



Department of Sociology
Harvard University

Teaching Fellows Handbook 2013-2014

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Teaching Fellows in the Sociology Department become adept navigators of Harvard's myriad bureaucratic rules and procedures. This is not because we've all read Max Weber, but because the job requires it. This isn't a well-advertised part of the job description and there really isn't any kind of training to prepare you for it. Before the semester even begins, the professor starts asking you to get this and find out that. You'll scour Harvard's websites, visit various offices, talk to staff, and e-mail veteran TFs all in an effort to find information that seems scattered across the university. And then the students arrive. Teaching them is just part of the job. You'll have to manage their records, reply to all of their e-mails, and find the answers to their questions as well.

This Handbook represents an initial attempt to pull together some of the rules, procedures, tips, and tools that make up the non-teaching side of being a TF and put them in one place.

We hope you find the information within to be useful throughout the semester. Above all, we consider this Handbook to be a living, evolving document. We invite any thoughts or suggestions for changes or additions.

Good luck over the school year and have fun.

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GETTING THE SEMESTER STARTED

I. The Course Syllabus

The course syllabus is vitally important for running a course. The syllabus represents a social contract between the teaching staff and the students. A syllabus should contain the following information:

- Course Information: course title, course number, meeting time, meeting location
- Instructor Information: name, office location, office hours, how to contact him/her.
- TF Information: names, office location, office hours, how to contact him/her/them
- Course Description/Objectives: This will vary a lot from course to course.
- Text, Readings, Materials: Textbooks, Course packs including where they are available and the cost.
- Course Calendar/Schedule: schedule of topics to be covered, dates for exams, quizzes, or other means of assessment, due dates for major assignments, and any required special events.
- Course Policies: Attendance, lateness, class participation, missed exams or assignments, dishonesty.
- Grading: details about how the students will be evaluated -- what factors will be included, how they will be weighted, and how they will be translated into grades.

You should acquaint yourself with the course syllabus well in advance of the first meeting. Doing so will help you map out your semester workload and help the instructor by ensuring that there are no inaccuracies or inconsistencies in the syllabus. Catching any problems before the semester begins will not only ingratiate you with the professor, but save you a lot of headaches down the line.

Dates

One of the easiest things to do is to sit down with the syllabus in one hand and a calendar in the other. First, you will want to make sure the dates and days match up, as professors often use the previous year's syllabus. Next you will want to make sure classes don't fall on any University observed holidays (President's Day, Columbus Day, Thanksgiving) and make sure the classes don't fall outside of the official end of the semester. See Appendix in this handbook for this year's dates. Note that in 2012-13 and 2013-14 classes will be held on Veterans' Day. In addition, the Registrar's official calendar lists all of these dates here:

<http://www.registrar.fas.harvard.edu/fasro/common/calendar.jsp> . You might also want to look at a calendar that lists major religious holidays. If, for example, a major assignment or exam is scheduled for Yom Kippur, then you might want to suggest moving it, or be prepared for some students to require a make-up.

Assigned Reading

Check the required and recommended books and make sure you and the students can get copies of them. If there is a specific edition, translation, or printing that you will be using in class, make sure that is clear. Make sure it is clear where the students can get the other course readings, whether on reserve at the library, on the course website, or through a hyperlink. Check all of the listed hyperlinks to make sure they are working and accurate. Check all of the course readings posted on the course website to make sure they are working and accurate.

Assignments

If course assignments are listed on the syllabus (sometimes assignments are handed out later in the semester), check when they are due and how students will be handing them in. Check to see if the due date and day match up. If there is a clear date, is there a clear time on that day (e.g. 5 p.m. Friday)? Will students be uploading their papers to the course website? Or will they be dropping them off in a box in WJH? There might also be expectations of format (e.g. double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman, etc.) and style for papers (e.g. ASA). If not, you will want to make sure it is clear before assignments are given, as students tend to take liberties when it is not explicit.

Grading

Most syllabi include some breakdown of how the students will be evaluated—e.g. 15% participation, 30% midterm, 40% final paper, 15% reaction papers. Make sure the breakdown makes sense (e.g. it adds up to 100%). If there is an explanation of what constitutes “A” work for each assignment or for the course overall, make sure it is clear. In general, it is not a bad idea to have some explanation for how ambiguous things like “class participation” or “reaction/response papers” will be evaluated, especially if they constitute relatively large portions of the student’s grade.

