

# Teaching Assistant Guidelines

## 1. Classroom Teaching

- The course syllabus (which indicates the content, sequence, and pacing of your 100-level course) has been carefully planned by your Sequence Supervisor and your Course Coordinator. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with this document, and to follow it carefully.
- Hold all scheduled class periods. In case of emergency, notify your team teacher if you have one, and your Course Coordinator. You are responsible for finding a replacement for yourself.
- Start and end your classes on time.
- Keep a daily attendance record.
- Record and keep lesson plans.
- Communicate regularly and faithfully with your team teacher if you have been assigned to a team-taught section.
- Support all rules on the syllabus concerning attendance, deadlines, make-ups, etc.
- Attend all meetings called by the Course Coordinator.
- Participate actively and contribute to course meeting discussions.
- Submit all requested material (for exams, quizzes, handouts, etc.) on time.

## 2. Professional Relationships

- Maintain a professional relationship with team teachers. It is unprofessional to discuss your team teacher with your students.
- Maintain a professional relationship with your students.
- Hold office hours on campus at regularly scheduled and posted hours and locations (One office hour per course taught, up to a maximum of three hours per week). Those teaching more than one class are expected to hold office hours on more than one day of the week. Do not schedule office hours during level meeting times or during times that you are working in the Media Center.
- Be available for students by appointment in your office (i.e., over and above regular office hours).
- Give help primarily to your own students; encourage other students to go to their own instructors for help.

## 3. Professional Development

- Observe the teaching of a full-time faculty member at least one class period per semester.
- Make an effort to employ various teaching strategies suggested through observations, discussions, classes, and workshops.
- Make every effort to improve your teaching skills throughout the course of your teaching assistantship or beginning teaching semesters.
- Make every effort to attend departmental functions and talks.

- Be completely familiar with the Departmental Policies and Practices.

## **4. TA Observations**

Teaching Assistants with the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures are observed by experienced faculty as part of the effort to facilitate their development as teacher-scholars. The expectations, methods of assessment, and observation procedures forming this program are outlined below.

### **Schedule of TA Observations**

#### **New TA's:**

New TA's who have never taught at UD before are usually observed twice during their first semester of teaching. The first observation is announced: the observer informs the TA of the date and the class s/he intends to observe one or two days ahead of time. This first observation normally takes place during the first half of the semester. The second observation is unannounced: the observer will not let the TA know the date and class ahead of time. Observers, course coordinators, and/or the sequence supervisor may feel that more observations per semester are necessary. In this case, the sequence supervisor may approve further announced or unannounced observations.

#### **Experienced TA's:**

Experienced TA's are usually observed once. This observation is unannounced and normally takes place before December (fall semester) or May (spring semester). Observers, course coordinators, and/or the sequence supervisor may feel that more observations per semester are necessary. In this case, the sequence supervisor may approve further announced or unannounced observations.

#### **Post-observation Conferences:**

Observers meet with TA's after each classroom observation and discuss strategies for improving teaching. Observers then write a report on each classroom observation, and provide the TA with a copy. Sequence supervisors will receive a copy of each report. Note: In Spanish, the observation process is handled through Canvas (see Canvas course entitled: "Spanish Teaching Assistants")

#### **Mentoring System:**

Please remember that these observations are not "exams." They are intended to serve as a support for beginning teachers. The role of the classroom observer is to help and to guide the TA. Take advantage of this mentoring system to ask questions and to improve your teaching!

## Evaluation Forms

- FLLT TA Evaluation Form
- TA Language Proficiency Form

## 5. Student Registration

- Do not allow students to sit in your class as informal listeners. In order to attend classes, students must officially register as listeners. Make no exceptions at all.
- Do not allow students to come to a different section other than the one for which they are registered. Students must attend the same section on Mondays and Wednesdays as on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Make no exceptions at all.
- Never sign any slip permitting students to add your course. Always refer them to drop/add. Tell them to be persistent and patient.
- If the problem is urgent, have them e-mail our Scheduling Officer (Dr. Jörg Busch: leipzig@udel.edu).
- Make no exceptions to these rules!

## 6. Taking and Recording Attendance

- Since students with an excessive number of absences will have points deducted from their class average, it is important to keep accurate records and to maintain a file of letters, doctor's notes, etc.
- You must take attendance daily.
- You must record the date of the absence.
- When a student provides you with an acceptable written explanation for an absence, (after the fourth absence) mark that day's absence as EXCUSED. Note: Be sure to discuss with your course coordinator what is considered an "acceptable written explanation for an absence."
- Knowing both the date and whether or not the absence was excused will be important when you and your team teacher get together to determine which absence was the fourth one, when you enter attendance information in the computer grade book at the end of the semester.
- The FLLT 100-level attendance policy is given below and is also provided in each course syllabus and/or in the web. Make sure that each student knows where to find the policy, and that you take time to explain it thoroughly. It is also a good idea to review the attendance policy once in a while during the course of the semester.

