



**Policies and Procedures Handbook for  
Graduate Teaching Assistants**

Department of Communication and Journalism

University of Maine

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## 1. Introduction

Welcome to teaching in the Department of Communication and Journalism! You are joining an exceptional group of graduate students whose work, thoughtfulness, and creativity as teachers supports our departmental mission to “understand and improve the human condition” through the study of communication. Our Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) both serve as instructors of record and assist faculty in the development and teaching of CMJ courses. GTAs teach more than 20 sections of different CMJ courses each semester, providing invaluable contributions to our Department, the College, and to the University and impacting the learning experience of hundreds of students. In recognizing the importance of your work, the Department of Communication and Journalism provides the training and support needed to both enhance your professional skills and to grow our community of teachers, so that we can continue to foster thoughtful and engaged learning.

As CMJ instructors, you will (continue to) develop professional skills applicable within and outside of academic environments. The job of a GTA requires commitment and reliability, creativity, working with and synthesizing complex information, deep content knowledge (as well as the ability to make that knowledge relevant), organization, clear and timely oral and written communication with various audiences, and the ability to work with others and help each other grow. We are confident in your capacities to meet these demands *and* we also know that embarking on this journey might seem daunting.

To support your professional development as teachers, we have a dedicated GTA Teaching Coordinator<sup>1</sup> who will be able to answer questions and provide teaching materials and training as you need them. Furthermore, you will participate in a Fall Semester teaching orientation and in regular teaching meetings with other GTAs to help with your teaching/lesson preparation and address any challenges you may encounter in the classroom. Resources are also available through faculty, other graduate students, and via a shared electronic database.

This handbook describes some of the policies and procedures relevant to CMJ Graduate Teaching Assistants. You should also be familiar with and follow the formal policies included in:

- the *CMJ Handbook for Graduate Students* (as discussed in CMJ 600) which includes CMJ’s Criteria for Reappointment of Graduate Teaching Assistants;
- the *University of Maine Student Handbook* and the *Student Conduct Code* included in it (<http://umaine.edu/handbook/>);
- the *Graduate School TA Handbook* (<https://umaine.edu/graduate/wp-content/uploads/sites/551/2021/08/TA-Handbook-2021-2022.docx-1.pdf>);
- and various *Graduate School Policies and Regulations* (<https://umaine.edu/graduate/wp-content/uploads/sites/551/2018/07/policies.pdf>).

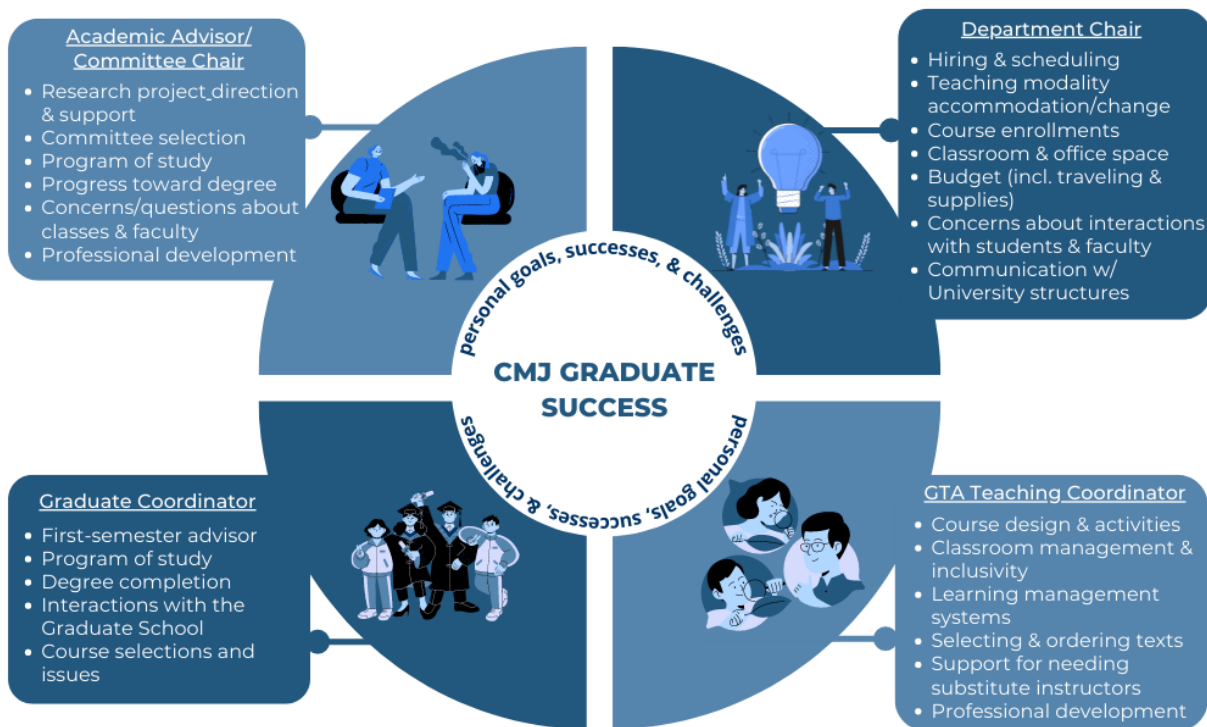
These policies are supplemented by informal as well as formal processes and procedures specific to CMJ and responsive to the needs of our instructors and students, existing departmental resources, and University requirements and expectations, as described in this handbook. In developing the handbook, we have balanced the need for detail with the desire for brevity. Additional teaching support and resources are available through the GTA Teaching Coordinator and the University of Maine Center for Innovation in Teaching and Learning (CITL, <https://umaine.edu/citl/>).

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<sup>1</sup> Currently, Dr. Lily Herakova, Dunn 436, [liliana.herakova@maine.edu](mailto:liliana.herakova@maine.edu)

## 2. Graduate Success and Support

Graduate school brings with it many changes in routine, expectations, and support. Each new semester is different from the previous. Students change, your GTA assignment might change, and as you progress through the program, you will develop your own interests, projects, and competencies that will impact how you experience your GTA position. In all of this, it is important to remember that there are various relationships where you can find support for your success. The diagram below shows who to turn to within our Departmental structure to seek answers and advice on specific questions. Additionally, each one of the people in the roles listed below can guide you and connect you to helpful resources should challenges arise in your personal or professional life. Please don't struggle in silence.



In addition to these resources, the CMJ Department has a Graduate Success Committee, consisting of the Department Chair, the Graduate Coordinator, and the GTA Teaching Coordinator. The Committee discusses emergent concerns and best ways to provide holistic support when necessary. If we are aware of specific ongoing issues, we can address these in this committee and try to create a workable solution. Furthermore, the Graduate School has a Student Success Manager with whom you can meet confidentially, as well as additional resources you can find here: <https://umaine.edu/graduate/students/> Don't forget also that healthy personal relationships and peer mentoring are part of meaningful support.

### 3. Departmental Support of Teaching

#### A. GTA Teaching Coordinator and Course Supervisors

Teaching is a responsibility *shared* by faculty and graduate teaching assistants. To support pedagogical development and the daily work of teaching, the CMJ Department has a designated GTA Teaching Coordinator who supervises all GTAs and serves as a Course Supervisor for CMJ 102, 103, and 106. In addition, the department has faculty members who serve as Course Supervisors. The responsibilities of the **Course Supervisors** include:

- Providing information about teaching and course content, including the development of a structured curriculum so the Department can maintain consistent quality of instruction in all its courses and across sections.
- Scheduling regular instructor meetings to discuss course-related teaching experiences and practices and to help instructors prepare for the continuous successful teaching of the course. The amount of time and frequency are subject to the Supervisor's and GTAs' schedules and needs. Meetings may focus on lesson planning, improving content understanding, grading, addressing challenges and opportunities in the classroom, etc.
- Maintaining availability for one-on-one meetings, as requested by GTAs. Some questions or concerns may not be appropriate for general discussion at regularly occurring meetings, while other concerns may require more immediate action. In these instances, GTAs are asked to contact the GTA Coordinator or the specific Course Supervisor for information on policies and procedures, problem solving, and feedback.
- Providing GTAs with information about preferred modes and times for contact (e.g., e-mail, office hours, specially scheduled meetings, etc.).

In addition to the above, the **GTA Teaching Coordinator** is responsible for the following:

- Encouraging GTAs' development as professionals through individual and group discussions about teaching skills, approaches, and innovations.
- Facilitating peer observations of teaching and related activities and documentation.
- Collecting letters documenting faculty members' observations of GTAs' teaching.
- Supporting graduate students in developing teaching statements, teaching portfolios, and teaching presentations for the academic job market.
- Coordinating trainings and workshops with CITL.

#### B. Departmental Administrative Assistant(s)

The departmental Administrative Assistant, Kristen Libby, works with faculty and instructors in the department as well as supervises work-study clerical staff. She is the point-person for all your questions about obtaining classroom materials, reserving rooms and computer equipment, and answering general questions related to your teaching duties. She is also the contact person for any issues related to building facilities management. Please note that while Ms. Libby may provide information, you are responsible for the clerical and administrative tasks involved in teaching courses (e.g., printing and photocopying). Should you need help photocopying materials for your classes (e.g., the syllabus, exams) and/or posting a message by the classroom door, please **e-mail Kristen Libby** ([kristen.libby@maine.edu](mailto:kristen.libby@maine.edu)) **as soon as possible** (preferably, at least 48 hours in advance). We ask, however, that you refrain from photocopying

and printing as much as possible and rely on digital materials instead. Please also let Ms. Libby know if there is an issue with the copier, accessing classrooms, etc.

### **C. GTA Offices**

Each GTA is assigned a desk in one of the shared GTA offices in Dunn Hall. This office space is provided for the purpose of meeting your obligations as an instructor, particularly holding office hours to meet with students. As explained in the section on GTA Responsibilities, you are required to maintain office/student hours for 3 hours each week during the regular workday and across multiple days in the week. Please post a copy of your scheduled hours on your office door.