Course Policies

Some syllabi include explicit course policies. Make sure you understand them as you are usually responsible for enforcing them. If it is not clear to you, it will be unclear to the students. Here are some policies that might be included on the syllabus. They are all discussed in more depth in the “Managing Students” section of this handbook: Attendance Policy; Extensions/Late Work; Re-Grading; E-mailing TF/Professor. In general, if a policy is listed, it should be clear what the expectations are, what are the potential consequences for failing to meet those expectations, and what, if any, are the exceptions to the rule.

II. Scheduling Classrooms

General Advice

Scheduling a classroom for your sections will generally be your responsibility (and if it is your Head TF's job, being proactive might help them out). It is always better to try to schedule your classrooms sooner rather than later (if you are unsure of your schedule you can always schedule an extra room/time and cancel later). You will want to think about things like time (what fits your schedule? what fits your students' schedules?) and location (what is convenient for you? what do your students prefer? WJH versus The Yard?). Mid-week, mid-afternoon times (e.g. Wednesday 12-4) tend to be very popular, so you will be hard-pressed to schedule something during those times unless you do it very early (i.e. weeks before the first section). Evenings or Fridays tend to be very unpopular, but sometimes these are the only times that will work for all of your students, your schedule, and the available rooms. You will also want to check in with your course head to see if there are times that they want sections scheduled (e.g. all after Tuesday's lecture or all before Thursday's, etc.).

Very few classrooms are perfect, so don't worry if you end up scheduling something late and it is not ideal. But it is always a good idea to scout out the classroom before scheduling—Is it big enough? Or too big? Does it have desks or tables? Does it have chalkboard or dry-erase board? Does it have the A/V equipment you might need? ETC. Visit the rooms and ask around; some of your colleagues might have some good tips.

Classrooms for Sections

Rooms for sections in WJH are given out at the beginning of each term after all classes scheduled to be taught are assigned (typically the day after study cards are due). If you wish to schedule a section in a departmental classroom (455, 501, or 601), please fill out our [Section Reservations Form](#), available on the [Sociology intranet](#). (A link to the intranet can be found in the Quick Links at the bottom of the [Sociology](#) website). **Note that your room is not reserved until you receive a confirmation email.** If no departmental classrooms are available you will be directed to WJH or FAS Classroom contacts (see below). Please keep in mind, **departmental classroom requests for sections are not permitted until after Study Card Day.**

William James Hall Classrooms

If you would like to schedule your sections in another WJH classroom (usually because the Sociology rooms are unavailable, too small, etc.), then you will want to coordinate with the Center Office. Bill Santoro will send an email over the Sociology list at the start of each semester with specific guidelines for reserving WJH classrooms for sections. Classroom requests for sections are not permitted until after Study Card Day when course enrollments are confirmed. Requests for space are made by emailing rooms@wjh after the date specified in Bill's instructional email. Classes with many sections may need to hold sections outside of WJH. Here's a list rooms in WJH (<http://www.wjh.harvard.edu/cbs/Classrooms.html>).

CGIS

There are rumors of people from our department occasionally getting classes scheduled in the much more attractive CGIS buildings. The CGIS website makes it seem a little difficult, but you might want to try anyway:

Meeting Room Scheduling: The Office of the Registrar (617-495-1541) has scheduling authority over most of the public teaching space 9:00 AM – 10:00 PM (Monday through Friday), with a few exceptions. The Registrar will give first priority to courses taught by Government faculty and other faculty with offices in CGIS.

The remaining rooms should be scheduled via CGIS's Building Operation's website. The seminar rooms on the upper floors are scheduled with consideration given to adjacencies. Due to overwhelming demand for CGIS meeting room space during the academic year, any classes and events scheduled must be affiliated with the Government Department, History Department, or sponsored by a CGIS faculty member. CGIS's Building Operations is also responsible for scheduling Fisher Family Commons and the lounge areas throughout the CGIS complex, and assists in coordinating with Gund Hall use of the green space behind the Knafel Building. Please contact cgisroom@fas.harvard.edu via email with questions. The Teaching Fellow (TF) meeting rooms (N016, N017, and N021) in the north concourse are scheduled by the Government Department. The computer training room (N018) is scheduled via the Harvard-MIT Data Center. For detailed information about seminar room capacity and multimedia capabilities in the CGIS complex, please see the Seminar Room Information Guide: http://cgis.fas.harvard.edu/meeting_rooms.html. To schedule a room: http://cgis.fas.harvard.edu/room_and_equipment_scheduling.html

