

SSCI 693, Practicum in Teaching the Liberal Arts

Syllabus

Units: 2

Term Day Time: Fall 2023, Wednesdays, 12:00-1:50pm

Location: TBA/TBD

Instructor: Robert O. Vos, PhD, GISP

Office: AHF 57B

Regular Office Hours: Mon 9:30-10:30 am and Fri 1-2 pm.
Also available by appointment via email.

Contact Info: vos@usc.edu, 213-821-1311, see the
Blackboard contact tab for my Zoom office room

Library Help: Andy Rutkowski

Office: LIPA B40-A

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Blackboard for Zoom Room

IT Help: Myron Medalla

Office: AHF B56B

Office Hours: By appointment via email

Contact Info: spatial_support@usc.edu, 213-740-2775

Course Scope and Purpose

This course encompasses both the general skills needed to teach successfully in an undergraduate, liberal arts setting and reflects on the special opportunities, challenges, and technologies that are engaged in learning spatial thinking and building spatial citizenship. Many disciplines, even geography for example, have taken a “spatial turn” in the past two decades, driven by new concepts oriented around space and place, powerful new analytical tools, and a burgeoning multitude of spatial datasets with rapidly increasing precision and accuracy.

The first half of the course focuses on quick preparation of key skills needed to run successful discussion sections and labs. Although the first half of the courses focuses on practical skills for teaching assistants, the overarching goal of the course is to provide a springboard for students to become thoughtful scholar-teachers who will soon meet with success as primary instructors. Thus, the second-half of the semester begins by reflecting on the relationship between teaching and research. It focuses further on course design, syllabus preparation, assignment design, and discussion of how the practice of grading connects with assignment design.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Relate to undergraduate students from diverse backgrounds, leveraging diversity to enhance scholarship and learning.
- Demonstrate a repertoire of techniques for leading and advancing classroom discussion.
- Handle issues of learning disabilities, academic integrity, and the undergraduate student’s social and intellectual development that may arise in a typical General Education (GE) course or upper division departmental course.
- Keep a lab section on track for students to complete a lab using required software and produce a laboratory report that exhibits mastery of learning objectives.
- Engage a discussion section in ways that lead to mastery of course material and improve critical thinking skills.
- Develop a syllabus and sample assignments for an undergraduate or graduate course in the domain of *Population, Health, and Place* that can be used as part of a teaching portfolio on the job market and in early teaching experiences.
- Compete on the teaching-related portion of an academic hiring process.

Prerequisite(s): None

Co-Requisite (s): None

Concurrent Enrollment: None

Recommended Preparation: Enrollment in USC's Population, Health, and Place Program

Class Conduct

Harassment, sexual misconduct, interpersonal violence, and stalking are not tolerated by the university. All faculty and most staff are considered Responsible Employees by the university and must forward all information they receive about these types of situations to the Title IX Coordinator. The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for assisting students with supportive accommodations, including academic accommodations, as well as investigating these incidents if the reporting student wants an investigation. The Title IX office is also responsible for coordinating supportive measures for transgender and nonbinary students such as faculty notifications, and more. If you need supportive accommodations, you may contact the Title IX Coordinator directly (titleix@usc.edu or 213-821-8298) without sharing any personal information with me. If you would like to speak with a confidential counselor, Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) provides 24/7 confidential support for students (213-740-9355 (WELL); press 0 after hours).

Diversity and Inclusion – It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course, that students’ learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength, and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful to everyone, and you are also expected to respect others regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender identity and expressions, cultural beliefs, religion, sexual orientation, national origin, age, abilities, ideas and perspectives, or socioeconomic status. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. Feel free to let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students.

Course Structure

This course is designed to be taken concurrently with the first semester that a graduate student serves as a teaching assistant. As such, much of the course focuses on readings and practical exercises that often do “double-duty” with preparation of labs or discussion sections and grading tasks that must be accomplished in the normal flow of a semester. All students in this class will participate in several common components including leading discussions of course readings and practical activities like carefully guided observation of lectures, discussion sections, and labs. Also, students will practice teaching skills during our class meetings (e.g., giving lectures, grading according to rubrics, and leading labs and discussions).

