient and organized.

Finally, just as in PHIL 102 or 240, you are likely to meet with many students who have very passionate views regarding “right” and “wrong” in the realm of human rights. Encourage them to see that their views are generally the conclusions of arguments, and remind them that the point of the class is to help them develop the skills to find and evaluate the premises of those arguments whose conclusions they endorse on the basis of their emotional relationship to the subject matter. (Here, as in other courses that deal with ethical issues, having a discussion about arguments that rely on religious appeals early in the quarter may prove helpful later on.)

CONCLUSION

We want to wish you good luck in your experience as a TA at the UW, and we hope that this handbook has been of some help to you. We welcome any suggestions you might have for expanding and/or revising this handbook; our hope is that it will expand to reflect the accumulated knowledge and experience of every TA in the department.

We began by inviting you to participate in an ongoing discussion about teaching. We would like to end it the same way, by encouraging you to discuss your teaching with other TAs, graduate students, and faculty members. Feel free to ask us any questions you might have. We look forward to talking to you.