Limited space and noise levels place constraints on the number of people that can professionally operate at any one time in each of the GTA offices. Please discuss with your officemates the most suitable ways to maintain a professional atmosphere in your office, particularly when meeting with students. Also, please discuss with your officemates decisions about office appearance. The Department requests that individuals not add or remove office furniture without prior departmental approval. Broken office furniture or equipment and requests for changes or new equipment should be directed to the Department Chair.

### **D. Classroom Technology and Access**

*1. Getting into Classrooms.* Dunn Hall classrooms are frequently locked, especially if you are one of the first people in the day to teach. The classroom keys are in the CMJ mailroom, which you can access with a key in a code-protected lockbox next to the door. **Please return the key to the mailroom as soon as you are done teaching – someone else is bound to need it.** If there is a missing key, please notify the Administrative Assistant. If she is not available, please contact the Department Chair. Either one of them would be able to open the room for you, in case the necessary key is not in the mailroom. If neither the Chair, nor the Administrative Assistant are available, please call the University of Maine Police Department (207-581-4040) and they will dispatch someone to unlock the room.

*2. Available Classroom Technology and Use.* Most Dunn Hall classrooms are equipped with a computer, projector, and a sound system for educational uses. Please refrain from using this technology for your personal needs. You will receive information about signing into these computers during Fall orientation. If you are using the classroom computer to log into your e-mail account, the UMaine Portal, Google Drive, and/or Brightspace to access materials for your class, please remember to log out at the end of the class session. Remind students to do the same. Many instructors prefer to bring their own laptop to class and connect it to the projector and/or speakers as needed.

*3. Reporting Problems.* If you have issues with equipment in the classroom, please first check to make sure everything is plugged in properly. If you have difficulties with equipment and need immediate help, you can call Media Services at 207-581-2500. If there are unresolved issues with classroom technology, please notify the Chair, GTA Coordinator, and Kristen Libby immediately via email. In addition to doing that, you can also email [help@maine.edu](mailto:help@maine.edu) and submit a ticket/request for service. Please do not leave issues for the next person to discover.

### **E. Office Equipment and Procedures**

*1. Computers and Printing.* A computer and printer for GTAs and general graduate student use are provided in the CMJ Graduate Student Lounge in Dunn Hall 412. The sole use of this printer is to support teaching (e.g., printing out one copy of an assignment to be photocopied for class distribution). This printer is not to be used to print out thesis chapters or papers for courses that you are taking as a student.

Please use the computer clusters in the Memorial Union and the Library for these purposes.

Please report any issues, needs, or ideas for more supplies to Kristen Libby and/or the CMJ Graduate Students Association (GSA). Please do not alter the configuration of the computers or add or delete programs. All software on this computer must be installed and registered by the Department (additional computers are available in the Memorial Union and the Library). In the case of any problems with the proper functioning of the computers and printers, please also notify an Administrative Assistant and the Chair immediately.

2. *Photocopying*. Due to environmental and financial considerations, it has long been the Department's stance to discourage photocopying materials (e.g., syllabi or texts) and instead provide students with electronic copies via various learning management channels (e.g., BrightSpace or Google Drive). Having electronically available course documents also improves learning accessibility for students who may need accommodations, such as audio readers.

3. *Office Supplies*. Please talk with the Administrative Assistant about obtaining materials you may need. Departmental letterhead, envelopes, and mailing labels are for official business only (e.g., for an academic job application or a recommendation for a student). If you need to use these items, including an electronic version of our Department letterhead, please contact the GTA Teaching Assistant or the Administrative Assistant.

## **F. Key CMJ Contacts**

### **Kristen Libby, Administrative Assistant**

(printing questions, office needs, classroom keys and technology)

Dunn Hall 420

[kristen.libby@maine.edu](mailto:kristen.libby@maine.edu); 207.581.1935 (CMJ main office)

### **Lily Herakova, GTA Teaching Coordinator**

(teaching prep & documentation, classroom management, student concerns, substitute coverage)

Dunn Hall 436

[liliana.herakova@maine.edu](mailto:liliana.herakova@maine.edu); 413-230-4840 (cell)

### **Laura Rickard, Graduate Coordinator**

(course registration, program of study, degree completion verification, Graduate School interactions)

Dunn 428

[laura.rickard@maine.edu](mailto:laura.rickard@maine.edu)

### **Judith Rosenbaum-Andre, Department Chair**

(classroom keys and technology, student disciplinary issues, hiring and scheduling questions, resources)

Dunn Hall 414

[judithrosenbaumandre@maine.edu](mailto:judithrosenbaumandre@maine.edu); 207.581.1934 (cell: 478-952-9875)

### **Graduate Student Association**

As part of the University's Graduate Student Government, the Communication and Journalism Graduate Student Association (CMJ GSA) is a peer-to-peer support network that develops and secures various programs and resources for CMJ graduate students. CMJ GSA is currently in the process of revising its structures and processes with the input of all graduate students. You can turn to any of the current CMJ GSA members (returning CMJ graduate students) with any questions or ideas.

#### 4. Responsibilities and Reappointment of Graduate Teaching Assistants

There are several types of teaching assistantships within the CMJ Department:

\* *Instructor of Record*: The GTA is the sole instructor for the class, having final say on grading and disciplinary matters within their assigned section(s). GTAs serve as instructors of record for the following classes: CMJ 102 – Introduction to Interpersonal Communication; CMJ 103 - Public Speaking; CMJ 106 - Storytelling; and (sometimes) CMJ 236: Journalism Writing and Editing. Advanced PhD students may serve as instructors of record for several upper-level classes. Opportunities for teaching upper-level classes should be discussed with the Department Chair.

\* *Support Assistant to Lead Instructor*: The teaching assistant supports a faculty member, adjunct instructor, or a lead GTA instructor in the execution of a course. **The specific responsibilities are decided between the lead instructor and the GTA.** Grading and disciplinary matters are ultimately up to the lead instructor.

\* *Departmental Service Assignment (as needed)*: The GTA serves in another role that supports Departmental operations. These are typically half assistantships, meaning that GTAs in this role will still also have a teaching assignment in one of the above two categories. Departmental service may include roles such as: working as an undergraduate advisor, managing the research participants pool on SONA, and/or helping with the department web site and publicity efforts as part of the CMJ aesthetics committee.

Below are responsibilities that generally fall within the scope of a teaching assistantship, though you should always discuss and document your specific responsibilities with the Course Supervisor and/or the Teaching Coordinator, and/or the faculty member to whom you report as part of your Departmental Service Assignment.

##### **Communication with Course or Service Assignment Supervisor and/or the Teaching Coordinator:**

- Develop a list of responsibilities.
- Meet to discuss, finalize, and document your exact responsibilities and expectations.
- Schedule regular check-in meetings.
- Agree on a mechanism for discussing classroom management and teaching-related issues.

##### **General Classroom Support (for Instructors of Record and Support GTAs):**

- Attend/hold all class meetings per the University calendar.
- Keep records of student attendance and/or engagement.
- Help create and maintain a respectful and stimulating learning environment.
- Follow course and University policies, as stated in the syllabus.
- Monitor classroom technology use and report any problems.
- Hold office hours (a minimum of 3 hours spread throughout each week).

##### **Instructor of Record:**

- Develop a section-specific syllabus with all appropriate and necessary policies. (The Teaching Coordinator provides a main template syllabus with required readings, assignments, due dates).
- Develop and implement lesson plans to teach course content toward the accomplishments of the agreed-upon learning objectives. Lesson plans should include lectures, activities, and assignments as needed. These ideas will be shared and discussed at weekly meetings. Starter packs of lesson plans are available for CMJ 102, CMJ 103, and CMJ 106.



- Help develop and revise assignments, activities, and study guides with other GTAs and the Teaching Coordinator.
- Attend regular teacher training and course management meetings with other GTAs and the Teaching Coordinator (a commitment of approximately 1 hour/week).
- Grade and provide feedback to student work in the sections you are responsible for.
- Make decisions regarding disciplinary actions, when needed. Consult with the Teaching Coordinator.

### **Criteria for GTA Reappointment**

Two factors are considered in the reappointment of Graduate Teaching Assistants in Communication and Journalism: (1) progress toward the M.A. or Ph.D. degree, and (2) satisfactory teaching.

**To demonstrate “satisfactory progress toward the M.A. or Ph.D. degree,”** the student must:

- Maintain a grade point average of 3.0 or above for coursework in the graduate program, with no incompletes in regular coursework at the time of reappointment. Students with incompletes must make arrangements to complete the work by the time of their reappointment (February or March, in most cases).
- Submit a Program of Study before 12 hours of course credit have been completed or by the third registration period (whichever comes first).

**To demonstrate “satisfactory teaching,”** the GTA must meet or surpass expectations in the areas of (each of these sections and subsections are detailed below):

A. Teaching Performance:

- Student work and learning
- Formative feedback (midterm evaluations and faculty observations)
- Summative feedback (end-of-semester evaluations and Chair’s letter)

B. Course Design and Management:

- Use of syllabus
- Use of grading rubrics
- Keeping records of assignment description
- Keeping records of student performance (grade book)
- Holding class sessions according to University schedule
- Timely submission of grades

C. Professional Responsibilities and Ethics:

- Keeping office hours
- Maintaining e-mail and social media etiquette
- Maintaining respectful interpersonal interactions with students, colleagues, and supervisors
- Adhering to University policies

D. Participation in a Continuous Teaching/Learning Community:

- Attend scheduled GTA/teacher training and course management meetings
- Conduct and reflect on peer observations of teaching (see Appendix B)
- Contribute to a database of teaching materials

**Note:** For GTAs not enrolled in the CMJ graduate program, reappointment will be determined by teaching performance as well as availability of an open line. Satisfactory progress toward a degree will not matter in this case, unless their home program has placed the GTA on probation or suspension. Priority in funding is given to GTAs earning a degree in CMJ.

## **A. Teaching Performance**

There are many different “metrics” of successful teaching performance, including your own documentation of teaching efforts and approaches (included in the “Course Design and Management” section below) and reflection on your development as a teacher. Additionally, perhaps the strongest indication of teaching effectiveness is student learning and a teacher’s ability to adapt accordingly. Yet, pedagogical adaptations are impossible without actually receiving, assessing, and reflecting on feedback on learning. The materials listed below are the Department’s way of helping you collect such feedback and guiding you through the reflective and adaptive process. These materials are also evidence of your professional development that can be relevant to future career opportunities.