FAS Classroom Office

If you are looking for a classroom in the Yard or elsewhere in the College, you will need to contact the Registrar's Classroom Office. You may call, email or make the trek to the basement of the Registrar's Office:

FAS Registrar's Classrooms Office

20 Garden Street

Telephone: (617-495-1541)

E-mail: classrms@fas.harvard.edu

<http://www.registrar.fas.harvard.edu/fasro/faculty/classrooms.jsp>

Venturing over to Garden Street is usually worth the effort. The staff is often delighted to share their knowledge of the classroom system and assistance in securing the best room for your needs. They are swamped just when you need them most, however: around study card day and sectioning. During these peak times, you may be better served by emailing them. In your email request, please detail: (1) How many students the room needs to accommodate, (2) whether you need a projector/AV connection, and (3) whether you prefer a conference table or movable chairs. They cannot guarantee these things to you, but an initial request is better than figuring out that the room doesn't meet your needs after rooms across campus have filled up.

If you've been given a room assignment by FAS, it's a good idea to go check out the room and make sure it meets your needs. Alternately, you can look up any room on campus, and see a report of the chair configurations/capacity and available technology on the FAS Classrooms website. <http://ims.fas.harvard.edu/classrooms/index.php>

III. Getting Paid

The basics

One section of a lecture course = .20 FTE (“one fifth”)

One section of a methods course = .25 FTE

One section of sophomore tutorial = .30 FTE (sociology 97)

One section of junior tutorial = .40 FTE (must be ABD)

Salary

If you have completed residence requirements, two-fifths for the year = \$20,200, divided into ten paychecks.

Paychecks

Payday is the 15th of each month. If the 15th falls on a weekend, the Friday before is payday

Term paychecks occur 5 times over the term (for the fall semester, beginning August 15th; for the spring term, beginning January 15th).

Limits on teaching

After passing the department’s qualifying exam, graduate students can teach an average of three-fifths per term, but no more than four-fifths in any one term.

In order to teach more than six-fifths over the year, you would have to be a teaching assistant (rather than a teaching fellow) and would have to register on leave of absence.

International Students

International students are limited to working 20 hours a week during term time, which combines all employment (including teaching, thesis advising, research assistantships, GSO or Bok Center positions, etc). This is the equivalent of a maximum of .57 time during each term.

A section of a regular course equals .20 FTE, or 7 hours a week, which means that the maximum number of sections an international student can teach is 2 sections (or 14 hours a week to stay under the .57 FTE and 20 hour-per-week maximum. If a student is teaching two sections of the sophomore tutorial GSAS will make an adjustment to pay you the additional you are owed at the end of your appointment.

Payroll

In order to get paid, you first have to fill out an I-9 (Employee Eligibility Verification) form, if you haven’t already done so for another reason (RA work, etc). Your teaching appointment will not be processed until this form is received. Then you should set up direct deposit and fill out Mass & Federal tax forms via the Harvard personnel web site (www.harvie.harvard.edu). All checks are direct deposited on the 15th of the month. Questions on payroll should be directed to Suzanne Ogungbadero (saw@wjh.harvard.edu, 495-3507, 668 WJH). You should contact Suzanne if you do not receive your payment by the 15th.

Frequently Asked Questions:

(Note: the following applies to graduate students in G3 and G4 cohorts only.)

What should I do if I was only able to obtain one section of a course?

Every effort is made to provide G3 and G4 students with two sections of the same course. In this instance, you should work with the Suzanne Ogungbadero to try and find additional teaching. We try not to have students teach a section of two different courses, but may be able to supplement the one section with some type of advising position (thesis, concentration).

What happens if enrollments fall below the expected numbers in a course for which I have a position? The department may need to move a teaching fellow from a course that is under-enrolled to one that is over-subscribed (keeping in mind the areas students are prepared to teach), or if that is not feasible, the student will be expected to do additional work for the course, the professor, or meaningful work for the Department, to make up the shortfall.

What if the enrollment ends up being higher for a course where I have a position of two sections?

