



GEOL 593: Practicum in Teaching the Liberal Arts (and Intro Grad Seminar)

Units: 2

Fall 2024—Monday—Time: 10:00-11:50 AM

Location: ZHS 118

Instructors:

Heidi Houston

Office: ZHS 101

Office Hours: by appointment

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Michelle Zill

Office: ZHS 117C

Office Hours: by appointment

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Course Description

The purpose of this course is to learn skills to become an effective teaching assistant, graduate researcher, and member of the scientific community. This will be accomplished by a combination of lectures, readings, discussions, and self-assessment. Another goal of the course is to get to know your cohort and become familiar with the Department of Earth Sciences at USC and what is expected of you to obtain a PhD.

Learning Objectives

1. Develop practical skills to use as TAs in a range of scenarios
2. Learn about opportunities for support, outreach, and engagement at USC
3. Practice science communication, scientific idea development, scientific writing
4. Develop a relationship with your cohort and get to know your peers
5. Learn to identify goals, evaluate personal progress, and refine personal expectations—
What it takes to be a PhD student and what it takes to get a PhD

Course Notes

Grading: This course is credit/no credit. To receive credit you must attend class, participate, and complete all assignments.

Reading: There will be various reading assignments. These will be provided to you. There are no required texts.

Description and Assessment of Assignments

- Irregular Readings
 - These will be assigned the week before they are due. You should read the material and be prepared to discuss in class.
- Frequent Surveys
 - Some weeks you will be required to participate in a google form survey to prepare for the next class's topic.
- Practice science communication

- You will explore the various ways science is communicated through TAing, elevator pitches, and preparing a presentation

Assignment Submission Policy

- Assignments should be turned in via Brightspace, unless otherwise specified.

Additional Policies

- Attendance is required. Since this is a credit/no credit class, your attendance is very important for your grade. If you are going to miss class for any reason please notify the instructor in class or by email and we can discuss how you will make up the material you missed.

Academic Integrity

The University of Southern California is foremost a learning community committed to fostering successful scholars and researchers dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and the transmission of ideas. Academic misconduct is in contrast to the university's mission to educate students through a broad array of first-rank academic, professional, and extracurricular programs and includes any act of dishonesty in the submission of academic work (either in draft or final form).

This course will follow the expectations for academic integrity as stated in the [USC Student Handbook](#). All students are expected to submit assignments that are original work and prepared specifically for the course/section in this academic term. You may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s). Students suspected of engaging in academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

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

Academic dishonesty has a far-reaching impact and is considered a serious offense against the university. Violations will result in a grade penalty, such as a failing grade on the assignment or in the course, and disciplinary action from the university itself, such as suspension or even expulsion.

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.

This course aims to develop creative, analytical, and critical thinking skills. Therefore, all assignments should be prepared by the student working individually or in groups. Students may not have another person or entity complete any substantive portion of the assignment. Developing strong competencies in these areas will prepare you for a competitive workplace. Therefore, using AI-generated text, code, or other content is prohibited in this course, will be identified as plagiarism, and will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity.

Course Content Distribution and Synchronous Session Recordings Policies

USC has policies that prohibit recording and distribution of any synchronous and asynchronous course content outside of the learning environment.

Recording a university class without the express permission of the instructor and announcement to the class, or unless conducted pursuant to an Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) accommodation.

Recording can inhibit free discussion in the future, and thus infringe on the academic freedom of other students as well as the instructor. ([Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook](#), page 13).

Distribution or use of notes, recordings, exams, or other intellectual property, based on university classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than individual or group study. This includes but is not limited to providing materials for distribution by services publishing course materials. This restriction on unauthorized use also applies to all information, which had been distributed to students or in any way had been displayed for use in relation to the class, whether obtained in class, via email, on the internet, or via any other media. Distributing course material without the instructor's permission will be presumed to be an intentional act to facilitate or enable academic dishonesty and is strictly prohibited. ([Living our Unifying Values: The USC Student Handbook](#), page 13).

Course Schedule

Date	Class Topic	Instructor	Guest Speakers
8/26	Welcome and TA Survival Kit	Michelle Zill	
9/02	No Class – Labor Day		
9/09	Grad Student Compensation and Finances in LA	Michelle Zill	Karen Young, Alex Aloia, and Darlene Garza
9/15	Building Your Teaching Framework	Michelle Zill	
9/22	No Class- GSA		
9/30	USC Ombudsman on Conflict Resolution	Heidi Houston	Kathie Greenwood and Grad Reps
10/07	Assessment and Active Learning	Michelle Zill	
10/14	Inclusion in the Classroom	Michelle Zill	
10/21	Tour of Department Facilities	Heidi Houston	Miguel Rincon
10/28	Classroom Management	Michelle Zill	Grad Panel
11/04	How to Give a Presentation	Heidi Houston	Frank Corsetti
11/11	No Class- Veteran's Day		
11/18	The Qualifying Exam Process	Heidi Houston	Julien Emile-Geay, John Platt, and Grad Panel
11/25	Writing in the Sciences	Heidi Houston	
12/01	Peer Evaluations and Reflection	Michelle Zill	

Statement on University Academic and Support Systems

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.

Student Financial Aid and Satisfactory Academic Progress:

To be eligible for certain kinds of financial aid, students are required to maintain Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) toward their degree objectives. Visit the [Financial Aid Office webpage](#) for [undergraduate](#)- and [graduate-level](#) SAP eligibility requirements and the appeals process.

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 consists 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) 740-2500

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.