### ***1. Student work***

While the terms of your appointment do not require you to keep copies of student work, you are strongly encouraged to do so for your own professional development and teaching documentation. Should a particular situation require GTAs to share student work with the Course Supervisor or other GTAs, you will be notified ahead of time. Should a more formal assessment process be planned across sections, the GTA Teaching Coordinator will inform GTAs ahead of time and will request retention and anonymous sharing of all relevant student work.

Student work is a good indicator of student learning and also of possible changes that might need to be made to course and assignment design. Discussing and reflecting on samples of student work can help calibrate expectations across sections and ensure fairness in grading. Reviewing student work and your response to it with other GTAs, the Teaching Coordinator, and/or the Course Supervisor can also be helpful in acknowledging strengths and recommending teaching strategies. The easiest way to retain records of both student work and of your feedback is to collect assignments electronically – via Brightspace or Google Docs (GTAs will receive training on using both). To this end, **you are strongly encouraged to collect (major) class assignments electronically, when possible.** You do not have to retain copies of all student work (which might be especially difficult with hard copy submissions or assignments of performative nature). After reviewing, commenting on, and grading student work, select and copy (or otherwise document) 1-2 representative examples of each level of performance (A-level work, B-level work, C-level work, etc.). **Please, always keep copies of student work that you suspect might be problematic in some ways (e.g., if you suspect or have identified plagiarism or if you think the student might contest the grade). Please also keep the assignment descriptions and your feedback notes relevant to the particular submission.**

### ***2. Formative feedback and responses***

Formative feedback will be provided to you over the course of the semester with the primary purpose of helping you adapt your teaching to class and learning dynamics if/as necessary. While instructors receive feedback via formal student evaluations at the end of the semester, the purpose of formative feedback is to become more responsive teachers, so as to enhance learning. You will get feedback from both faculty and students. This feedback is not a critique, nor should it be interpreted as an indication of “perfection” in teaching that requires no further reflection. Please talk with the GTA Teaching Coordinator about the feedback you receive and what possible adaptations might look like. You are by no means required to

implement every suggestion you receive, but you do need to be clear as to the goals of your teaching and how the approaches you are using may help or hinder the accomplishment of such goals.

- a. *Faculty observations.* You will be assigned a faculty observer who will schedule two visits to your class (only one visit if this is your last semester of teaching). The faculty observation process will follow the guidelines in Appendix B. The purpose of the faculty observations is not evaluative; it is to help support your development as a thoughtful, reflective, and well-informed teacher.
- b. *Midterm evaluations.* Near the mid-point of the semester, **collect students' feedback** (a Google form is available and you are also strongly encouraged to request qualitative feedback). Introduce the collection of this information as formative feedback that will be used to shape the teaching and learning in the course for the remainder of the semester. Please make clear to students that this is not their end-of-semester evaluation of the course and your teaching. Here is the process for administering and making use of the midterm evaluations:
  - i. Create your midterm feedback plan and necessary forms. It is preferable that you administer them in class and make them anonymous. You can leave the room for 10-15 minutes while students complete the feedback in class.
  - ii. On your selected administration day, introduce the process of midterm evaluations. You may say something like this: *Because I care about your learning, it is important for me to know more about your experience in the course so far. Please be honest in both your numeric assessment and your written comments – take this as a chance to make this course what you want it to be! It is equally important, then, to tell me about the things that are going well, which you wouldn't want to change. Your feedback will be completely anonymous and won't affect your grade in any way; it will be used only to enhance your learning in the course. I will reflect on your feedback and will bring up the key points for discussion in class, so that together we can decide on any changes that might need to be made to the course and/or my teaching.*
  - iii. When you receive the results from the midterm evaluations, review them carefully and consider what changes in the course are desirable and feasible. Consider scheduling a meeting with the GTA Teaching Coordinator to help interpret the feedback and craft an appropriate response to the class, especially if this is your first semester teaching and/or if there is something that is of particular concern to you.
  - iv. Plan for a 10-15 min. in-class conversation about the feedback you received and possible changes in the course. Thank students for their honesty and participation. Make sure to highlight several positive aspects that the evaluations mentioned and restate your commitment to these aspects of the course. Then, discuss students' suggestions and changes to the course, if any.

### 3. *Summative feedback and evaluations*

- a. *End-of-semester evaluations.* Formal student evaluations will be solicited at the end of the semester. The end-of-semester evaluation process – which makes use of a University-provided, online student evaluation form – takes place during the last two weeks of the semester. The evaluation must be conducted at a time when you are *not* in the classroom. Make sure to clearly state to students that: 1) you will not have access to the responses until after the submission of final grades and 2) if students want their qualitative comments to be included in your professional files, they need to sign those comments. **Only you and the Department Chair have access to the evaluation results.** However, you are strongly encouraged to schedule a meeting with the TA coordinator to help interpret the evaluations and consider strong points and possible adjustments to

teaching approaches.

- b. *Chair's end-of-semester letter.* Based on the formative faculty observation letter, the results of the end-of-semester evaluations, and any other materials or observations that might be relevant, the Department Chair will provide you with an annual letter that summarizes your teaching accomplishments and strengths and might make some recommendations for continuous development. This letter may be included in any portfolios you develop for professional purposes.

## **B. Course Design and Management**

### ***1. Syllabus design, distribution, and adherence***

During the first week of classes, you must distribute a course syllabus. During the semester, both the instructor and the students should adhere to what the syllabus outlines in terms of expectations, policies, grading, and assignments. Should changes be made to the course, it is the instructor's responsibility to inform the students and append the syllabus as needed. A sample syllabus, which you can use as a template, is provided in Appendix C.

The syllabus must include:

- a. Your name, office number, office hours (at least 3 hours a week), and e-mail address.
- b. Course expectations and policies related to communication, submission of (late) work, engagement, make-up work, and plagiarism, among others. You are encouraged to develop class community agreements together with students and add those to course documents as relevant.
- d. Overview of course assignments, including how participation is defined and evaluated.
- e. The specific formula you will follow for computing the final course grade.
- f. Statements of the required University policies (on accommodations, mandated reporting of sexual assault and harassment, and religious observances). You can find these policies here: <https://umaine.edu/citl/teaching-resources-2/required-syllabus-information/>
- g. A weekly or daily schedule, indicating assigned readings, assignments, and due dates.

Review your syllabus with the GTA Teaching Coordinator *before* you make copies to distribute in class. After finalizing the syllabus, submit a copy to the GTA Teaching Coordinator and the Administrative Assistant for the Department's records.

**Note:** To ensure comparable experience and outcomes for students across different sections, the following multi-section courses use a common syllabus, developed by the GTA Teaching Coordinator with input from instructors: CMJ 102, CMJ 103, CMJ 106, and CMJ 136. Instructors for these courses are required to use the same course materials, cover the same topics, and structure the course around the same key graded assignments across sections. Exams and due dates for major assignments in these courses are also scheduled at the departmental level and instructors should adhere to this schedule. However, instructors have flexibility around the daily specifics of the class schedule and the order in which topics are covered. Instructors also have flexibility in planning the class sessions and additional graded and ungraded assignments and activities to stimulate learning.

### ***2. Use of grading rubrics with clear criteria that are communicated to students***

Rubrics are descriptive tools that outline what is expected of students to achieve and/or demonstrate and how each level of accomplishment will be evaluated. As tools, rubrics help instructors to be both more efficient and fairer in grading. For multi-section courses, rubrics will be developed collaboratively by instructors and the GTA Teaching Coordinator. Additionally, during regular GTA meetings, grading will be "calibrated" using the rubrics, which will also serve as a test of the usefulness of the rubrics. Grading

criteria should be clearly communicated with students, and you should also keep records of your rubrics that you can then refer to (and share with the Department) should a student contest a grade.

### ***3. Maintenance of clear and comprehensive records of assignment descriptions (including grading rubrics), lesson plans, and other teaching materials***

In your time as a teacher, you will edit, adapt, and develop many teaching materials, including lecture notes and slides, in-class activities, and graded and ungraded assignments. Keeping a database of such materials streamlines teaching preparation in subsequent semesters and it also allows for the exchange of ideas among various instructors. Additionally, should any concerns arise, a review of teaching materials provides a baseline for pedagogical conversations and insights into different approaches. Instructor-developed materials are also available in our shared Google Drive folder.

### ***4. Maintenance of clear and comprehensive records of students' performance***

A clear, comprehensive account of each student's performance is crucial in reaching accurate and equitable final grades and in providing helpful feedback to students throughout the semester. This record also provides documentation, should a student contest a grade. **Please record attendance (if part of grading), participation in class activities, and grades for all assignments.** Keep multiple copies of this record. For example, you may record grades on Brightspace, in an Excel file, and on paper. Some instructors also provide students with their own grade tracking sheets. Collecting assignments electronically (e.g., as Google Docs or via Brightspace) is also an efficient way of keeping more detailed feedback for each student even after you have returned the graded assignments. Please note that grades are subject to FERPA protections and you must ensure they are kept and shared with each student confidentially (for more on FERPA, see the University guidelines here: <https://studentrecords.umaine.edu/home/confidentiality/>)

**You must provide the Administrative Assistant and the GTA Teaching Coordinator with copies of all grades given to each student during the semester – including their final grades – before you leave for semester break.** We will keep these records protected. The Department needs this because students raise questions about their grades after courses and it is important to be able to reconstruct their grading in the absence of the instructor. The grade record should include:

- a. An Excel spreadsheet with your grades (with all assignments recorded and notes on any irregularities) and the grading scheme.
- b. Attendance record with any relevant notes on absences, excuses, exceptions granted, special considerations, etc.

Please include an address and phone number where you may be reached during the break. If a student questions a grade, the Department will have the materials necessary to discuss the contestation with the student.

### ***5. Holding class sessions according to the University schedule***

Classes meet on a regular basis at University-assigned days, times, and locations. GTAs are expected to hold class accordingly with the exception of official University holidays. Please, follow the academic calendar: <https://calendar.umaine.edu/events/category/academic-calendar/>.

