

Econ 593x
Practicum in Teaching (TA Training in Economics)
Fall 2023

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Office Hours: Mon, Tue: 2:30-3:30 PM

This class will be offered fully in person. This is an important course for all graduate students and is required for new teaching assistants.

Your efforts and assistance are very instrumental for getting our students:

- (a) into good study habits,
- (b) to be able to appreciate the usefulness of the concepts and tools to which they are introduced,
- (c) to feel comfortable in applying the learning outcomes to different problems and the real world
- (d) to hopefully develop a passion for the subject that will carry them throughout the major and/or prepare them to draw on economics in other courses.

This course is designed to achieve the goals above and improve your teaching proficiency by helping you fulfill each of the following tasks:

- 1) communicate effectively with their students whether in class or online,
- 2) draw up effective lesson plans,
- 3) become familiar with the pros and cons of different approaches to teaching,
- 4) teach at a level appropriate for USC undergraduate students,
- 5) organize TA sections in ways designed to reinforce key ideas and methods taught by the professor
- 6) display enthusiasm and responsiveness to student queries
- 7) either avoid or mitigate as much as possible problems that may arise during the semester,
- 8) get practice in
 - (a) covering important concepts in the class you are or will be teaching
 - (b) providing clear and understandable answers to quiz or exam questions,
 - (c) introducing breakthrough ideas that has led to a particular Nobel Prize award in economics
 - (d) covering the topics that you are most excited about and why you are excited about them.

Each class will involve 20–30-minute presentations by two students followed by 20 minute discussions. Chapters from the two textbooks below to be presented will be assigned by random assignment.

Textbooks

(Tips) McKeachie, Wilbert and Marilla Svinicki, 2006, McKeachie's Teaching Tips

(Tools) Gross Davis, Barbara 1993. Tools for Teaching

During each week we will save time for discussing collectively problems that you as TAs are having with students, faculty etc. Hence, please make note of any such issues before class. Among these issues may be attendance problems of students, confidentiality issues, no shows for appointments, how to encourage students who are having problems in the class, how to deal with students who talk or disrupt in class, how to maintain attention of all students, complaints about grading, etc.

This course is graded as Credit/No Credit and being an active participant and contributor to the collective learning experience will earn you the credit.

Schedule of Classes and Topics

Week 1: Course Introduction and General Guidelines for Success as a TA

Week 2: Inspiration and Motivation for why your performance as a TA is important not only for you but for the Department and University. Hear Reports from our faculty on problems that they have had with TAs and what they expect of them.

Week 3. Preparing for a course and meeting students for the first time

Presentation 1: Tips: 1, 2, 3

Presentation 2: Tools: I, II

Week 4. Facilitating learning and motivating students Part I

Presentation 3: Tips: 4, 5, 6

Presentation 4: Tools: III, IV

Week 5. Facilitating learning and motivating students Part II

Presentation 5: Tips: 11, 12, 13

Presentation 6: Tools: V, VII

Week 7: Testing part I

Presentation 7: Tips: 7,8,9,10

Presentation 8: Tools: VII, VIII

Week 8: Testing part II

Discussing grading samples

Week 9: Teaching Repertoire Part I

Presentation 9: Tips: 14, 15, 16

Presentation 10: Tools: X, XI

Week 10: Teaching Repertoire Part II

Presentation 11: Tips: 18 19

Presentation 12: Tips 17, Tools IX

Weeks 11: Higher Goals (Collective discussion)

Tips: 20,21,22,23

Tools: XII

Weeks 12-15

Presenting a Nobel prize winning research or some other topic you are passionate about at a level appropriate for you students.

3 presentations of 20 minutes with 5-minute discussions

Week 12: P 1-3

Week 13: P 4-6

Week 14: P 7-9

Week 15: P 10-12

Key Reference Materials

1. (TIPS) McKeachie, Wilbert and Marilla Svinicki, 2006. ,McKeachie' Teaching Tips, Twelfth Edition. New York: Houghton Mifflin.
2. (TOOLS) Gross Davis, Barbara 1993. Tools for Teaching. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

Other helpful resources

1. Curzan, Anne and Lisa Damour 2000. First Day to Final Grade: A Graduate Student's Guide to Teaching. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan Press A rather unique feature of this book is that it is written by two former TAs and is aimed at TAs preparing for their first course
2. Cabone, Elisa 1998. Teaching Large Classes: Tools and Strategies Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications
3. Nobelprize.org All prizes in Economic Sciences, www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/economic-sciences/laureates
4. Annenberg/CPB The Economics Classroom 2002 Corporation for Public Broadcasting. (a prep aimed at teachers of Advanced Placement Courses I High school/ good for transition to undergrad courses in economics)
5. Race, Phil and Sally Brown. 2005 500 Tips for Tutors, Second Edition New York: Routledge This book has a lot of useful guidelines as to what not to do: e.g., not to overemphasize powerpoint, what not to do in opowerpoint, how to prevent students from taking bad notes,
6. Kerns, Barbara et al Bradley University . 2008 Ten Principles of Effective Teaching and Practical Examples for the Classroom and Online .
7. Lubawy, W.C. 2003 "Evaluating Teachers Using the Best Practice Model", American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education 67 (3)
8. Tauber, Robert and Cathy Mester 2007 Acting Lessons for Teachers: Using Performance Skills in the Classroom. Praeger, 2nd Edition.
9. Chickering A. and Z. Gamson 1987. Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education American Academy of Higher Education Bulletin 39 (7)
10. American Library Association 2004 TEACH Act Best Practices Using Blackboard <http://www.ala.org/washoff/teach.html>
11. Kelsky, Karen 2015 The Professor Is In, The Essential Guide for Turning You PhD into a Job. New York : Three Rivers Press.

Everyone must also consult the CET website

<http://cet.usc.edu/resources/teaching-assistant-resources/>