**Graduate Student Teaching Initiative:**

**TA WORKSHOPS | SPRING 2017**

Register at: [http://www.teaching.pitt.edu/workshops/](http://www.teaching.pitt.edu/workshops/)

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Developing a Lesson Plan:
Whether it’s scribbled on the back of a napkin or filed in a formal record of course instruction, planning ahead for a class session makes for a more effective class. A detailed description of instructional activities for each class provides a roadmap for the instructor and structure for the students. It can also help you determine how well class goals have been met.

Objectives: By the end of this workshop, students will be able to...
- Identify the major components of a lesson plan
- Develop a lesson plan based on their own course’s learning objectives

Offered: Friday, Jan. 13, at 10 am in Alumni 815

Dealing with Difficult Situations in the Classroom:
Teaching isn’t always or even usually “easy,” and a wide array of challenging situations can arise in the course of a semester. You may encounter students who are disengaged, distressed, combative, or suffering from addiction. Perhaps you find that you are not connecting with your students, or that some students do not get along with one another. You may have students who frequently complain—justifiably or not—about various aspects of your teaching, such as grading. While you may not encounter all of these issues, it is best to be prepared beforehand with some strategies for addressing such challenges.

Objectives: By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to...
- Evaluate possible courses of action that can be taken in the difficult situations;
- Apply the University of Pittsburgh’s policies in dealing with difficult situations;
- Identify distress in students and respond accordingly.

Offered: Thursday, Jan. 19, at 10 am in Alumni 815

Developing and Assessing Writing Assignments:
There are few things as painful as reading a poorly written student essay, and few things as rewarding as reading a well-crafted response to a writing assignment. Effective design and assessment of student writing can be challenging. By the end of this workshop, participants will be able to identify characteristics of an effective writing assignment, design grading criteria and rubrics, assess writing assignments, and provide constructive feedback.

Objectives: By the end of this workshop, students will be able to...
- Identify characteristics of an effective writing assignment
- Design grading criteria and rubrics
- Effectively assess writing assignments
- Provide constructive feedback

Offered: Friday, Jan. 20, at 10 am in Alumni 815

For more information, contact us at tahelp@pitt.edu or call 412-383-7152
TA Workshop Descriptions: Spring 2017

Encouraging Student Participation:
Few things are less comfortable than asking a question and seeing a classroom of blank faces staring back at you in silence. In this workshop, we cover concrete strategies for eliciting meaningful student participation, and facilitating that participation so that students meet course learning objectives. Participants will gain strategies to engage all of their students in the learning process.

Objectives:  By the end of this workshop, students will be able to...
• Describe the role of participation in student learning and course design
• Employ strategies for increasing quality student participation

Offered: Monday, Jan. 23, at 10 am in Alumni 815
Tuesday, Feb. 28, at 10 am in Alumni 815

Developing a Teaching Philosophy Statement:
A teaching philosophy statement is a concise, compelling illustration of you as an instructor, a useful exercise in reflexive examination of your teaching, and a necessary component of many academic job applications. This workshop will give those just beginning to write a teaching philosophy statement a place to start and tools with which to move forward. Students who have developed teaching philosophy statements in the past will take a fresh look at those and implement effective revisions.

Objectives: By the end of this workshop, students will be able to...
• Create a compelling, concise statement which reflects their unique values as an instructor
• Articulate teaching objectives
• Describe personal teaching methods
• Discuss ways of gauging teaching effectiveness
• Reflect on the ways in which teaching is impactful for the instructor, and in which the instructor hopes to make an impact

Offered: Wednesday, Jan. 25, at 1 pm in Alumni 815

Effective Teaching with and without PowerPoint:
PowerPoint is used in a majority of classrooms on campus today, but it is not often used to enhance the quality and effectiveness of teaching. In this workshop, we will cover best practices for designing slides for use during lectures and review sessions that will help students better engage with (and better retain) course material, as well as the complexities of sharing slides and notes with students. Participants will leave the workshop knowing how to design PowerPoint presentations which contribute to more effective learning.

Objectives: By the end of this workshop, students will be able to...
• Use best practices to inform use of presentation tools
• Identify and avoid common PowerPoint pitfalls
• Design and present an effective PowerPoint presentation

Offered: Wednesday, Feb. 1, at 1 pm in Alumni B26
Friday, March 17, at 10 am in Alumni B26

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TA Workshop Descriptions: Spring 2017

Time Management Strategies - In and Outside the Classroom:
Managing your time—both in and outside the classroom—can prove challenging for both new and seasoned instructors. Activities may take more or less time than you have planned. Your students participation or lack thereof can affect the time necessary to complete tasks. You may occasionally find that time has gotten away from you, or that you have finished what you planned and still have fifteen minutes of unplanned-for class time remaining. Outside the classroom, balancing teaching responsibilities with other academic responsibilities, including research, coursework, or committee work provides another kind of challenge. This workshop is designed to provide you with some tools and strategies to manage your time effectively both in and outside the classroom, which can benefit both you and your students.