***What happens if you cannot be in class on a given day (e.g., if there is an emergency or you need to attend a pre-planned event)?*** There is generally no reason for a teacher to cancel class sessions except in the case of illness or emergency. In cases of emergency, you are expected to notify the GTA Teaching Coordinator as soon as possible; a decision will then be made about finding a substitute or offering asynchronous learning options in place of the in-person meeting. If you know in advance that you will be unable to meet with your class on a particular day (for example, because you're presenting a conference paper), you are expected to 1) arrange for a substitute and 2) receive, in an advance, an approval of your

arrangements by the GTA Teaching Coordinator.

***What happens if you need to change a class session's meeting location or time?*** If you plan to meet with your class in a different location (e.g., the library), or at a different time (e.g., for a special speech), please notify the GTA Teaching Coordinator and the Administrative Assistant. Remember to remind students of the change by: 1) sending an e-mail or posting on BrightSpace **and** 2) leaving a note on the door of your regular classroom.

***What happens if you “run out” of things to do before the scheduled end time of the class session?*** Generally, classes should not be dismissed early. If you find that the activities you planned do not fill the entire period, consider using the extra time to get some anonymous feedback/reflections on students' learning and use that as a formative assessment to shape your teaching for the rest of the semester. You may also use the time to review course content, discuss the content of the day in more detail, preview upcoming course content, review student progress on current writing or speaking assignments, or have students do an impromptu exercise.

### ***6. Timely submission of grades***

Final grades are to be submitted on MaineStreet within five (5) days of the last day of final exams (more information is available via Student Records and in the [Faculty Handbook](#)). The GTA Coordinator will also send reminder emails with instructions toward the end of the semester. The Office of Student Records posts procedures for final grading about two weeks before the end of the semester. Please follow these directions and discuss any questions you may have with the GTA Teaching Coordinator.

On occasion, a student may request an “Incomplete” grade, but assigning incompletes is strongly discouraged. If you think special circumstances may justify an incomplete for a given student (e.g., severe illness or automobile accident, etc.), discuss these circumstances and review the University's policy for incompletes with the GTA Teaching Coordinator before you agree to anything with the student. **No incompletes will be granted without prior approval from the GTA Teaching Coordinator.** If an incomplete is arranged, a University form outlining the specific requirements must be completed and signed (see the departmental office for a copy of the form). **If a student has stopped attending class without withdrawing, you must assign a grade of L (which converts to a F) and provide the last date of attendance.**

## **C. Professional Responsibilities and Ethics**

### ***1. Office hours***

GTAs are required to keep office hours within their assigned office space for a minimum of 3 hours/week and on at least two different days of the week. Office hours (which may also be called “student hours”) are to be used for teaching-related work, primarily for meeting with students when they need extra help or mentoring. Office hours should be listed on the course syllabus and posted on your office door.

### ***2. E-mail etiquette***

Please use your official academic e-mail (your @maine.edu address) for communication with students; advise students to do the same (instead of using a personal e-mail). Because this account is managed by Google, it allows all students and employees of the University of Maine access to Google Drive, which you can use to manage course aspects, such as sharing materials or recorded speeches. If you need to send a message to the whole class, you may do so via MaineStreet or Brightspace.

Please maintain a respectful tone in your e-mails and know that you are modeling the same for students. Address the person you are writing to by their name, provide a summary of the reason for contacting them, and outline next actions. Be very careful in the information you disseminate via e-mail – **grades**

**and other academic performance information are private and are best not discussed via e-mail.** If a student requests information about grades via e-mail, you can direct him/her to any (if existing) confidential electronic records of his/her academic performance and/or schedule a time to meet in person.

### ***3. Appropriate social media use***

Many educators maintain personal and/or professional social media profiles. While freedom of speech is protected on social media, there are certain rules and regulations that are specific to the U.S. educational context that affect what is considered legal behaviors on social media. Furthermore, social media posts are accessible to students and colleagues and are a part of the processes of creating professional relationships. As you navigate the world of social media as an educator, keep in mind the following:

- ***FERPA protects student privacy and educational records*** – this means that posting on social media about students’ grades, photos, or comments on their classroom performance is not allowed. Please inform students that they are also discouraged to post photos of classroom activities and other potentially identifiable information on their personal social media.
- ***The University of Maine distinguishes between speaking as a “private citizen” and as an institutional “representative.”*** According to Board Policy 214, University of Maine employees are restricted in their “partisan political activity” when acting as representatives of the University.
- ***Be mindful of the language and imagery of your posts*** – 1) Rules against harassment and hate speech apply to social media posts. 2) General rules of professionalism and mutual humanization apply to social media posts. We may all want to share a teaching success or a difficult teaching situation with friends and colleagues online, but when doing so, we are also constructing our position in relation to students more generally. For example, referring to students as “my kids” may seem endearing, but it could also be patronizing. *If you were to post about educational experiences, please be mindful of the language you use and of the purposes of sharing your posts.* Before you post, ask yourself, *Why am I posting this? For whom am I posting it? Would an in-person conversation with a colleague work instead?*

### ***4. Interpersonal interactions with students***

Being a teacher requires and creates a certain level of trust, which may prompt students to want to speak with you about personal problems and challenges. In such situations, it is important to acknowledge the student’s distress and concerns, the expectations and limitations of your role as a teacher, and your own personal capacities. You are *not* a counselor or a friend. If possible and if you feel comfortable with that role, then request to see the student in private and listen carefully to what they have to say. Underscore your support for the student and offer to connect them with resources on campus and beyond. Requests for personal counseling should be referred to the University Counseling Center (581-1392). If you are worried about a student or unsure how to respond to a situation of concern, please talk with the GTA Teaching Coordinator.

**Important:** remember that we are all mandated reporters of sexual assault and harassment. If a student reaches out to you with a request for personal counseling or even just to share a harassment experience, you should remind the student that you are mandated to report it, and that you will contact the Counseling Center which will, in turn, follow up with the student. Even if a student willingly seeks your advice, assuming the role of counselor abuses the power differential that exists between instructor and student.

Another abuse of this power differential can develop in personal relationships between students and instructors. For this reason, the University discourages romantic or sexual relationships between instructors and students – even if consensual.

Sometimes, conflicts develop between teachers and students or we may encounter course-related

situations that make us feel uncomfortable or uncertain. If this happens, consult with the GTA Teaching Coordinator. Please document the interactions that are a source of concern (e.g., keep e-mail correspondence and write memos describing what happened, who was involved, etc.).

### **5. *Interpersonal interactions with colleagues***

Your fellow GTAs, part- and full-time instructors, faculty, and the CMJ administrative staff are your colleagues. We all benefit from mutual support and respect and recognize that these develop and strengthen over time. Please take care to cultivate collegial relationships. For example, take time to develop shared use of space agreements with your officemates, learn about one another, and respect personal boundaries and preferences, as well as name your own. Consider learning more about who the Administrative Assistant and/or instructors are people (not just in their institutional role).

You will also have regular contact with fellow GTAs in the weekly instructors' meetings for CMJ 102, 103, and 106. Together with the GTA Coordinator, you will help outline community agreements for these spaces, which should be respected. Please contact the Department Chair, if you have questions about collegial expectations, conduct appropriateness, and/or if conflict arises.

### **6. *Interpersonal interactions with supervisors***

While the Department Chair is your direct supervisor, there might be other people who have supervisory roles in relation to you (e.g., the GTA Teaching Coordinator, a course's lead instructor, the Undergraduate Coordinator, etc.). A supervisory role, in these contexts, means the person helps socialize you in the University environment and the Department culture and provides guidance for your daily activities in your role as GTA. This may include but is not limited to, guiding and evaluating your performance, advocating on your behalf, mentoring you, and, when necessary, informing you of disciplinary actions.

You can request a meeting with a supervisor at any point, as can they with you. Note that this may include your direct supervisor (e.g., the lead instructor in your course) as well as the GTA coordinator and the Department Chair. Please use email to schedule such meetings. You should turn to the Department Chair with questions about course schedule and your GTA assignment, accommodations you may need, and experience with lead course instructors that you might want to discuss in confidence. Please understand that University processes take time and be patient – the Department Chair is an excellent resource on the steps necessary and can answer questions about timelines and next steps. The Department Chair is also an advocate for everyone employed by CMJ, including GTAs – they are your first point of contact about anything related to employment by the University; please respect this and do not overstep their authority.

### **7. *Adherence to University policies***

The University of Maine is committed to providing a positive learning environment for all students and staff. To encourage this sort of environment, the University has developed policies and procedures to guide people who work and study here. The *UM Student Handbook* describes many of these policies and is found at <http://www.umaine.edu/handbook/>. The *Graduate School TA Handbook* also provides an overview of key policies and strategies and can be found at: <https://umaine.edu/graduate/wp-content/uploads/sites/551/2021/08/TA-Handbook-2021-2022.docx-1.pdf>. Please become familiar with the University policies, particularly the ones on academic appeals, accommodating students with disabilities, confidentiality, handling of student records, nonsexist language, student conduct, sex discrimination, sexual harassment, sexual assault, relationship violence, stalking and retaliation. You are expected to adhere to these policies and to inform the GTA Teaching Coordinator if you have a question or suspect a violation. **Key elements of the policies are excerpted in Appendix A** of this handbook.



#### **D. Participation in a Teaching Community**

The expectations of your assistantship include contributions to pedagogical development in the Department as a whole. The activities listed below are designed to structure such contributions and are an expected part of your 20 hours/week contracted teaching commitment. Regular failure to engage in these activities violates your GTA contract and may result in the discontinuation of your appointment.

##### ***1. Participation in GTA meetings with the GTA Teaching Coordinator and/or the Course Supervisor***

Regular instructors' meetings will be organized by the GTA Teaching Coordinator and/or the Course Supervisors, as relevant. Meetings will be scheduled each semester with consideration of GTAs' and Supervisors' schedules. These meetings will focus on course assignments and grading, activities for teaching course content, and strategies for addressing student concerns and classroom problems, etc. Attendance is required with an expected time commitment of 1-1½ hours a week throughout the semester.