There are two options for the final project for the course. Students may **either** produce a syllabus in alignment with the student’s research and teaching interests **or** students may produce a new spatial sciences lab that makes use of GIST technology.

Workload – This is a two credit, one semester course. Students should expect to spend two hours in the classroom and four hours outside of class. Every effort will be made to ensure that the hours spent outside of class are relevant to accomplishing coterminous teaching assistant tasks.

Technological and Communication Requirements

All course materials will be organized through Blackboard. Students in this course should have at minimum a basic, working knowledge of the ArcGIS software suite. The computer technologies required for this class can be accessed through the SSI server, provided that a fast Internet connection is available. Relative to other courses in your Ph.D. program, work on GIS software is not expected to be a major component of activity in this course. However, when it is required, you can access the Spatial Sciences Institute server using the instructions provided on the course Blackboard site. If you are unable to connect to the server or experience any type of technical issues and need support in carrying out your teaching assistant duties, send an email spatial_support@usc.edu and make sure to copy (cc) me. SSI Technology Support is responsible for making sure the hardware and software are accessible and operating properly, but questions about how to use the software are answered by SSI faculty or by you as a teaching assistant.

Required Readings and Supplementary Materials

The required textbooks for this course are:

- Nilson, Linda B. 2016. *Teaching at Its Best: A Research-Based Resource for College Instructors*. 4th ed. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. (~\$30-40 paper; ISBN 978-1-119-10780-4)
- Solari, Osvaldo Muniz, Ali Demirci, and Joop van der Schee, eds. 2015. *Geospatial Technologies and Geography Education in a Changing World: Geospatial Practices and Lessons Learned*. New York, NY: Springer. (~\$60-70 hardcover, ISBN 978-4-431-55518-6, and as an e-book at the USC library: <https://libproxy.usc.edu/login?url=http://link.springer.com/10.1007/978-4-431-55519-3>)

One optional textbook for this course is:

- Curzan, Anne, and Lisa Damour. 2011. *First Day to Final Grade: A Graduate Student's Guide to Teaching*. 3rd ed. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press. (~\$20-30 paper; ISBN 978-0-472-03451-2)

Supplementary readings will be assigned from various sources including:

- Carroll, David W. 2012. "Ethical Considerations in Providing Accommodations for Students with Disabilities." In *Teaching Ethically: Challenges and Opportunities*, edited by Eric Landrum and Maureen A. McCarthy, 125-135. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.
- Harrell, Maralee. 2005. "Grading According to a Rubric." *Teaching Philosophy* 28, no. 1: 3-15.
- Domenech-Rodriguez, Melanie M. and Scott C. Bates. 2012. "Aspiring to Ethical Treatment of Diverse Student Populations." In *Teaching Ethically: Challenges and*

Opportunities, edited by Eric Landrum and Maureen A. McCarthy, 101-123. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.

- Johns, Ann M., and Maureen Kelly Sipp. 2004. *Diversity in College Classrooms: Practices for Today's Campuses*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Longcore, Travis. 2016. "GIST in Undergraduate Capstone Research Projects in Environmental Science." In *STEM and GIS in Higher Education*, edited by David J. Cowen, Chapter 9 (1-19). Redlands, CA: Esri Press.
- Prokoshka, Vincent. 2012. "Strategies for Encouraging Ethical Student Behavior." In *Teaching Ethically: Challenges and Opportunities*, edited by Eric Landrum and Maureen A. McCarthy, 79-88. Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association.
- Ruscio, Kenneth P. 2013. "What Does It Mean to Be a Teacher-Scholar?" *Peer Review* 15, no. 3 (Summer): 27-28.
- Warshawsky, Daniel. 2016. "Teaching GIS in the Classroom: Story Maps as a Case Study." In *STEM and GIS in Higher Education*, edited by David J. Cowen, Chapter 10 (1-10). Redlands, CA: Esri Press.
- Washington, Pat. 2004. "Community-Based Service Learning: Actively Engaging the Other." In *Diversity in College Classrooms: Practices for Today's Campuses*, edited by Ann M. Johns and Maureen Kelly Sipp, 209-231. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Description and Assessment of Assignments

Weekly Assignments

The following assignments in this course will be assessed quickly and thoroughly to ensure progress and confidence in the classroom.

