Department of French & Italian

Policies and Procedures for French Teaching Assistants & Associate Instructors

Updated August 2015

Introduction

This document is intended to provide Teaching Assistants and Associate Instructors (TAs and AIs) with the policies and procedures of the Department of French and Italian (the Department), particularly those that extend beyond or are more specific than the policies and procedures that apply to all instructional faculty at the University of California (UC) and the University of California, Davis (UC-Davis). It does not supersede or replace pertinent policies governing instruction, employment, or study at UC and/or UC-Davis.

In your initial Teaching Assistant Training, you were provided links and documentation that pertain to the Academic Personnel Manual (APM) for the University of California. These can be accessed at the UC Office of the President's website: http://www.ucop.edu/academic-personnel/academic-personnel-policy/index.html.

Policies and procedures specific to UC-Davis can be accessed at the Office of the Vice Provost – Academic Affairs: http://academicpersonnel.ucdavis.edu. This link includes a helpful "FAQ" page for instructional faculty, as well as information about professional development.

Additional information about teaching effectiveness is available from a number of campus offices and organizations. Some helpful resources for TAs include:

- Center for Educational Effectiveness: a hub for information and resources pertaining to instructors, both international and domestic (http://cetl.ucdavis.edu)
- Office of the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education (http://ue.ucdavis.edu)
- Davis Language Center (http://llc.ucdavis.edu)

Principles of Community

The Department and its faculty affirm the UC-Davis Principles of Community as the basis for policies concerning teaching, curriculum, instruction, and student-faculty interaction. These principles are articulated as follows:

"The University of California, Davis, is first and foremost an institution of **learning** and teaching, committed to **serving** the needs of society. Our campus community reflects and is a part of a society comprising all races, creeds and social circumstances. The successful conduct of the university's affairs requires that every member of the university community acknowledge and practice the following basic principles:

- We affirm the **inherent dignity** in all of us, and we strive to maintain a **climate of justice** marked by respect for each other. We acknowledge that our society

carries within it historical and deep-rooted misunderstandings and biases, and therefore we will endeavor to foster **mutual understanding** among the many parts of our whole.

- We affirm the right of freedom of expression within our community and affirm our commitment to the highest standards of **civility** and decency towards all. We recognize the right of every individual to think and speak as dictated by personal belief, to **express** any idea, and to disagree with or counter another's point of view, limited only by university regulations governing time, place and manner. We promote open expression of our individuality and our diversity within the bounds of **courtesy**, **sensitivity** and **respect**.

- We confront and reject all manifestations of discrimination, including those based on race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religious or political beliefs, status within or outside the university, or any of the other differences among people which have been excuses for misunderstanding, dissension or hatred. We recognize and **cherish** the richness contributed to our lives by our diversity. We take **pride** in our various achievements, and we **celebrate** our differences.

We recognize that each of us has an obligation to the community of which we have chosen to be a part. We will strive to build a true community of **spirit** and purpose based on **mutual respect** and caring."

More information is available at: http://occr.ucdavis.edu/poc/

Instructional Policies

The Department and its faculty encourage TAs and AIs to consider their instructional tasks as part of a larger period of professional development, in which they master skills that will be required of them in their future careers. As most graduate students are preparing for a career in academia, this is the time to gain a solid foundation in the art and science of teaching, while still under the guidance of experienced faculty mentors.

Many of the pedagogical and methodological expectations of TAs and AIs are outlined in the TA Guide (available in the lower-division SmartSite work portal). These can be summarized as deriving from the following principles:

1. Target language use: Class time should have as its primary objective the *mise en oeuvre* of structures, vocabulary and cultural themes via the meaningful manipulation and creation of language by students. Explicit grammar instruction, translation, or explanation should be minimalized in all class sessions, at all levels, enabling a "flipped-classroom" environment.
2. Focus on student proficiency: The role of the instructor is to facilitate and moderate language use. Instructors should orient classroom activities and exercises toward the student, rather than themselves, text, or ancillaries.
3. Active student engagement: Students should be the authors of their proficiency gains and the actors in language use. The instructor should not repeat the text or facilitate an environment in which students are required to do little or no study independently. The goal is active engagement and holistic communicative production.
4. Promote French: Students should be exposed to as much French as possible, and be encouraged to use the target language, even imperfectly, to the greatest extent feasible given their level and background. English should be used sparingly and always with a clear pedagogical purpose.