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### Attendance Policy

Successful completion of French/German/Spanish 10\_\_\_ presupposes about 70 hours of direct contact with the French/German/Spanish/ language, in much the same way that a laboratory course or any skill-licensing course presupposes a predetermined number of contact

hours. Nevertheless the first four absences for whatever reason (e.g. illness, religious holidays, etc.) will not be held against you. Do not bring in a written excuse for these first four absences. (However, if the absence occurs on a day when a test, quiz, composition, or other evaluation is scheduled, you must bring written documentation such as a letter from your physician or from a Dean's office. No such excuses will be accepted one calendar week (seven days) beyond the day on which the absence occurred.)

After four absences for whatever reason (e.g. illness, religious holidays, etc.) your final percentage grade will be lowered by 1% for each additional absence. This excludes absences after the fifth which are due to religious holidays, illness, accidents or other exceptional circumstances. Such absences must be reported promptly and will require written documentation such as a letter from your physician or from a Dean's office. No such excuses will be accepted one calendar week (seven days) beyond the day on which the absence occurred.

There are no make-ups of any kind for work missed due to unexcused absences or late arrivals. Please note: If a student misses a final exam, no make-up will be given unless the student provides documentation that the exam was missed due to an emergency (e.g. severe illness, accident, death in the family).

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This policy does not provide for keeping track of late arrivals. You should mark the days when a student arrives late. Taking attendance at the beginning of each class serves to discourage latecomers. Your course coordinator may have a specific method of dealing with tardy students. If lateness is a recurrent problem, speak to the student, and be sure to lower the participation grade accordingly. Be sure to point out to latecomers that they cannot make up work missed due to a late arrival. This means that work they missed counts as a zero!

### **In other words...**

- Students are expected to attend every class. However, we recognize that legitimate reasons for absences do occur. Therefore, there is no penalty for the first four absences.
- If however, a student is absent for a quiz, test, composition, etc., written proof that the absence was legitimate must be provided, or the student will receive a zero for that work.
- Work that was due to be turned in on the day a student was absent may be turned in immediately upon the student's return, provided that written proof that the absence was legitimate is provided.
- For unexcused absences after the first four, one point will be deducted from the final average.
- There is no penalty for excused absences, (those documented with a valid written excuse), after the first four.

Students sometimes find the policy confusing, specifically with regard to the first four absences. If one of those absences is for a reason which would be considered "excused," they sometimes conclude that it won't be counted as one of the first four. Make sure you point out that the policy

specifies: “after four absences for whatever reason.” Students can’t “save” excused absences for later.

## **7. Final Exams**

The specific date and time for final exams will be announced in the course of the semester. It is not possible to schedule an alternate date or time for a final exam. If students miss the final exam, no make-up will be given unless they can document that the exam was missed due to an emergency (e.g. severe illness, accident, death in the family). It is not possible to schedule an alternate final exam in order to accommodate travel plans.

Students can view their individual exam schedule on their UDSIS student page. Tell your students not to plan to travel during exam week. If students have three exams on the same day, you may ask your instructors to allow you to take their exam on an alternate day/time. If students have an exam conflict (more than one exam on the same day and time), they should notify their instructors. One of them must give you an alternate exam day/time during final exam week. Please encourage students who need to reschedule finals to check with other professors first. Our finals are prepared by teams of instructors and creating make-ups is very difficult.

Graduate teaching assistants should not plan to travel during final exam week either. You are required to stay in the area two work days after the final exam of any course you are teaching. Note: There are no written final exams for 100-level Spanish courses.

## **8. Computer Gradebooks / Sakai / Canvas**

FLLT 100-level course instructors use either Canvas, Sakai, Excel (or a combination of these systems) to record and calculate student final grades. Please familiarize yourself with the appropriate program for your language during the first week of classes. Media Center attendants can help you.

All grades must be entered promptly. This means as soon as you’ve graded a test, workbook assignment, etc., you must enter the grade immediately.

Keep attendance records separately in a notebook, add them to those of your team teacher at the end of the semester. Do not subtract any absences except for those beyond the first four for which you have received a written excuse.