Discussion Leadership – 3 worth a total of 12 points. From weeks 6-13, each student will lead discussions on readings assigned for four of the weeks. These weeks and specific readings will be identified at the first meeting of the class.

Lesson Plans– 2 worth a total of 10 points. In these two assignments, students will prepare one discussion and one lab. For the *Lesson Plan #1* assignment, students must create the lesson plan for either the first discussion or the first lab they will lead in this course in which they are a teaching assistant this semester. For the *Lesson Plan #2* assignment, students must prepare a lesson plan for whichever type of class section (discussion or lab) they did not prepare for the first assignment.

Short Lecture Presentation – 1 worth 5 points. In this assignment, students will prepare a 10-minute lecture suitable for an undergraduate audience. The topic is open to each student's choice, but some synergy may be achieved by picking a concept which will need to be covered in a discussion, lab, or exam review session later in the semester in a lecture format.

Grading Rubric – 1 worth 5 points. Students will prepare a grading rubric for a sample undergraduate writing assignment. The rubrics will be discussed in class, and then a single final rubric will be constructed. During our class meeting, sample undergraduate responses will be graded according to the final rubric for comparison.

Scholar-Teacher Career Map – 1 worth 5 points. Students will identify an exemplary, senior scholar-teacher in their field and will make a conceptual map of this individual's career path. The maps will be based on review of curriculum vita, biographical statements, personal websites, syllabi, and publications to convey an understanding of any ways in which the exemplar's research has informed his or her teaching and vice versa

Observation Report– 1 worth 5 points. Students will write a short report based on visiting a USC undergraduate class that reflects on the teaching modes and methods employed by the instructor and that reflects on successes and areas for improvement.

Teaching Portfolio Outline– 1 worth 5 points. Students will provide an outline for a teaching portfolio to use on the job market. The outline will include both previous teaching experience and evidence of teaching success (if any), as well as anticipated experience and documentation of classroom performance. The major objective is to organize students to develop and gather documents they will need for the academic job market.

Class Participation–1 worth 8 points. Students are expected to carefully reflect on each week's reading and arrive at class prepared to critically discuss key concepts in relation to their work as teaching assistants and the assignments in this course

Students will **choose two of the following three** assignments to complete:

Geospatial Technology Sample Assignment – 7.5 or 0 points. Students will outline a sample assignment, such as a lab or field exercise, that uses geospatial technology. The exact type of sample assignment is flexible. The assignment should identify either “canned datasets” that could be prepared for the students from existing data resources or clearly reference the steps students would take to access and use existing data resources. Do **not** choose this assignment if you choose to write a lab as your final project in this course.

Non-Geospatial Technology Sample Assignment – 7.5 or 0 points. Students will produce a sample assignment or examination that does not directly use geospatial technology. At this point in the course, students will have been introduced to a variety of types of teaching methods and associated assignments. The exact type of sample assignment is flexible. If you are writing a syllabus for your final project, you might connect this assignment to that project.

Alternative Teaching Method Demonstration – 7.5 or 0 points. Students will prepare a lesson using a learner-centered teaching method of their choice other than discussion or lab. The student should provide a brief written document of the learning objectives and teaching modes invoked. The lesson will be taught during our class meeting and whatever written materials (if any) are required to execute the lesson should be submitted at class.

Final Project

The final project in this course will consist of **either** drafting a syllabus for a course that you would like to teach early in your career **or** drafting a lab that makes use of GIST. The three components of the project are:

Sketch of Syllabus or Lab – 5 points. Students will produce a sketch of the course they will develop for their final project. Students will write a draft of the course description, learning objectives, and an abbreviated bullet list of weekly topics. Students will also give an oral presentation of this sketch during class in the week in which it is due for seminar discussion. For the sketch of the lab, see the geospatial technology sample assignment.

Final Project Written - 15 points. This document will consist of a fully developed syllabus or lab document. The syllabus should be suitable to enter the curriculum review process at USC or another institution, and it must be prepared according to USC and Spatial Science Institute formatting requirements. It will be evaluated for overall quality and innovation in course design. The lab must be of similar quality and suitable for classroom use.

Final Project Presentation- 10 points. Students will give a brief oral presentation of their course or lab and how it connects with their research interests as preparation for job interviews. The presentation will be evaluated by how compelling a case student can make that the proposed course or lab is coherently linked to his or her research interests.