The methodologies and organizational strategies outlined in the TA Guide dovetail with and emerge from these principles. Please review the Guide regularly and consider the information in this when crafting your lesson plans.

Standards of Professionalism

As members of the instructional faculty of UC-Davis, all TAs and AIs should conduct themselves in a professional manner in the classroom, in related activities, and in educational contexts.

It is particularly crucial that TAs and AIs approach each class session ready to apply the instructional principles outlined above and expanded upon on in the TA Guide. The following are general expectations of all instructors:

Prepare a lesson plan well in advance

- Lesson plans should include goals and objectives.
- Lesson plans should be logically sequenced ('articulated').
- Activities in the plan should be designed to promote language use, even if they are at times closed and focused on accuracy.
- Lesson plans should include models for all activities/exercises, as well as clear instructions.

Begin and end the session on time

- TAs and AIs should plan to arrive at their assigned classroom ten minutes prior to the hour. This allows ample time to set up equipment, hand back homework, and answer student questions.
- TAs AIs should make every effort to end the lesson at the assigned time. This is a matter of courtesy to the instructor using the room next, and to students who often must attend subsequent classes.

Carefully prepare all ancillary materials

- Ancillaries should be support unit and chapter goals and objectives.
- Ancillaries should be carefully proofed for grammar, formatting, and effectiveness.
- Any projected images/exercises should be vetted to ensure visibility in the classroom setting.
- Any photocopies or materials to hand out should be prepared several hours in advance of the session, to allow for machine malfunctions or the like.

Remember and promote the Principles of Community *in instruction*

- Respect for all participants in the classroom is paramount. TAs and AIs should treat all students with respect and dignity at all times.
- Respect for students requires objectivity and fairness. TAs and AIs should endeavor not to favor or disfavor any student or group of students, but involve all students in class activities to the greatest and most uniform manner possible.
- Respect for students requires the establishment of boundaries. TAs AIs are expected to establish and maintain boundaries between their professional and personal lives, and to refrain from the discussion of topics that do not contribute to the unit goals/objectives.

Maintain professionalism at all times

- If a student or group of students should become disruptive or disrespectful to the instructor or other students, the TA or AI should consult with the supervising faculty or Department Chair as soon as possible, and in all circumstances within 24 hours.
- If a TA or AI suspects that a student has violated the Academic Code of Conduct (plagiarism, cheating, etc.), s/he must contact the faculty supervisor, who will advise him/her on filing a report with Student Judicial Affairs (http://sja.ucdavis.edu).
- If a TA or AI ever feels that a student is behaving in a dangerous manner or threatens physical violence to her-/himself or others, the University Police should be called immediately (9-1-1 or 752-1230). After the Police have been contacted and appropriate intervention has been made or determined, the TA or AI should contact the faculty supervisor and the Department Chair, as well as any other appropriate UC Davis resources (SHCS, SJA, relevant dean's office).

Interaction with Students

TAs and AIs are part of the instructional corps of the University and Department. They are, at the same time, students and are typically closer in age to the undergraduates in their lower-division sections. This situation can lead to both professional challenges and intellectual opportunities.

TAs and AIs are encouraged to be particularly mindful of the power dynamic that is established in the classroom, and to the boundaries that must be established and maintained involving themselves and their students (see above). The Department has also established particular policies that all TAs and AIs are expected to follow.

Office Hours

- TAs and AIs (like all instructional faculty) are required to hold at least two, non-consecutive office hours per week during all instructional quarters.
- Office hours are to be held in the TA's or AI's assigned office space: office hours may not be held off campus or in a non-instructional setting other than the assigned office.
- At the beginning of each quarter, TAs and AIs should inform the appropriate staff member of these hours/days and post a "door card."