If there are still other Sociology graduate students, especially those in G3 and G4 in need of funding, who are not yet assigned, they will have preference for getting the additional section, if at all feasible. Otherwise it should be given to a Sociology graduate student in need of teaching, for either financial reasons or to fulfill their teaching requirement, or to another GSAS student in need. These students should be considered first before giving the additional third section to the student currently assigned to teach for the course who is already being paid for two sections.

What if I have two sections of a course, and the instructor would like me to be head teaching fellow? (This is relevant for courses that have 100+ students)

It would be best if you taught one section and received one section of pay for head teaching fellow. This would free up a section for another fellow graduate student, allowing them to get the additional pay, and/or the experience teaching.

What is “topping up”?

Because the stipend you normally receive is slightly higher than the pay you would get for teaching two sections, GSAS will pay out the difference, called a “top up”, once each term. The student must be teaching either two sections of a course, or a combination of teaching and research assistantship.

Note: The “top up” supplement, or difference between your TF stipend pay rate, will happen automatically the middle of each term. If you do not receive it, email Social Sciences Financial Aid Officer Emily Burns (617-495-5396, emburns@fas.harvard.edu) to remind her. Keep in mind that all income from “teaching” is included in this amount – so if you are taking on additional teaching-related responsibility (such as advising theses, grading, working for the Bok Center etc), this figures into your teaching salary and you will not receive the supplement if this puts you over the standard stipend amount for the term.

IV. What Is “Shopping Period”?

Or Dealing with Too Many, Too Few Confused Students

General Advice

The best-laid plans of profs and TFs for a course are usually up-ended for the first two weeks of the semester as Harvard Students “shop.” This means that your course’s numbers might not settle completely until about the third week of the course. Classes expecting 100 students might get 30, and courses expecting 100 might get 300. Some professors will be prepared for this. Some will have a pre-established cap for the class. And some will not. This can wreak havoc on scheduling sections and trying to teach, but it is not such a daunting task, as many profs and TFs have weathered it each semester. Finally, the college’s growing use of pre-enrollment should provide a tentative forecast of future enrollment, helping to ease some of these uncertainties and anxieties.

In general, try to proceed with teaching as best you can, getting into the material and scheduling your sections as soon as you can. You have to assume there will be a natural ebb and flow of students during the first couple of weeks that will eventually pass. There are several things out there to help you get through this often chaotic time in a reasonable manner.

Sectioning

Generally, the responsibility of sectioning falls to the Head TF’s, but sometimes, with smaller courses (30-50), there might be no official Head TF. You might find yourself the de facto Head TF, so this might be something you will have to do yourself. The easiest and fairest way to deal with sectioning, especially for larger classes, is to use the on-line Sectioning Tool on the Registrar’s website, found here:

<http://www.registrar.fas.harvard.edu/fasro/sectioning/index.jsp>

There are instructions about registering and signing up for training. Attending a training session at the Registrar’s office is not necessary—there is an on-line tutorial that should do just fine. But if that is not clear for you and you anticipate having to use the sectioning tool this semester, then you might want to sign-up.

The basic logic of the On-line Sectioning Tool is straightforward. After registering the course and yourself as the TF, you will receive a user ID and password. You will then need to go into the on-line tool and create section blocks for each of the individual sections of the course (i.e. you might have more than one section at a time). You will want to include all possible sections for the course—not just your own. If you are running an especially large course (i.e. 150 or more), then you might want to include an extra section block or two at different times to see what times are most popular. Also, you will be asked to include information about the section, but really, there is no reason to include things like location or the TF teaching a particular section as it might bias students’ choices. But you want to make sure you list the appropriate size limit for each section. Generally it is 18, but it might be smaller depending on the type of course or enrollment. Depending on your course numbers, you may want to set the section limit a little lower than 18 so that you end

up with more balanced sections (e.g. having a limit of 15 instead of 18 for 4 sections in a 55 person class).

You will then be asked to set the student choice parameters—what is the minimum number of preferences they must list, what is the maximum number of choices, etc. Depending on the number of sections and the number of students, you will want to make sure the minimum is high enough (at least 2 or 3) and that the maximum is not too high (e.g. don't let them list 12 preferences for 12 sections).