It is wise to keep a printout of current grade books to avoid catastrophes.

## **9. Dealing with Academic Dishonesty**

It is much easier to prevent instances of academic dishonesty than to deal with them once they have occurred. Be sure to explain policies and expectations for homework, compositions and exams. Seat students appropriately during exams and quizzes. Circulate during exams, quizzes,

and in-class compositions, and remind students whether or not dictionaries, notes, etc. are allowed.

If you notice instances of cheating, do not attempt to deal with this on your own. Before confronting a student, confer with your course coordinator. Academic dishonesty is discussed in the Student Guide to University Policies.

## **10. Films**

Each 100-level course involves some videos and films. You must show the films on the syllabus on the day they are scheduled. You may not show a film that is not on the syllabus without first clearing it with your Course Coordinator.

For films located in the Media Center library (basement of Jastak-Burgess Hall):

- Have a Media Center attendant check out the film.
- Return films to a Media Center attendant.
- Please return films promptly after you have finished using them for the course.

## **11. Audio-Visual Equipment**

If you're experiencing problems with A/V equipment, including overhead projectors, contact University Media Services – Classroom Technology Division at 831-3546.

## **12. Copying Procedures**

You must obtain permission from your Course Coordinator before distributing any original materials (i.e., materials created by you, or by other TA's) to your students. Please cooperate.

If you need someone to show you how to use some of the copying equipment, please ask an experienced TA or an instructor. The secretaries are too busy to help each one of us individually.

- Xeroxing:
  - Tests and quizzes will be photocopied for you. Complete a work order and place item in the bin in the Jastak-Burgess Hall mail room (main office). Allow at least 24 hours for completion.
  - For occasional small jobs or last-minute jobs: Each of you will be able to make 100 copies per semester on the copier on the second floor of Jastak-Burgess Hall. Please see Diane Parke for an access code.
- Making transparencies
  - Bring a color laser transparency that you have purchased yourself to the Media Center for use with the color printer.

## 13. Level Meetings

Your Course Coordinator will inform you of times and locations of your course level meeting(s). Find out when these meetings will take place before you choose office hours. Your office hour can't be during level meetings.

Attendance and participation at level meetings are mandatory.

## 14. Communication Procedures

All T.A's must communicate regularly with the course coordinator and their team teacher (if applicable). Your Course Coordinator will inform you of how and how often you should do this. Tell briefly who was absent and what was covered in class. Please read your e-mail daily. Respond to e-mails immediately.

Listen to your voice mail regularly as well (keep in mind that there may be saved messages for you that are not signaled by the stutter tone.)

## 15. Emergency Substitute Procedures

In case of unavoidable absence from classes, faculty members should make arrangements for a colleague to take over for them. At the same time, the Course Coordinator, Sequence Supervisor, and the Department Chair are to be informed. A class should not be canceled without the permission of the Department Chair. You are responsible for finding your own replacement. Please do not ask the secretaries to call substitutes.

At the beginning of each semester, please identify persons who can substitute for you. Provide your Course Coordinator with those names. You should provide your substitute with a lesson plan.

For any absence that you know about ahead of time, e-mail a request for permission to miss class to the Department Chair with copy to your Sequence Supervisor and Course Coordinator.

Please read Policies and Practices of the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures: "Absences from Class" and "Cancellation of Classes."

## 16. Final Exam Proctoring

There are no written final exams for 100-level Spanish courses. If you are teaching French or German, please be sure to announce to all students before the end of classes that they must come on time for the final, and that they may not stay longer than the 2 hours allotted for the exam, even if they come late. Clarify which kinds of questions you'll answer/not answer: i.e. **will not** provide any vocabulary words / **will** explain instructions, etc. Remember that these final exams

typically count for 15% or 20% of the total grade. Students must take them seriously. Proctors can help by setting a calm and encouraging tone.

**Remember to:**

- arrive 10 minutes before the exam is scheduled to begin.
- seat students as they come in. Write on the board how you want students to sit: every other desk, fill in front seats first.
- pass out test promptly when exam time begins. One proctor starts from the front, the other from the back.
- take attendance. If there are students missing, one proctor should try to phone them. Do this during the first 30 minutes of the exam.
- circulate during the test.
- ensure proper test-taking conditions. Do not allow noise, whispering, cell phones or other distractions.
- usher late-comers to their seats. If possible, seat them away from students already working. Late-comers must hand in their test at the end of the scheduled exam time.
- stay in the room for the entire time the test is in session. It's O.K. for one proctor to leave before the end of the exam if there are fewer than 10 or so students left.