Objectives: By the end of this workshop, students will be able to...
- Develop and implement a lesson plan with a time-sequence of events
- Identify the rationale for sticking with the planned lesson sequence
- Make strategic decisions about when it may be appropriate to deviate from the lesson plan
- Identify opportunities to shift lecture material, student activities, or media to CourseWeb, to free up in-class time
- “Audit” a personal schedule and schedule teaching and other responsibilities for maximum efficiency

Offered: Thursday, Feb. 2, at 12 pm in Alumni 815

Preventing and Monitoring Cheating and Plagiarism:
One national study conducted by the Academic Integrity Center at Duke University suggests that 3 in 4 college students cheat. And cheating is more likely when a teaching assistant gives the exam. Why? Because they thought they could get away with it. Be prepared! By the end of this workshop participants will be better able to identify and prevent cheating in general, and to manage violations of the University of Pittsburgh’s academic integrity policy.

Objectives: By the end of this workshop, students will be able to...
- Define academic integrity, cheating and plagiarism
- Discuss ways to prevent plagiarism and cheating
- Describe how to deal with cheating and plagiarism at the University of Pittsburgh

Offered: Monday, Feb. 6, at 1 pm in Alumni 815

For more information, contact us at tahelp@pitt.edu or call 412-383-7152
Teaching Abstract Concepts:
Dark Matter. Gender. Nation. Time. Class. Schrodinger’s Cat. Have you ever attempted to teach abstract concepts in your class and been met with blank stares from your students? Grasping abstract concepts is challenging for students, and so too is teaching such concepts. Often, students feel more comfortable learning—and we feel more comfortable teaching—concrete facts, the kinds of concepts bearing strong connections with reality. But mastery of abstract concepts is critical in many of our disciplines, and often provides the necessary framework within which to make sense of the phenomena we analyze as disciplinary scholars—furthermore, it is often mastery of such concepts which can prove most engaging and inspiring to our students. This workshop provides strategies for effectively teaching abstract concepts to your students, and for assessing student mastery of such concepts.

Objectives: By the end of this workshop, students will be able to...
- Effectively deploy strategies for teaching abstract concepts
- Address common challenges which students face when learning abstract concepts

Offered: Friday, Feb. 10, at 10 am in Alumni B26
Tuesday, Apr. 4, at 12 pm in Alumni B26

Using Mid-Semester Surveys to Improve your Course:
End of semester teaching evaluations can be extremely helpful for implementing course improvements next semester, but mid-semester surveys can provide you with information upon which you can act now, so that you can make adjustments and improvements benefiting your current students. Mid-semester surveys can provide insights into student perceptions about which teaching strategies and methods are most effective, which aspects of your teaching are most helpful, and what you should keep doing...or consider doing differently. This workshop is designed to provide you with the technical information necessary to deploy an anonymous, online survey via CourseWeb, to analyze the responses you receive, to communicate those results to your students, and to formulate a strategy to make any necessary adjustments for the second half of the semester.

Objectives: By the end of this workshop, students will be able to...
- Design an anonymous, online mid-semester survey in CourseWeb
- Analyze survey responses to formulate a strategy for course adjustments
- Develop a plan for communicating survey results to students in a productive manner

Offered: Monday, Feb. 13, at 2 pm in Alumni 815

For more information, contact us at tahelp@pitt.edu or call 412-383-7152
Best Practices in Online Teaching:
Best Practices in Online Teaching – Faculty who teach online or hybrid classes want to know how to design and teach courses that are pedagogically effective. This workshop will summarize and synthesize research about the most effective practices in teaching learner-centered courses and point to CourseWeb tools that can help you implement engaging teaching strategies. Topics covered will include strategies and tools for planning sequenced assignments and activities, managing the course, and evaluation. The workshop will be of interest to faculty who teach online or who are interested in incorporating online components into their traditional courses. Bring your questions, ideas and experiences to share.

Objectives: By the end of this workshop, students will be able to...
- Organize materials for your course in CourseWeb
- Use CourseWeb to communicate with your students
- Design collaborative learning activities by selecting tools such as Groups, Discussion Board, Wiki, Blog or Journal
- Provide feedback to students with tools such as the rubric or quizzes

Offered: Wednesday, Feb. 15, at 2 pm in Alumni B26

The Value-Added Classroom – Using Labs, Simulations, and Case Studies:
Student engagement. Professional development. “Real-world” applications of class content. These are issues facing instructors across STEM, social science, and the humanities. Data shows that goal-oriented process-based learning can foster student motivation and enhance student understanding and competency. The goal of process-based learning is to develop activities and assignments that help move students from “thinking” to “doing”. The primary objective of this approach is that students leave the classroom with skills, experiences, and concrete deliverables that contribute to their professional development – and career prospects.