##### ***2. Participate in a teaching peer mentoring group (see Appendix B for process)***

As part of an effort to support and learn with each other, the Department has devised a peer mentoring process (see Appendix B). The purpose of peer class visits is not evaluative, but rather to learn with others' approaches to teaching and reflective conversations about such approaches. Depending on teaching schedules, you will be placed in a peer triad within which you will conduct class visits. Twice in the semester, observations will be conducted during assigned weeks and will be followed by an all-GTAs meeting. During those weeks, the expected time commitment is 3-3½ hours a week. Participation in the peer mentoring process, including the completion of a final reflection is required.

##### ***3. Contributing to a database of teaching materials, including syllabi, activities and resources, etc.***

Through our years of teaching and working with GTAs, we have developed a shared Google Drive folder with teaching resources for various classes (the link will be provided to you by the GTA Teaching Coordinator). As you develop your own teaching, your contributions to this depository of resources will be strongly appreciated.

## Appendix A: Important University Policies and Procedures

### A. Accommodating Students with Disabilities

Regarding accommodating students with disabilities, it is a student's responsibility to notify the instructor of any disability that might affect her or his performance or participation in the class, with adequate time to make accommodations. You must inform students of this policy and have a written statement in your syllabus. If students have a disability for which they may be requesting an accommodation, have them contact Student Accessibility Services (um.sas@maine.edu, 121 East Annex, 207.581.2319), as early as possible in the term. With sufficient notice, accommodations for disabilities must be made with every effort to maintain fairness and reasonability.

### B. Grading Policies and Procedures

All course syllabi must contain a description of the criteria for achieving specific grades. These general statements should be supplemented with explicit written criteria for each assignment given in class. Students should have a clear understanding of what they must do to successfully complete their assignments. The grading criteria should be applied in a consistent, fair, and objective manner in your evaluation of student work. Approaches to grading, use of evaluation forms, and different strategies for evaluation will be discussed in weekly GTA meetings.

**Confidentiality of student grades.** Student grades are subject to University policies regarding the handling of student records (see the *UM Student Handbook*). You should consider student grades to be confidential information. Do not post grades by name or by ID or social security number. Do not leave graded materials in envelopes tacked to, or boxes located near, your office door and do not post student grades via group e-mail messages to your class. Do not give graded assignments to anyone other than the student (tell roommates and friends that you are unable to pass along a grade, even if the student requests it) and do not give grades to parents over the phone or e-mail. Do not share student papers or video recordings of their speeches/performances with other students without explicit permission. The exception to this policy is that you may share papers with your Course Supervisor, or with other instructors, if you want feedback about grading, plagiarism, etc.

**Student appeals of grades.** On occasion, students will feel that the grade they receive for an assignment is incorrect or inappropriate. If a concern arises over a grade, ask the student to schedule a meeting with you outside of class. When the student comes to your office, ask the student to describe his or her concern. Check to see that the grade they have received is, indeed, the grade you assigned and that your math is correct. Ask the student to show you the written assignment and to point out how it meets the assignment requirements. Take notes, if necessary. Once you have a good sense about the student's concerns and about the supporting evidence, you should decide if you need time to review the case before making a decision. There is nothing wrong with taking time to re-read a student paper before making a decision about a student complaint. If you need to schedule another meeting, do so. If not, simply explain your decision and the reasons for keeping or changing the grade.

If the student wishes to appeal your decision, you should refer her or him to the University policy on academic appeals contained in the Student Handbook and ask the student to schedule a meeting with your Course Supervisor. The Course Supervisor will meet with the instructor to discuss the appeal; ideally, this meeting will take place before the student comes to the Course Supervisor. The instructor should provide the Course Supervisor with copies of the assignment requirements and any relevant samples of student work. The Course Supervisor may ask to meet with both student and instructor in an attempt to resolve the complaint. If the student's concern persists, the student may consult with the Chair. Failing resolution at this level, the student can request an ad hoc departmental committee to review the dispute (see the *UM*

*Student Handbook* for a more complete description of this committee). After that, the student may write to the Dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and then to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. Throughout the appeal process it is important to remember that the GTA, if she/he is the instructor of record, *has the ultimate responsibility for determination of grades*.

### **C. Academic Integrity, Plagiarism, and Cheating**

The University of Maine expects students to fulfill all academic requirements needed to achieve their educational objectives. One of those requirements is academic integrity. The *University of Maine Student Handbook* contains the following section on Academic Integrity:

Academic honesty is very important. It is dishonest to cheat on exams, to copy term papers or to submit papers written by another person, to “fake” experimental results, or to copy parts of books or articles into your own papers without putting the copied material in quotation marks and clearly indicating its source.

Students committing or aiding any of these violations may be given failing grades for an assignment or for an entire course, at the discretion of the instructor. In addition to any academic action taken by an instructor, these violations are also subject to action under the University of Maine Student Conduct Code. The maximum possible sanction under the student conduct code is dismissal from the University.

As instructors at the University, we are responsible for helping students understand exactly what constitutes plagiarism and for responding to instances of plagiarism and cheating in a consistent and professional manner.

#### ***What constitutes plagiarism or cheating?***

Most students recognize some of the more extreme examples of academic dishonesty, such as copying answers from another student’s exam or submitting a paper that someone else wrote. Other examples—whether committed intentionally or unintentionally—are less clear. Consider the following cases:

- A student uses a speech outline developed by another student in a different class. The student doesn’t consider this use of another’s work to be plagiarism because she gave the speech “in her own words.”
- A student submits a paper with direct quotes from a published author but does not set them off with quotation marks or indent them in the text. The student doesn’t consider this use of published material to be plagiarism because he “gave the author’s name in his paper.”
- A student combines material from three different sources but does not refer to those sources in the paper because “they put everything in their own words.”
- A student uses the visual aids developed by another student in giving a speech without identifying the source. The student doesn’t consider this to be plagiarism or cheating because “the other student said it was OK.”

In these examples, students confuse the concept of “good intentions” with our concern for adequate documentation and attribution. Plagiarism and cheating can occur even if a student does not intend to mislead the teacher. Every teacher expects students to learn from others, to read outside sources, to find material that influences their arguments, and to incorporate “the best of what has been written” in their own work. However, teachers also expect that students will clearly distinguish between their work and the work of others. Students expect that we grade and recognize the quality of their work, but they would not want a teacher to give their grades to a published author or another student. Plagiarism and cheating occur when a student fails to adequately identify or document what is, and is not, her/his work.

### ***Warning off plagiarism and cheating***

The best way to avoid problems with plagiarism and cheating is to highlight the importance of source citation and to anticipate the ways in which student confusion and difficulties are likely to occur. Discuss the University's expectations for academic integrity when the syllabus is distributed at the beginning of the semester. Return to the topic of academic integrity and discuss examples of what constitutes plagiarism when introducing major assignments in class.

Students stand a better chance of avoiding plagiarism if they know which practices to employ and which to avoid, so discuss ways of documenting sources (both direct and indirect) in writing and speaking assignments. Furthermore, explain source citation as a beneficial practice; focus on the positives of citing sources rather than on the negatives of "cheating." For example, you may say something like this: *Writers use citations in their work in order to not only give credit where credit is due, but also to leave a paper trail for future scholars who are interested in the same topic and want to build and expand upon the work that has already been done.*

To encourage students to turn in original work, design assignments that have unique aspects, thus lessening the opportunity for a student to turn in work that was also submitted for another class. Encourage students to "spread out" by taking alternate seats when writing an exam. Discourage the use of baseball caps or sunglasses—or anything that shields the eyes—during exams. Ask students not to use cell phones in class and especially during exams.

### ***Responding to plagiarism and cheating***

Even if you provide the most careful instruction on this topic, you are likely to encounter instances of plagiarism and cheating during your time as a GTA. **If you have reason to believe that a student has engaged in plagiarism or cheating, the first step you should take is to consult with your Course Supervisor and/or the Teaching Coordinator.** The Course Supervisor will review the incident with you and discuss possible responses. Some of the responses that may be taken include:

- General discussion of plagiarism and cheating with the class (the specific student infraction is not singled out),
- Individual meeting with student, reprimand, and discussion to prevent further occurrence,
- Requirement that the work be repeated,
- Assignment of an "F" for work submitted, or
- Assignment of an "F" for the course.

Whatever the decision and the response, the GTA should keep a clear record of interactions with the student and retain electronic or paper copies of papers and other materials in question.

In addition to the above academic responses, the instructor has the option of taking further action under the Student Conduct Code. The instructor, with support from the Course Supervisor, the Teaching Coordinator, and, if necessary, the Department Chair, will decide if further action should be taken under the Student Conduct Code. For a description of the University recommendations on this process, go to <http://umaine.edu/judicialaffairs/resources-for-faculty/managing-incidents-of-suspected-academic-dishonesty/>.

### **D. Sexual Harassment** (text from: <http://umaine.edu/OSAVP/policy/>)

Sexual harassment undermines the educational climate of the University. For that reason, the University seeks to maintain an environment free of sexual harassment. Common examples of sexual harassment include such things as sexual jokes or teasing, sexually demeaning remarks, pressure for dates, deliberate touching, requests for sex in exchange for grades, etc. This sort of behavior may be part of a pattern of

harassment over time, but you may also be forced to deal with one serious incident. While examples of teachers harassing students illustrate the most obvious type of sexual harassment, another type can be seen in the case of one student harassing another, thereby creating a hostile educational environment. As instructors and University employees, we have the responsibility to identify instances of sexual harassment and to take appropriate action.

According to formal University policy:

Sexual harassment includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, including sexual assault and sexual violence. Sexual harassment, including sexual assault, can involve persons of the same or opposite sex. Consistent with the law, this policy prohibits two types of sexual harassment:

1. Tangible Employment or Educational Action (quid pro quo): This type of sexual harassment occurs when the terms or conditions of employment, educational benefits, academic grades or opportunities, living environment or participation in a University activity are made an explicit or implicit condition of submission to or rejection of unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favors, or such submission or rejection is a factor in decisions affecting an individual's employment, education, living environment, or participation in a University program or activity. Generally, a person who engages in this type of sexual harassment is an agent or employee with some authority conferred by the University.
2. Hostile Environment: Sexual harassment that creates a hostile environment is based on sex and exists when the harassment:
  - Is severe, pervasive, or persistent, and objectively offensive such that it denies or limits a person's ability to participate in or benefit from the University's programs, services, opportunities, or activities; or
  - Unreasonably interferes with an individual's academic or work performance.