Grading Breakdown

Assessment	Number	Points Each	Total Points
Weekly Assignments			
Discussion Leadership	3	4	12
Lesson Plans	2	5	10
Short Lecture Presentation	1	5	5
Grading Rubric	1	5	5
Scholar-Teacher Career Map	1	5	5
Observation Report	1	5	5
Teaching Portfolio Outline	1	5	5
Class Participation	1	8	8
Geospatial Technology Sample Assignment	1 or 0	7.5 or 0	7.5 or 0
Alternative Teaching Method Demonstration	1 or 0	7.5 or 0	7.5 or 0
Alternative Sample Assignment	1 or 0	7.5 or 0	7.5 or 0
Project Components			
Sketch of Syllabus or Lab	1	5	5
Final Project (Presentation)	1	10	10
Final Project (Written)	1	15	15
Total			
	17	-	100

Additional Policies

A successful practicum depends on the preparation and participation of students at each class meeting. For leading discussions of course readings, students should strive to consider the following:

- *Central theme* – organize your presentation in terms of central themes or main points in the readings you are covering. Please relate the reading to the theme of that week’s class, your ongoing experiences as teaching assistants, and with assignments in this course.
- *Connections to teaching in our discipline* – think of the central themes in terms of what they mean for teaching generally in the spatial sciences and specifically in the domain of *Population, Health, and Place*.
- *Critical Evaluation* – carefully assess the practical implications of the teaching methods and ideas in the reading.
- *Questions* – raise questions and ideas needing clarification.

Schedule

	Topic	Readings and Assignments	Deliverables/ Due Dates
Week 1 8/23	Introduction: Introduction to the course and to lesson planning. Preparation for introducing yourself to your students. Initial survey of spatial thinking in education.	Curzan and Damor (2011), Ch. 1 -3 Nilson (2016) Ch. 7	Lesson Plan #1
Week 2 8/30	Leading Discussions and Labs: Discussion of common principles to successfully plan and lead discussion and lab sections that complement lecture sections.	Curzan and Damor (2011), Ch. 4-5 & pages 107-113 Solari et al. (2015), Ch. 3 & 7 Nilson (2016) Ch. 9 & 13	Lesson Plan #2
Week 3 9/6	Classroom Observations <i>(No Class Meeting)</i>	Nilson (2016) Ch. 1, 12, & 23	Observation Report
Week 4 9/13	Engaging Students: Reflection on teaching to date, including how to draw out taciturn students. <i>Activity:</i> Short lecture presentations with feedback.	(Review of Weeks 2 & 3 Readings)	Short Lecture Presentation
Week 5 9/20	Grading: Key principles of student feedback and grading. The use of grading rubrics for consistency and efficiency. <i>Activity:</i> Parallel grading using a rubric with comparison.	Curzan and Damor (2011), Ch. 7 Nilson (2016) Ch. 27 Harrell (2005) <i>Grading According to a Rubric</i>	Grading Rubric

	Topic	Readings and Assignments	Deliverables/ Due Dates
Week 6 9/27	The Scholar-Teacher: The relationship between research and teaching in the spatial sciences, strategies for time management, and course design/syllabus preparation. <i>Activity:</i> Brainstorm for the final project.	Nilson (2016) Ch. 2-3 & 5 Curzan and Damour (2011) Ch. 11 Ruscio (2013) <i>What Does it Mean to Be a Teacher-Scholar?</i>	Scholar-Teacher Career Path Map
Week 7 10/2	Using Instructional Technology: Technology across modes of instruction and the role of technology in the “flipped classroom.”	Nilson (2016) Ch. 4	
Week 8 10/11	Using Geospatial Technology in Instruction: A survey of emerging opportunities and challenges in using geospatial technologies and two practical examples of use of such technology with undergraduates	Solari et al. (2015) Ch. 15 & 17 Warshawsky (2016) <i>Teaching GIS in the Classroom: Story Maps as a Case Study</i> Longcore (2016) <i>GIST in Undergraduate Capstone Projects in Environmental Sciences</i>	Geospatial Technology Sample Assignment
Week 9 10/18	Alternative Types of Teaching Modes and Methods: This week we discuss a range of modes of and methods of instruction other than discussion, lecture, or labs (e.g., inquiry-guided learning, case methods, problem-based learning, and thesis advising.) <i>Activity:</i> Students will design a short lesson using an alternative teaching method and teach it at class the next week.	Nilson (2016) Ch. 14 (pp. 167-174), 16-19, 25, & 22	Sketch of Final Project Syllabus or Lab