Once you have set up all of the sections and the student preferences, you should determine a time frame for registered students to fill in their section preferences. Generally, you should announce it in class and/or via course-wide e-mail at least a day in advance. You should give the students at least a few days (i.e. a weekend) to give their preferences. You will need to manually open and close the sectioning tool for that timeframe. The registered students will then log-in to the sectioning tool and rank their preferences. Cross-registered students (e.g. Kennedy School students) might need you to manually add their e-mails, IDs, or XIDs to the course list in the sectioning tool website beforehand (this is all in the instructions).

Once the on-line sectioning is closed, you might find there are still a few stragglers. These might be students dropping the course or they just might not have done it. The tool will tell you who from the official class list has not listed their preferences. E-mail them and either give them extra time to do it (if this is possible or preferred) or tell them they might not get their preferred section and will have to be placed into a section manually.

The on-line sectioning tool takes care of all the complicated stuff for you—assigning students, etc. You will find almost all, if not all, of the students placed into sections. There might be a few who didn't fit; it is usually best to deal with this manually and on a case-by-case basis. For example, some TFs might be generous enough to let one “extra” student squeeze into their section. Or you might find that the student can actually make that Thursday 8 p.m. section but just didn't list it as a preference.

Once you feel the sections have pretty much settled, you can use the sectioning tool to notify the students of their assigned sections. Most students will be fine with their assigned section as the computer is pretty fair. A few might complain or might have had schedule changes and therefore will ask to switch. Generally, if there is room in a section, then you can do it. Usually, the “best” times are filled though (and you always want to make sure the sections are relatively balanced both for TF workload and student experience). One rule of thumb some professors advocate is that students can switch into a section as long as they can find someone from that section to switch with. That puts the onus on them. Just have both students e-mail you and manually switch the students. But ultimately section hopping should be discouraged, as it will mean more headaches for you. Definitely talk to your course head about a course policy in this regard.

Too Few Students

Unfortunately, some courses end up with enrollments less than expected. If it is significantly less, then a “promised” section or sections will have to be dropped, which might mean that a TF or TFs will have to find another teaching assignment. The target size per section is 18-20, though that number that has been inching upward in recent years. If enrollment falls well short of expectation, you should talk with your course head, and alert Suzanne Ogunbadero (saw@wjh.harvard.edu). She is usually the first to know of enrollments and openings in sociology, and often beyond, and she can initiate your transfer from one teaching assignment to another, if need be.

Running a Lottery

If the course head has a pre-established course cap and there are significantly more students than that cap, then you will need to run a lottery. Unfortunately, at this point, there is no software program to hold a lottery for a course akin to the On-line Sectioning Tool. Ultimately, there is no easy way to do it but it is manageable if it is done systematically and explicitly.

The first step is really the course head/professor's job—and that is to contact Laura Thomas (lthomas@wjh), who will inform the Registrar that a signature will be required in order for students to register for the course. As a TF, you will want to ask them to make sure they have done this to prevent non-lotteried students from registering for the course.

The next step is to announce the rules/parameters of the lottery on the first day of class—even if you are not sure if a lottery will be necessary. These rules need to be thought out well in advance, and they need to be explicit to the students. Otherwise you will be bombarded with e-mails and questions from students trying to figure out if they have a good chance of getting into the course.

The rules/parameters of the lottery are decided by the course head, but there are questions you might want to ask to help make the process easier down the line. Some questions might include: Will sociology concentrators get priority? Do first semester sophomores who have not declared a concentration count as “concentrators”? Will students who have been previously waitlisted by the course lottery get priority? Will upperclassmen get priority? Or will there be some proportional breakdown of each year?

One simple way to collect this kind of information is to use the iSites “Quick Survey” tool to create a survey on the course iSite requesting the following information:

- Name
- E-mail
- Year
- Have you been previously waitlisted for this course?
- Concentration
- Comments/Reasons for interest in the course

The QuickSurvey tool allows you to post the survey for a specified period of time for students to complete. The information collected can be downloaded in a spreadsheet and dealt with in a systematic manner, going through each rule. For example, if concentrators were given first priority, then the 15 or 20 sociology concentrators were added to the course list. If those previously waitlisted were given next priority, then the 10 or 15 prior waitlistees would be put on the course list next. This would continue according to whatever stated rules until one had more potential candidates than spots. One could then use a random number generator (easily found through Google) to assign the remaining potential candidates.