Based on this definition, the University discourages romantic or sexual relationships between instructors and students. Further examples and guidelines on sexual harassment can be found in the Student Handbook (see <http://umaine.edu/OSAVP/policy/>).

If you identify an instance of sexual harassment, you must report it to the appropriate University personnel. The Office of Sexual Assault and Violence Prevention (207.581.1406; [elizabeth.lavoie@maine.edu](mailto:elizabeth.lavoie@maine.edu)) is designated by the University to answer questions and respond to concerns about sexual harassment. If an instance of harassment involves the course you teach, you should inform the Course Supervisor as well. When harassment occurs in class, the instructor should make the harasser aware that such action is inappropriate and unwanted. Keep a written record of the incident, including dates, place, time, witnesses, and what was said or done.

## Appendix B: Observations of Teaching

All CMJ GTAs take part in observations of teaching. The faculty and peer observation processes are intended to support all of us in our professional development as teachers and practitioners of communication and journalism. The goal of the observations is not to evaluate, but to describe and help identify our strengths as mentors and educators – qualities and skills that are applicable beyond the academic context. The process is further intended as a way to learn with each other and develop a clear and well-articulated vocabulary of/about teaching as part of your graduate program experience. *Handouts to guide the observation processes are provided following the general descriptions below.*

\* If you wish to be video recorded during an observation session, please let the Teaching Coordinator and your observers know ahead of time. Teaching videos are helpful for your own self-reflection and are occasionally requested as part of job application materials in the academic context.

### Faculty Observation and Support of Teaching

Each semester, the Department Chair will assign faculty members to observe and discuss teaching with GTAs. These assignments are based both on scheduling availability and on an effort to facilitate GTAs' interactions with different faculty members. The steps of the faculty observation process are as follows:

- The Department Chair and the Teaching Coordinator create faculty and GTA pairings.
- The faculty member contacts the GTA to schedule classroom visits (twice during the semester; only once for GTAs in their last semester of teaching).
- Strongly encouraged: The faculty member and the GTA meet before the classroom visit to discuss specific areas of focus, questions, goals, etc.
- Faculty member observes on the agreed-upon dates and record notes (see handouts below).
- After each observed class, the faculty member and the GTA meet to debrief in the form of an open conversation/dialogue rather than an evaluation (see the debriefing questionnaire handout below).
- After the second visit and conversation, the faculty member writes a formative letter that highlights the GTA's teaching strengths, goals, and any recommendations, if relevant. The letter is shared with the GTA, the Teaching Coordinator, the Department Chair, and the Administrative Assistant.

### Peer Observation and Support of Teaching

The peer mentoring observation process should be considered within the time commitment expected of your teaching assistantship and counts toward GTAs' required participation in a teaching community. The steps of the peer observation process are as follows:

- Groups ("teaching triads") of 3 GTAs are formed, based on schedules and availability; the triads schedule class visits **during weeks 4-5 and/or 10-11 of the semester.**
- GTAs conduct observations. Each GTA is **observed by the other 2 together at least once.**
  - Both observing peers are provided with a timeline of the class in 5-minute increments (see below). The timelines are completed descriptively, with each observer recording what she/he sees happening in the classroom.
    - One peer observer completes the timeline **with focus on the instructor.**
    - One peer observer completes the timeline **with focus on the students.**
  - The observers complete observation forms (see below), during the class or shortly after.
- After each observed class, peers meet to debrief in the form of an open conversation/ dialogue rather than an evaluation (see sample guide below).
- GTAs attend an all-GTAs debriefing/reflective meeting in week 6 and in week 12 of the semester
- At the end of the semester, each GTA submits to the Teaching Coordinator short reflective notes (see below), which may also be completed during the week 12 meeting (a Google form link will be sent to ease the completion and collection of reflections).

**Classroom Visit Time Log**

**Date of classroom visit:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Instructor visited:** \_\_\_\_\_

I am completing this log with a focus on (mark one): \_\_\_ **the teacher** \_\_\_ **the students**

<b>Minutes</b>	<b>Descriptive notes: What is happening? What are people doing?</b>
0 – 5	
5.01 – 10	
10.01 - 15	
15.01 - 20	
20.01 - 25	
25.01 - 30	
30.01 - 35	
35.01 - 40	
40.01 - 45	
45.01 - 50	
50.01 - 55	
55.01 - 60	
60.01 - 65	
65.01 - 70	
70.01 - 75	

**Focus on Students' Engagement with Learning: Classroom Visit Form**

(can be completed immediately after the visit based on the time log)

Remember: 1) Arrange your class visit ahead of time. 2) Your visit should last a minimum of 30 minutes; ideally, it should last the whole class period. 3) Remember to schedule a debriefing/feedback conversation after the visit.

Date of Visit: \_\_\_\_\_ Type of Class Visited: \_\_\_\_\_

Time Arrived: \_\_\_\_\_ Time Departed: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>A. What are the students doing?</b>	<b>Amount of Time on Activity:</b>
_____ Receiving information	_____
_____ Applying skills	_____
_____ Practicing new skills	_____
_____ Participating in collaborative activities	_____
_____ Doing homework	_____
_____ Taking test or quiz	_____
_____ Using technology (Specify: _____)	_____
_____ Viewing videos	_____
_____ Presenting information	_____
_____ Using resources other than textbook	_____

**Describe a specific activity/class engagement that you observed. Describe how students seem to respond and/or participate in it:**

**How are students challenged to think and communicate their ideas?**

**What did you observe about the interactions between teacher and students? What about students' interactions with their peers?**

**Other Comments:**



**B. As you observe, what do the students demonstrate?**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interest in subject  | <input type="checkbox"/> Competency in the subject matter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Critical thinking skills                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Ability to follow directions     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Time management skills                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Respect for others               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Self-discipline  | <input type="checkbox"/> Participation from all students  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Expression of personal opinions, ideas, and/or experiences |   |

**Comments:**

**C. As a visitor, what did you gain or learn from this visit?**

**Focus on Instructor's Teaching Practice: Classroom Visit Form**  
(can be completed immediately after the visit based on the time log)

Remember: 1) Arrange your class visit ahead of time. 2) Your visit should last a minimum of 30 minutes; ideally, it should last the whole class period. 3) Remember to schedule a debriefing/feedback conversation after the visit.

Date of Visit: \_\_\_\_\_ Type of Class Visited: \_\_\_\_\_

Time Arrived: \_\_\_\_\_ Time Departed: \_\_\_\_\_

**A. What is the teacher doing?**

**Amount of Time  
on Activity:**

_____ Providing information (e.g., lecture)	_____
_____ Guiding students in applications	_____
_____ Interacting with students (e.g., discussion)	_____
_____ Facilitating collaborative activities	_____
_____ Using technology (Specify: _____)	_____
_____ Viewing videos	_____
_____ Receiving information (e.g., students' reports)	_____
_____ Using resources other than textbook	_____
_____ Other:	_____

**Describe a specific activity/class engagement (may be lecture as well) that you observed. Describe how the teacher introduced and facilitated it:**

**How are students challenged to think and communicate their ideas?**

**What did you observe about the interactions between teacher and students? What about students' interactions with their peers?**

**Other Comments:**

**B. As you observe, what does the teacher demonstrate?**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interest in subject                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Competency in the subject matter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attention to critical thinking              | <input type="checkbox"/> Clarity                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Time management skills                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Respect for others               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attention to collaboration in the classroom |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Facilitating inclusive environment          |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interest in students and their experiences  |   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Interest in students and their knowledge    |   |

**Comments:**

**C. As a visitor, what did you gain or learn from this visit?**

## Post-Observation Conversation

This debriefing/feedback meeting is part of a reflective process of developing contextually-appropriate teaching practices for both the “observed” and the “observers.” The conversation should be a dialogue and a mutual learning opportunity, rather than an evaluation of teaching. The conversation should serve as a basis for the reflective memo to be produced at the end of the semester. You may use the time to:

- **share and discuss observations** (of students and the teacher) in a descriptive manner;
- **talk about questions that consider the unobservable;**
- **discuss and share ideas for teaching strategies and approaches.**

Below are some suggested questions to guide the debriefing conversation – the questions can be asked of the “observed” and the “observers” alike:

- What were the goals (learning, community building, skills, etc.) of the observed class?
- What were the strategies used to achieve these goals?
- How was goal accomplishment assessed? How well do you think the goals were met?
- What was the central topic/content area addressed in the class?
- How were teachers and students positioned in the classroom and in relation to one another? How did teacher and students interact?
- What kinds of topics and ideas were discussed during the class? What kinds of topics and ideas would you like to be discussed in the future?
- At what points and in what ways were students asked to think?
- How does the class relate to students’ previous knowledge/experience?
- What were you most pleased about?
- What did you learn from being in this class?
- What went well? Explain.
- What suggestions/ideas do you have for teaching in the future?
- How do you prepare before entering the classroom? What is your process of teaching preparation?

### “RULES” FOR PEER MENTORING

(from NCSALL’s *Mentor Teacher Group Guide*: [http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/teach/mentor\\_b.pdf](http://www.ncsall.net/fileadmin/resources/teach/mentor_b.pdf))

#### THE STANCE

1. We’re engaging in exploration, not criticism. We’re unraveling a mystery (teaching and learning) together, not monitoring each other.
2. An observed lesson is a shared resource; all participants should take something of value away from any discussion of it.
3. Look for, describe, and assess the practice and its results, not the person’s competence.

#### THE TALK

1. Describe first, discuss details later. First describe what happened, using your data. The teacher can take or leave that. Only then talk about what the results were, and only if the teacher initiates the discussion.
2. Talk specifically and concretely (e.g., “You called on Will three times,” rather than “You tend to call on boys a lot”).
3. Talk about things that can be done differently and discuss what adaptations might be worth making (e.g., ignore personal mannerisms, unless they are interfering with student learning).