Meeting with students

- TAs and AIs should meet with students in a public area or in their assigned office. Meetings should take place during the course of normal campus hours (i.e. from approximately 8:00am to 5:00pm on weekdays, excluding holidays).
- <u>TAs and AIs should never meet or confer with students with their office door closed</u>, unless another TA, AI or faculty member is present.
- TAs and AIs should be ready to refer students to Student Health and Counseling Services (SHCS: https://shcs.ucdavis.edu/services/counseling.html)
- if they are noted to be in crisis. While the TA or AI is encouraged to be mindful of student problems and to follow up on issues that students may divulge in office hours, TAs and AIs are not trained therapists.

Relationships with students

- All instructional faculty are subject to UC and UC-Davis policies regarding relationships with students, both those who are currently in their classes or those who could reasonably be expected to be in their classes in the future.
- Sexual and/or romantic relationships between instructional faculty, including TAs and AIs, and students are strictly prohibited.
- TAs and AIs are reminded to be cautious about entering into non-sexual, non-romantic friendships with students currently enrolled in their classes, or with students who might reasonably be expected to enroll in their classes. While the Department and University do not have blanket restrictions about such relationships, TAs and AIs are reminded that, in their role as instructor, they are in a position of imbalanced power and authority, and act as academic "gate-keepers." A well-intentioned friendship with a student can have detrimental effects on the boundaries established between personal and professional arenas, as well as on a classroom dynamic and on perceptions of fairness and equity among other students.

Sexual Harassment

- All TAs and AIs are required to complete a Sexual Harassment Training module. Information on these will be distributed to new and entering TAs.
- Sexual Harassment is strictly prohibited. All members of the University community are subject to regulations concerning sexual harassment, including protections against retaliation for reporting and confidentiality (as appropriate). See http://hdapp.ucdavis.edu for further information concerning applicable rules, regulations, policies, and procedures.
- If a TA or AI suspects or witnesses sexual harassment, s/he should immediately report this to the faculty supervisor, Department Chair, Unit MSO, and/or HDAPP.

Discrimination

- Discrimination is strictly prohibited. Discrimination is an illegal or prohibited adverse action or harassment based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity, pregnancy (including childbirth and related medical conditions), physical or mental disability, medical condition (cancer-related or genetic characteristics), genetic information (including family medical history), ancestry, marital status, age, sexual orientation, citizenship, or service in the uniformed services (including membership, application for membership, performance of service, application for service, or obligation for service in the uniformed services).

- Harassment is strictly prohibited. Harassment is verbal or physical conduct that unreasonably interferes with a person's work or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment when that conduct is based on the categories identified above.
- Policies and procedures pertaining to discrimination and harassment are governed by pertinent Federal, State, UC and UC-Davis rules and regulations. See the UC-Davis Policy and Procedure Manual, Chapter 380, Section 15 (http://manuals.ucdavis.edu/PPM/380/380-15.pdf) for full details.

Evaluation Policies

A crucial component of instruction is evaluation, both the assigning of grades for students and the completion of course evaluations by students. It is paramount that both types of evaluation be undertaken with integrity and professionalism at all times, keeping in mind the Principles of Community and professionalism.

Test Writing

- The faculty supervisor will indicate the test writing procedure for each level and group of sections at the beginning of the quarter.
- If TAs or AIs are assigned a particular test to write, either alone or in groups, a draft should be completed <u>at least</u> one week prior to the administration of that test. (Exceptions may be made for the first chapter of a given quarter, depending upon the course syllabus and calendar.) The draft should be circulated via email to all TAs and AIs teaching at the same level and the course supervisor. <u>Please carefully proofread all drafts</u> for grammar, spelling, formatting, and point distribution.
- Once all TAs, AIs and the supervisor have given input and a final version of the test is complete, a copy of this should be uploaded to the lower-division SmartSite workspace (access restricted to TAs, AIs and faculty).