Objectives: By the end of this workshop, students will be able to...
- Identify primary components of process-based learning
- Compare and contrast labs, simulations, and case studies in the context of goal-oriented skills development and project-based learning
- Address the use of process-based learning in “soft skills” development (e.g., communication, negotiation, collaboration, and decision-making)
- Effectively deploy strategies for designing and implementing process-based learning

Offered: Thursday, Feb. 16, at 12 pm in Alumni 815

For more information, contact us at tahelp@pitt.edu or call 412-383-7152
Teaching with Prezi:
Looking for a way to move beyond traditional slides or add new life to old presentations? Prezi is an easy-to-use presentation tool (as easy to use as PowerPoint) that provides a fresh, new, interactive way to present information to your students. Driven by Flash animation, Prezi allows you to organize course content in logical ways, while at the same time establishing multiple connections between multiple fields of knowledge. You can use Prezi to give a presentation in a predetermined “Path,” or explore instead, in response to student interactions. You can even have your students navigate, contribute to, or create a Prezi on their own. Prezi also easily integrates media. (To see sample Prezis, see: http://prezi.com/explore/) This interactive workshop will familiarize you with the pedagogical and technical aspects of working with Prezi.

Objectives: By the end of this workshop, students will be able to...
- Identify some of the advantages of Prezi over traditional presentation tools, like PowerPoint.
- Use best practices in teaching with Prezi.
- Create their own new Prezi or convert an old PowerPoint presentation into a Prezi.
- Avoid common pitfalls in the creation of Prezis

Offered: Friday, Feb. 24, at 10 am in Alumni B26
           Wednesday, March 15, at 2 pm in Alumni B26

Developing a Teaching Portfolio:
Teaching portfolios are an important component of many academic job applications and the promotion process: it is never too early in your teaching career to begin developing yours. While teaching portfolios vary widely, this workshop presents some guidelines to follow and some basic strategies you can use to ensure that your portfolio will best demonstrate your teaching experience, accomplishments, and potential. Whether you are just beginning to teach or about to enter the job market, this workshop will enable you to compile and develop your best teaching portfolio.

Objectives: By the end of this workshop, students will be able to...
- Identify the important characteristics of a teaching portfolio
- Make decisions about portfolio contents, structure, and framing based on an understanding of its likely audience
- Strategically compile teaching materials for use in a teaching portfolio
- Streamline information for more impactful presentation in a teaching portfolio

Offered: Thursday, March 2, at 12 pm in Alumni 815

For more information, contact us at tahelp@pitt.edu or call 412-383-7152
TA Workshop Descriptions: Spring 2017

Syllabus Construction:
Putting together a syllabus for the first time can be a daunting task. In this workshop, we cover the basic components of a syllabus, as well as practical and stylistic “do's-and-don'ts” of syllabus construction. Participants will leave the workshop knowing how to construct their own syllabus so that course information is clearly presented to students, and so that students' confusion over course assignments and expectations is kept to a minimum.

Objectives: By the end of this workshop, students will be able to...
- Identify and produce necessary features of a syllabus
- Identify optional features of a syllabus
- Construct a syllabus for a class

Offered: Wednesday, March 29, at 1 pm in Alumni 815

Teaching a Six-Week Course:
Teaching a six-week course is a whirlwind, a challenge, and a very different kind of teaching. Covering a full course in a third of the time is a difficult proposition for students and instructors alike. In this workshop, we will identify the distinctive characteristics of a six-week course, discuss the associated challenges, and identify some strategies which you can apply to meet those challenges.

Objectives: By the end of this workshop, students will be able to...
- Identify distinctive characteristics of a 6-week course
- Identify some of the challenges unique to a 6-week course
- Identify and apply some strategies to meet those challenges

Offered: Monday, April 10, at 1 pm in Alumni B26
Wednesday, April 26, at 1 pm in Alumni B26

Teaching International Students:
Do you have international students who you would love to know more about and to engage more in classes? Come learn about international students and the challenges they face. You will see engaging your international students takes as few as 4 steps. You will also have an opportunity to make a specific plan to engage your international students based on the 4-step approach.

Objectives: By the end of this workshop, students will be able to...
- Identify common challenges that international students face.
- Explain international students’ classroom behaviors from cultural perspectives.
- Make a specific plan to engage their international students based on the 4-step approach.

Offered: Thursday, April 13, at 2 pm in Alumni B26

For more information, contact us at tahelp@pitt.edu or call 412-383-7152
Teaching Inclusively:
This workshop introduces principles of inclusivity and offers practical advice for fostering an inclusive university environment through your teaching. Through discussion and workshop exercises, learn how promoting and practicing inclusivity can improve learning outcomes and your relationship with your students. This workshop will also address effectively articulating your inclusive approach to teaching in job applications and interviews.

Objectives: By the end of this workshop, students will be able to...
- Identify issues related to inclusive teaching
- Evaluate methods of instilling and communicating inclusivity into a course and classroom
- Articulate inclusivity in job applications and interviews

Offered: Wednesday, May 3, at 2 pm in Alumni 815