4. Remember to comment on strengths. Important learning comes from building on our strengths as well as from addressing areas that need strengthening.
5. Check to ensure clear communication. Paraphrase a lot: “Are you saying that...?” “Let me see if I understand you...”
6. Interact. The basic human interaction skills of attending, listening, responding, and acknowledging are important for both the observer and the teacher.

### **PRE-OBSERVATION QUESTIONS**

1. How can I be of help to you?
2. What specifically do you wish me to look for?
3. What specifically do you wish me to know?
4. Is there a particular student you would like me to watch?
5. What are your objectives and expectations for the lesson?
6. How long would you like me to observe?
7. When can we get together after the lesson?

### **POST-OBSERVATION QUESTIONS**

1. How do you think the lesson went?
2. Can you recall what the students were doing that made you feel this way?
3. What do you remember about what you did or the strategies you used?
4. How does this compare with what you expected would happen?
5. What could be some reasons it happened this way?

### **Written Reflection Based on the Process and Experience of Peer Observation of Teaching**

This is an informal, forward-oriented reflective note that focuses both on your teaching practice and on the experience of the peer observation/mentoring process. These reflective notes should be submitted to the GTA Teaching Coordinator at the end of the semester. Some questions to guide your reflection include:

- What did you learn about teaching and learning in general?
- What did you learn about your own teaching practice (goals, approaches, strengths, etc.) through the peer observation process?
- What surprised you about your teaching and/or about teaching and learning in general?
- What are some challenges you encounter in teaching and in mentoring teaching?
- Did the experience of the peer observation make you want to change something in your classroom and/or teaching practice? Explain.
- What strategies would you like to implement in the future?
- What kind of teaching support will be beneficial to you?
- What specific actions might you take toward adapting your teaching approaches and/or seeking teaching support?

## Appendix C: Sample Teaching Materials

### Syllabus

**PLEASE NOTE:** This is a sample ONLY! At the start of each semester your Course Supervisor and/or the Teaching Coordinator will provide you with a syllabus to use as a foundation for your section specific syllabus.

#### **CMJ 602: Teaching Communication in College Fall 2021 – (some) Tuesdays, 3.30 – 4.50 pm, Dunn Hall 424**

Prof. Lily Herakova

Office: 436 Dunn Hall & zoom: [tinyurl.com/DrLilyHer](https://tinyurl.com/DrLilyHer) ~ E-mail:

[liliana.herakova@maine.edu](mailto:liliana.herakova@maine.edu)

Office Hours: M, Tu, & Th, 11 a.m. – noon; by appointment

**Description:** This course is designed to support CMJ teaching assistants' growth as reflective and effective college teachers. We will consider what is the role of communication in teaching (a field of study known as *instructional communication*), as well as approaches to designing, teaching, and assessing CMJ courses (a field of study known as *communication education*). Through consideration of pedagogical theory and research and through practical exercises and reflection, the course encourages us all to become more thoughtful teachers and create a community around teaching.

**Commitment to Inclusivity & Learning:** This class aspires to be a working and evolving model of inclusion and universal design for all participants. ***If there are circumstances or experiences that may affect your learning in class (e.g., visible and invisible disabilities, personal challenges, class design), please let the course instructor know as soon as possible so that we can discuss and design strategies for inclusion and success together with you.*** Official University accommodations must be documented and arranged through Student Accessibility Services (207-581-2319).

**This class is premised on the belief that we all work together to promote an inclusive learning environment for all and that the use of gross generalizations, stereotypes, and derogatory/oppressive language are not conducive to inclusivity.** Elevating practices of civil communication and learning from one another, please speak up if you observe or experience the use of derogatory and/or oppressive communication (including by the instructor). If you are called-out on the use of oppressive communication, please stop, listen with empathy and expand the learning opportunity for everyone. **You may not agree with the views expressed by others, but we must all agree to respect each individual's right to have and share their own ideas and arguments.** Listening to the perspectives of others creates greater understanding of the diversity of experiences in society.

**Expectations:** Expected time commitment for this course has been adjusted to fit its designation as a 1-credit course. We will be meeting less frequently than most courses and, compared to other graduate courses, will have fewer and/or shorter readings. To succeed in class and in your future teaching, you should:

- Engage with, reflect, and respond to assigned weekly materials before we meet.
- Attend class/Be there for one another (particularly for the teaching demos).
- Bring assigned work with you to class.
- Participate actively in discussion, reflection and/or group activities.
- Be willing to share your thoughts on and experiences of teaching.
- Listen respectfully to others' ideas and experiences.

**Learning materials:** Course materials, including readings, videos, and instructional samples, will be shared in a course folder on Google Drive. Materials in the folders are organized by weeks (see schedule below) but may change depending on your interests and needs as the course progresses. It is your responsibility to review and reflect on materials before our meeting in class.

**Goals/Outcomes:**

<b>Learning Outcome</b>	<b>Activities to Support Learning</b>	<b>Assessment of Learning</b>
List and define the basic principles of learning- and student-centered teaching	Readings, reflections, in-class discussions	Teaching demo; journals; teaching statement
Design and apply formative assessments to evaluate performance in alignment with learning goals	Readings, in-class exercises and feedback	Teaching demo; teaching activity essay
Summarize the principles of Critical Communication Pedagogy (CCP) as praxis	Readings, reflections, in-class discussions	Observation reflection; teaching statement
Apply and critique CCP in terms of its potential and limitations	Readings, teaching experiences	Journals; teaching activity essay; teaching statement
Reflect on and critique personal beliefs and assumptions about teaching and learning	Class discussions, reflections	Journals; teaching statement
Assess approaches to college teaching of communication and journalism	Readings, class discussions, teaching experiences	Observation(s); in-class teaching demos
Develop and refine a process of reflectively documenting teaching activities for personal use and the job market	In-class writing and feedback	Lesson plans & reflections (included in journals); teaching demo; teaching activity essay; teaching statement
Create a supportive and collegial teaching community	In-class conversations and team work; feedback	Team teaching; in-class feedback and discussions

### **Course Assignments → Teaching Portfolio:**

- Teaching journals with lesson plans (100 points) – ongoing; complete at least once a week; collected 3 times in the semester
- Teaching observation of a faculty member or a peer and reflection (100 points)
- In-class team teaching demonstration and feedback (100 points)
- *Communication Teacher (CT)* journal research & activity submission (150 points)
- “Assignment” to assess learning (100 points)
- Teaching statement/philosophy (150 points)

**Note:** This is a “live”/changing syllabus. Since, as a document, the syllabus reflects course vision, design, and organization, you should look at *this* syllabus as a learning playground. Revisions are welcome and encouraged – we can continue to create it and reshape it together to match your needs, experiences, and learning objectives.

## **UNIVERSITY OF MAINE POLICIES**

**Accommodations:** If you have a disability for which you may be requesting an accommodation, please contact Student Accessibility Services, 121 East Annex, 581-2319, as early as possible in the term. Students who have already been approved for accommodations by SAS and have a current accommodation letter should meet with me (the instructor of the course) privately as soon as possible.

**Academic honesty:** Academic honesty is very important. It is dishonest to cheat on exams, to copy term papers, to submit papers written by another person, to fake experimental results, or to copy or reword parts of books or articles into your own papers without appropriately citing the source. Students committing or aiding in any of these violations may be given failing grades for an assignment or for an entire course, at the discretion of the instructor. In addition to any academic action taken by an instructor, these violations are also subject to action under the University of Maine Student Conduct Code. The maximum possible sanction under the student conduct code is dismissal from the University.

**Prolonged illness or absence:** In the event that students must be absent for an extended amount of time due to illness, emergency, tragedy, etc., it is the responsibility of the student to contact the instructor and to maintain communication. Students are urged to do so through University channels such as their dean, advisor, or Student Accessibility Services.

**Sexual discrimination reporting:** The University of Maine is committed to making campus a safe place for students. Because of this commitment, if you tell a teacher about an experience of sexual assault, sexual harassment, stalking, relationship abuse (dating violence and domestic violence), sexual misconduct or any form of gender discrimination



involving members of the campus, your teacher is required to report this information to the campus Office of Sexual Assault & Violence Prevention or the Office of Equal Opportunity.

If you want to talk in confidence to someone about an experience of sexual discrimination, please contact:

For confidential resources on campus: **Counseling Center: 581-1392** or **Cutler Health Center: 581-4000.**

For confidential resources off campus: **Rape Response Services: 1-800-310-0000** or **Partners for Peace: 1-800-863-9909.**

Other resources: The resources listed below can offer support but may have to report the incident to others who can help. For support services on campus: **Office of Sexual Assault & Violence Prevention: 207-581-1406, Office of Community Standards: 207-581-1409, University of Maine Police: 207-581-4040 or 911.** Or see the OSAVP website for a complete list of services at <http://www.umaine.edu/osavp/>

**Observance of religious holidays/events:** The University of Maine recognizes that when students are observing significant religious holidays, some may be unable to attend classes or labs, study, take tests, or work on other assignments. If they provide adequate notice (at least one week and longer if at all possible), these students are allowed to make up course requirements as long as this effort does not create an unreasonable burden upon the instructor, department or University. At the discretion of the instructor, such coursework could be due before or after the examination or assignment. No adverse or prejudicial effects shall result to a student's grade for the examination, study, or course requirement on the day of religious observance. The student shall not be marked absent from the class due to observing a significant religious holiday. In the case of an internship or clinical, students should refer to the applicable policy in place by the employer or site.

**Contingency plan:** In the event of an extended disruption of normal classroom activities, the format for this course may be modified to enable its completion within its programmed time frame. In that event, you will be provided an addendum to the syllabus that will supersede this version.

**COVID-19 prevention:** In response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the University of Maine issues regular guidance and members of the community commit to ensuring their own and others' wellbeing under the Black Bears Care Plan. Currently, all individuals attending in-person classes and events at the University are required to wear face coverings when indoors on campus. Guidance and requirement updates will be posted at: <https://umaine.edu/return/>

## TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

(subject to revision in response to the needs and interests of the class)

### **Week 1, Sept. 7: Introduction**

What is good teaching? What standards apply to Communication and Journalism teaching?  
What is your dream course and how would you teach it?