Assigning Student Grades

- Students deserve to understand how they are evaluated. All tests prepared by a TA or AI and her/his colleagues should have a **key**, including a **rubric** for synthetic components (writing, oral exams, structured output, etc.). The purpose of the key and rubric is to make clear the criteria for evaluation and facilitate student understanding of any shortcomings in their work.
- Students deserve to be evaluated fairly. TAs and AIs should apply the key and rubric as uniformly as possible. When subjective judgment is required, e.g. in **writing**, the TA or AI should apply the same matrix to all students. The TA or AI should take adequate notes as to why s/he assigned a grade that derives from any and all subjective judgment, to facilitate any discussion at a later date, should this be necessary.
- Students should receive adequate feedback about their work. For **oral exams, presentations,** and **in-class compositions**, the TA or AI should provide students a rubric and instructions indicating how they will be evaluated. This should be given prior to the examination. The TA or AI should take adequate notes on student performance in oral exams, to facilitate any discussion at a later date. These notes and all related work or commentary should be remitted to the faculty supervisor at the end of the quarter.

- Students deserve to see the results of their performances in a timely manner. TAs and AIs should make every effort to correct evaluative materials, as well as homework and other graded work, as soon as possible after it is completed during the course of an instructional quarter. **Grades should be posted to SmartSite** as soon as possible.

Final Exams

- All TAs and AIs are expected to collaborate on the creation of jointly administered final exams.
- All TAs and AIs are expected to attend the common final exam time.
- Student requests for a make-up final require the approval of the faculty supervisor. If approved, the make-up final should be administered within a window extending no further than 24-hours before and after the common exam time.
- Per University policy, all final grades must be submitted to the Registrar no later than 72 hours after the assigned final exam time. TAs and AIs should plan ahead to allow ample time for the correction of final exams, as well as other evaluative components (oral exams, compositions, participation grades, final chapter notes, etc.).
- Once a TA or AI has completed all grades and input these into the SmartSite gradebook, s/he should contact the faculty supervisor informing her/him of such. Any irregularities, problems, or discrepancies should also be noted to the supervisor. The supervisor will review all grades and inform the TA or AI of any problems or concerns. <u>Only after receiving confirmation that all grades are reviewed should the TA or AI consider her/his responsibilities for the quarter complete</u>.
- All final exams, as well as all evaluative materials not returned to students (participation grade sheets, oral exam rubrics, etc.) should be turned in to the faculty supervisor within one week of the end of the quarter. These will be maintained for a period of two years, at minimum.

Student Instructor Evaluations

- End-of-the quarter instructor evaluations are required per University and Departmental policies. These provide an important means of gaining feedback, both positive and negative, about instructional quality and assessing teaching effectiveness. The Department takes instructor evaluations very seriously and reviews them on a regular basis.
- Student evaluations are conducted online. It is desirable to remind and encourage students to complete the online evaluation forms in order to maximize response rates.

Departmental Citizenship

The Department and its faculty strongly encourage TAs and AIs to collaborate on the development and implementation of instructional materials. Working together to create shared lesson plans, PowerPoint presentations, ancillaries, and evaluative materials has several beneficial effects on instruction:

- It provides commonality across sections
- It fosters creativity and the cross-pollination of ideas
- It allows experienced instructors to guide new instructors
- It allows for new ideas to be introduced into the curriculum
- It can alleviate some of the daily instructional burden.

Regardless of the above, a TA or AI is ultimately responsible for her/his lesson plan and for the implementation of the curriculum, according to Departmental practice and policy. TAs and AIs are expected to carefully proof all materials, regardless of authorship, and to review and adjust these taking the particular needs of their students into account.

The Department also encourages TAs, AIs and graduate students to keep in mind their role and responsibilities as Departmental citizens. Regardless of experience, rank, or background, all members of the Department are participants in its daily workings, enjoy the benefits of intellectual, pedagogical and professional community, and are answerable to the implementation of standards, principles, and policies. TAs and AIs are expected to conduct themselves with respect to all other community members, including fellow graduate students, staff, and faculty.