	Topic	Readings and Assignments	Deliverables/ Due Dates
Week 10 10/25	Types of Assignments: This week will connect assignments to teaching methods and student feedback. We will cover exams, experiential assignments, and team projects. <i>Activity:</i> Teaching with alternative method	Curzan and Damor, Ch. 6 Nilson (2016) Ch. 14, 15, 20, 21 & 26 Washington (2004)	Alternative Teaching Method Demonstration
Week 11 11/1	Academic Integrity: Key tools and approaches for reducing academic integrity violations, USC's SJACS process. <i>Activity:</i> Writing test questions	Nilson (2016) Ch. 10 Prohaska (2012) <i>Strategies for Encouraging Ethical Behavior</i>	Alternative Sample Assignment
Week 12 11/8	Teaching Inclusively for Diverse Student Populations: We will consider the challenges and how to leverage the virtues of diversity to enhance learning. Here will consider diversity in its broadest possible sense to include race, class, culture, religion, language, gender, sexual orientation, and disability	Curzan and Damor (2011), Ch. 8 Johns and Sipp (2004) <i>Diversity in College Classrooms</i> , Preface and Ch. 1-3 Domenech et al. (2012) <i>Aspiring to Ethical Treatment of Diverse Student Populations</i> Carroll (2012) <i>Ethical Considerations in Providing Accommodations for Students with Disabilities</i>	
Week 13 11/15	Teaching Assessments and Portfolios: Discussion of strategies and tools to assess and improve quality of teaching. Discussion of the role of teaching portfolios and your own plans to develop them.	Curzan and Damour (2011) Ch. 9 & 10 Solari et al. (2015) Ch. 12 Nilson (2016) Ch. 28	Portfolio Outline
Week 14 11/22* *11/22-11/27 is a university holiday	No Class Meeting		

	Topic	Readings and Assignments	Deliverables/ Due Dates
Week 15 11/29	The Scholar-Teacher Revisited: How will teaching complement research and research complement teaching in your career path?		Presentation of Final Projects Final Projects Due on Friday, December 1
Final Exams	Meetings with lead instructors to determine final grades.		

Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Integrity

The University of Southern California is a learning community committed to developing successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the dissemination of ideas. Academic misconduct, which includes any act of dishonesty in the production or submission of academic work, comprises the integrity of the person who commits the act and can impugn the perceived integrity of the entire university community. It stands in opposition to the university's mission to research, educate, and contribute productively to our community and the world.

All students are expected to submit assignments that represent their own original work, and that have been prepared specifically for the course or section for which they have been submitted. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s).

Other violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), collusion, knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching and is considered a serious offense against the university. All incidences of academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the university.

For more information about academic integrity see [the student handbook](#) or the [Office of Academic Integrity's website](#), and university policies on [Research and Scholarship Misconduct](#).

Please ask your instructor if you are unsure what constitutes unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment, or what information requires citation and/or attribution.

Students and Disability Accommodations:

USC welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student has completed the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and accommodations are determined to be reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at osas.usc.edu. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

Support Systems:

[Counseling and Mental Health](#) - (213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

[988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline](#) - 988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on call

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline is comprised of a national network of over 200 local crisis centers, combining custom local care and resources with national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (though the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely) and represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

[Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services \(RSVP\)](#) - (213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on call

Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

[Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX \(EEO-TIX\)](#) - (213) 740-5086

Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

[Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment](#) - (213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298

Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) - (213) 740-0776

OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities through providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids in accordance with federal laws and university policy.

USC Campus Support and Intervention - (213) 740-0411

Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion - (213) 740-2101

Information on events, programs and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on call

Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-1200 – 24/7 on call

Non-emergency assistance or information.

Office of the Ombuds - (213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)

A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice - (323) 442-2850 or otfp@med.usc.edu

Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.