What is reflexive teaching?

*In class:* 1) Review syllabus: Where do you see yourself entering this class? Where do you see yourself going? 2) Begin drafting a teaching philosophy: What works for you in the classroom? What works to support your learning? What do you think you do (want to do) that supports student learning? What do you aspire to as a teacher? List your three main teaching goals and activities/ideas of how you would accomplish them.

### **Week 2, Sept. 14: Understanding the big picture – a critical perspective on education**

*Readings (on Google Drive):* Freire, ch. 2; Giroux (text or video: <https://youtu.be/gJfK6kBr9GI>); Fassett & Warren, Critical Communication Pedagogy (selections); Wink (selections)

*In class:* Form teaching teams & discuss “subjects” for the demos; Discuss what are the challenges and opportunities of/for communication and journalism education (see below)

*Due:* “Research” popular writing about challenges and opportunities in the contemporary education. Good places to start include: *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Inside Higher Ed*, and education sections and blogs in *NPR*, *The Huffington Post*, *The NYT*, etc. **Bring to class:** A summary of what you found out, a minimum of 3 questions to start a conversation.

*Ongoing:* Journals & drafting/revising the teaching statement

### **Week 3, Sept. 21: Course design and lesson planning – where does critical meet practical?**

*Readings (on Google Drive):* Backward design to learning – goals, approaches, assessment (learning cycle, Bloom’s taxonomy, students’ participation in course design, assessment and evaluation as tools to improve teaching)

*In class:* What are the goals of CMJ education? What are your goals as a learner and teacher of communication and journalism? What are the roles of communication and journalism education in the current socio-political climate? How do you know/How did you learn that?

Due: 1) Begin looking through *Communication Teacher*; 2) Begin planning a possible out of class assignment for your (dream) class or teaching demo and 3) Design a rubric for the assignment

Ongoing: Journals & drafting/revising the teaching statement

#### **Week 4, Sept. 28: Facilitating conversations & using technology to support learning**

Readings (on Google Drive): Classroom communities and/as learning, leading discussions, facilitating conversations, high-tech and low-tech activities inside and outside the classroom

In class: What does inclusion and co-creation of knowledge **really** and **practically** mean in the communication and journalism classroom? What/How do we teach about communication and journalism by structuring classroom interactions?

Due: *Communication Teacher* research & in-class activities discussion

Ongoing: Journals & drafting/revising the teaching statement

#### **Week 5, Oct. 5: “Flipped” models of teaching & learning**

Readings (on Google Drive): Teaching philosophy statements – what & why are they, active learning in an outside of the classroom, flipping the classroom

In class: What do communication and journalism learners gain from active learning approaches? Is active learning in communication and journalism necessarily critical? Should it be?

Due: Draft teaching philosophy (peer review in class)

Ongoing: Journals

#### **Week 6, Oct. 19: Team teaching demos & feedback**

Readings (on Google Drive): None (prep demos)

In class: Team teaching demos

Ongoing: Journals & drafting/revising the teaching statement

Due: Lesson plans for the teaching demos; in-class teaching presentation; draft *CT* submission

### **Week 7, Nov. 2: Service and community-engaged learning**

Readings (on Google Drive): Opportunities, challenges, and critiques of service learning

In class: In what ways can CCP and backward design inform a better service learning education?

Ongoing: Journals & drafting/revising the teaching statement

Due: Draft 2 of the teaching philosophy

### **Week 8, Nov. 16: Teaching large lecture classes**

Readings (on Google Drive): Engaging students in large classes, preparing successful lectures

In class: What makes the large class feel intimate? What lessons are there for/from the studies of communication and journalism?

Due: Revised CT submission draft; Draft assignment/assessment description with rubric

Ongoing: Journals & drafting/revising the teaching statement

### **Week 9, Nov. 30 (or Dec. 7? or both?): Just keep swimming**

Where do we go from here – summaries, visions, suggestions, evaluations, & plans...

Readings (on Google Drive): Faculty Focus report on improving teaching and learning

In-class: Select and be prepared to discuss at least 2 of the strategies in the Faculty Focus report; discuss the strategies in light of 1) what you have learned throughout the semester (in class and/or through practice) and 2) your personal teaching goals and approaches.

Due (no later than 12/11; electronic submissions are ok):

- Portfolio: 1) Teaching philosophy statement – final draft; 2) Approaches to facilitating learning (CT submission final draft + select lesson plans); 3) Approaches to assessing learning (assignment design final draft with rubric)
- All journals & observation reflections

## Lesson Plans

Lesson plans help teachers purposefully organize class time and keep a record of teaching approaches. Lesson planning reduces course-prep time in the future, as you can adapt and edit an already existing plan rather than trying to remember what you did in the past and/or create a new plan. Furthermore, should you ever need someone to substitute for you in class, lesson plans are an effective way to support the colleague who is substituting for you and to ensure continuity of learning for the students. Additionally, lesson plans developed by more experienced teachers are helpful resources for new GTAs. *As you develop your lesson plans and experience their success in the classroom, please share them with our community of teachers via the Google Drive folder!*

There are many ways to document lesson planning and you should both experiment and talk with others to find out what works for you. The template and samples below offer a starting point.

### Sample Lesson Plan Template

**Lesson Topic:**

**Class name:**

**Semester:**

**Goal:**

**Rationale:**

Instructional Objectives (for the class session):

Performance Criteria (to assess the degree to which the instructional objectives are met):

On Board (what students will see):

Detailed Plan for the Day (with approximate times/duration of each part/activity):

Synthesis (to conclude the class):

**Sample Lesson Plan: Classroom Environment Lesson**  
**Introduction to College Teaching, Fall...**

**Goal:** To understand the concept of a learner-centered classroom and to learn techniques for creating and maintaining such a classroom environment.

**Rationale:** Research shows that students learn better in an environment that is deliberately centered on them. Many new teachers feel overwhelmed and neglect the classroom environment as an element of successful learning. It is important to recognize the benefits of a healthy classroom environment and to learn simple ways to create such a climate for students.

**Instructional Objectives - Students will be able to:**

- give examples of interaction strategies they can employ to improve the classroom environment.
- give examples of physical changes that can be made to classroom environments to make them more learner-centered.
- articulate why it is important to create and maintain a learner-centered classroom environment.

**Performance Criteria:**

-Classroom observation    -In-class activities    -Reflective one-minute essay.

**On Board:**

-Topic introduction activity  
-Learner-centered classroom environment  
-Blackboard discussions  
-Synthesis/Essay

1. **Topic Introduction Activity (9 – 10 mins)**
  1. Students will turn the room into an environment in which they prefer to learn. If there was one thing you could do to make this environment more productive for your learning, what would it be? Students will have an active role in changing the room. Each student must act out his or her preference. (THINKING, DOING AND FEELING)
  2. Students will share what they did to change the room. Preferences will be written on white board. (DOING AND WATCHING)
  3. Why were these changes made? Why are these changes important to you? What works and what could work better? (FEELING)
  4. Synthesize:
2. **Learner-Centered Classroom Environment and Blackboard Discussions (14 mins)**
  - a. Define “learner-centered,” “physical environment,” and “interactive environment” - w/slide (WATCHING AND THINKING)
  - b. Divide into small groups. Each group should come up with a list of specific examples of a learner-centered classroom that used (both physical and) interactive environment strategies. Pros and cons of such. (FEELING AND DOING)
  - c. Synthesis and discussion based on Bb posts. Kohn’s crib sheet, humor and immediacy. Write on board. (THINKING, WATCHING, AND FEELING)
3. **Reflective Synthesis, Questions and Comments (5 minutes)**
  - a. Each student will write on a sheet of paper the following
    1. What he or she learned in class- specify 1 or 2 concepts;
    2. What he or she thought went well;
    3. What could be improved?
  - b. Ask each student to share with the rest of the class one important “lesson” he or she learned in class today.
  - c. Questions or comments from class
  - d. Take home point: Think about what you would do differently or do the same when you team-teach keeping a learner-centered classroom environment in mind.

**Sample Lesson Plan: Toulmin Model**  
**Class name: CMJ 103 Public Communication**  
**Semester: Fall 2016**  
**Contributed by Adam Goldsmith**

**Goal:** To understand the components of the Toulmin model, construct all of the components of the model for a particular claim, and analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the model.

**Rationale:** Many people hold beliefs and truths that they have not meaningfully reflected upon or critically analyzed. When thinking about arguments, what is often overlooked are the merits of the evidence and the care required to make even the most trivial claims. Therefore, by engaging with this model, students will begin to reflect upon the necessary depth required for argumentation and perhaps critique their own understandings of the world.

Instructional Objectives (for the class session):

- Students will be able to define each component of the Toulmin model
- Students will work together to create an argument using all of the components of the Toulmin model
- Students will critique the model
- Students will reflect upon the experience of constructing an argument using this model

Performance Criteria (to assess the degree to which the instructional objectives are met):

- Classroom Observation
- In-class activity
- 5-minute reflective essay

On Board (what students will see):

- Lecture (w/ slides)
- Generating a Toulmin model
- Reflective Essay

Detailed Plan for the Day (with approximate times/duration of each part/activity):

1. Lecture on the Toulmin Model (13-15 minutes)
  1. Claim
  2. Grounds
  3. Warrant
  4. Backing
  5. Potential Rebuttal
  6. Verifier
  7. Qualifier
2. Group Activity (10-15 minutes)

Students will collaborate to generate a specific argument following all of the pieces from the Toulmin model
3. Class Discussion on Work (15min)
  - a. Students share what they have created and discuss their experience
  - b. Class evaluates the model based on experience with Instructor guidance

Synthesis (to conclude the class) (5-7 minutes)

Each student will write on a sheet of paper the following & then synthesize as a large group

1. What key concepts did you learn today (specifying one or two concepts)?
2. How did it feel using the model? What challenges are there to using this model?
3. What might the model indicate about our everyday way of making claims? Why?