

Our Team



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a place of mind
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Centre for Teaching and Learning



Teaching Your First Class as a TA

We are all somewhat nervous the first time we meet a new class. What is helpful is to have a clear vision regarding what you want to accomplish during the first session. This will vary somewhat depending on the size of the group with whom you are working and whether you are meeting a group of first year students or more seasoned undergraduates.

In either case you will want to:

use some time to clarify any or all aspects of the course, its expectations, the objectives, technological requirements, the course outline and assignments. It would be usual for the professor to have covered this material, nevertheless you can provide both back up and an opportunity to answer questions.

Find out who is in the class and learn as many names as you can. One of your most important tasks is to provide your students with a security net. You can do this by creating a presence which promotes confidence. Students will need to be assured that you know the material and that you genuinely care about their success.

First Impressions:

Appearance. How do you dress? Formal suggests confidence and knowledge, informal may make you appear more approachable.

Room set up:

Do you want rows, a circle or a “U” shape. Rows are good for a lecture while the circle and the “U” shape suggest that the class will be involved in more participatory activities.

Arrival:

Greeting the students will set a tone that you are available while arriving at the last moment suggests a lack of preparation.

Background:

The students will want to know who you are. If possible cover the following:
Qualifications – your availability – in what area of research are you involved – how can you be reached (I suggest a professional e-mail dedicated to your TA experience, Gmail is fine), - office hours – the expectations you have of the students – cover a couple of personal interests (favourite books, movies, sports, travels, etc).

Clarify Objectives:

Pre-requisites – assessment – punctuality – from where to seek assistance – participation in class discussions – cell phones – food and drink.

Introductions:

Have students introduce themselves; Have them tell you something about their experiences that nobody else knows. This helps you learn their names.

You can use an icebreaker. (check out <http://wilderdom.com/games/Icebreakers.html> for suggestions). Also an excellent guide for first day contact can be found at: https://webspace.utexas.edu/mss662/398Thandbook/III_GettoKnowUPDATED.pdf

You should know the following information:

Course name and number
A description of how the students will be graded
Meeting time
The professor’s name
Your office number, professor’s office number
Your e-mail address, professors e-mail
Your phone number, professor’s phone number
Your office hours, professor’s office hours
Name of lab supervisor, his or her office number and phone number
Any materials students will need to purchase for the course
Any additional information which you feel will help communicate the course requirements to the students.

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Centre for Teaching and Learning

The Centre for Teaching and Learning at UBC's Okanagan campus promotes and supports excellence in teaching and learning . The Centre provides campus-wide support for all models of teaching and learning, including online learning.

It is our Mission:

"To lead, support and promote teaching and learning excellence, innovation and scholarship at the UBC Okanagan campus."