

## Grad to Grad: Support for Current and Future Teaching Assistants

Being a Teaching Assistant in graduate school can assume a plethora of forms, and each type of assistantship requires a unique set of skills in order to be successful. Very often, graduate students are experiencing the classroom for the first time *as an instructor* and are not yet equipped with the skills necessary to be effective educators. “Teaching is not a priority; your own classes must take precedence,” is a potentially confusing message that many new ‘TAs’ receive at orientation, and this session seeks to offer first-hand advice for finding and maintaining the delicate balance as both a student and a teacher. The general goal of this workshop is to assist and support graduate students who are, will be, or hope to be Teaching Assistants, with special emphasis on practical pedagogical support. The workshop will also provide participants with opportunities to voice their own concerns in a safe and non-judgmental environment via a number of activities.

Our presenter will provide an overview of the various types of assistantships (e.g. language instructor, grader, etc.) available to students and solutions for currently unfunded students. This individual brings the perspective of a graduate student, who did not initially receive funding but worked to receive assistantships and aid in a variety of ways. This talk will cover outside-departmental assistance, summer positions, and on-campus pedagogical resources. During the main presentation, the presenter will break up participants into pairs (or groups of three) and task them with specific teaching scenarios that correspond to the types of assistantships. This activity will introduce participants to the differences between these positions and the distinct concerns that each involves. Following a short work time, participants will role play their scenarios, offer their own solutions, and seek opinions from the other groups in a “What would you do?” format.

Following the presentation, the presider will distribute a worksheet for participants to develop an action plan for the rest of the semester and into the next academic year. This action plan sheet is a questionnaire and timeline designed to develop growth in participants for whatever aspect they seek to improve as TAs (e.g. public speaking, lesson plan design, acquiring funding, etc.). The presenter and the presider will lead participants through this activity, and participants will share their action plans at the end of this section of the session.

The workshop will conclude with an open forum for participants to voice their concerns and questions, which they may not feel comfortable asking their supervisors or departmental peers, anonymously to protect their privacy. Participants will do this by means of notecards, which the presider will distribute, collect, and read aloud. The presenter, presider, and any willing participants will attempt to either answer these questions or will provide resources and recommendations as appropriate. The final goal of this workshop, to be achieved during the open forum, is to establish an online support network for Classics TAs throughout the year.