The next immediate step would be to contact the students to notify them that they have made it into the course and to ask them if they plan on taking the course. Some students who get picked by the lottery might not be able to take the course because of a change in schedule (or a change in heart). You will want to find this out as soon as possible so you can get other waitlisted students in the class. However, it should be noted that because of the ubiquitous use of G-mail among the students, bcc-ing a large group of students via e-mail might not be possible as such e-mails will be “filtered” out. You might be better off e-mailing the students individually in order to get a response.

Once the course-list has been set, the selected students will then need to have their study cards signed by the course head.

Too Many Students

If the course has no pre-established course cap, then the course will have to accept all-comers. This means adding sections and potentially adding more TFs. Adding sections does have a couple of benefits: it might mean being able to pick up an extra section of a course for which you are already doing the prep for some more money and it might make scheduling sections a bit easier as you can offer a greater variety of times. The downside is that it might mean finding more TFs and scheduling more classrooms for section. It is always better to do the former first, as you will want to schedule sections that work for the new TF (though this is not always possible with time constraints).

When searching for additional TFs, always begin in the department first. You or a fellow TF might already know someone looking to pick up an extra section. With approval of the course head, this is generally fine. If you don't know of anyone, talk to Suzanne Ogungbadero (WJH 668; 617-495-3507; saw@wjh.harvard.edu). If there aren't any graduate students available to teach with the department, then you will have to do some legwork and reach outside of the department. Keep in mind, you (as the Head TF) and the course head will probably want to interview/screen candidates from outside of the department (the course head will generally decide if they want to interview the people themselves, with you, or if they will leave it to the Head TF).

Where you search for additional TFs will largely depend on the course topic. You will want to consider people from other departments (anthropology, government, economics, psychology, statistics, history of science, etc.) as well as other schools (the Law School, the Business School, the Education School, the School of Public Health, the Kennedy School, MIT, BU, etc.). Your point of contact will generally be someone with the title of "graduate coordinator" or some equivalent. If you are not sure, call someone and ask (e-mails generally don't get a response).

If you end up with additional TFs from outside the department, make sure you direct them to Suzanne Ogungbadero (saw@wjh.harvard.edu) to process their appointment and get them on the payroll and to Gretchen Gingo (gingo@wjh.harvard.edu) so they can get a TF account for printing in the Sociology Department computer labs.

The Class Menagerie

As a TF you will encounter a strange variety of students that you might have to deal with, from desperate beggars looking to switch into your "interesting" course a month into the semester to middle-aged, mid-career fellows from the Kennedy School, and everything in between. Here is some advice on how to deal with them.

Late-Adds

Once the semester begins, you might encounter students coming and going for the first month or so. As a TF, you might be approached by a student looking to add the course late, after registration has already closed. They will need the Instructor's signature in order to do so. The course Late-Add policy will ultimately be determined by the professor. You might, however, want to ask what it is in advance so you can advise those students who come to you first as to whether the course is already "closed" or if they should seek out the professor.

Drops/Withdrawals

You will not actually have to do anything for students who would like drop the course; in fact these students may drop from your enrollment without any notice at all. You should be aware that students have up until the 5th Monday of the semester to drop/withdraw from the course without consequence from the Registrar's office. It is not a bad idea to remind your students of this deadline as it approaches.

Pass/Fail Students

Again the professor sets course policy as to whether or not to allow students to take the class pass/fail and if so, just what the standards for a student to pass are. If the professor allows for students to take the course pass/fail, those doing so will need to designate it on their study cards, which must be signed by the professor. The students will also have up to the 5th Monday of the semester to change their status to or from Pass/Fail, so again you will want to remind them as that date approaches.

Unless you are the Head TF, you will probably not know a student is taking the course Pass/Fail—though students might tell you this in order to get you to go easy on them. The default rule is that a student who receives a C- or better is considered a pass. The professor might, however, change the standards for Pass. This needs to be explicit (usually in the syllabus), so you might want to ask the professor to ensure that it is clear to you and the students. For example, some professors require a higher grade standard for a Pass (such as B-) and some professors require that Pass/Fail students complete all major course assignments (i.e. so students who get an A on the midterm still complete a final paper). Other professors will not care. But asking for clarification can save you headaches down the line.

Cross-Registered Students

Students cross-registering for the course—whether from Harvard University's other schools or from other nearby colleges and universities—will generally need to obtain the permission of the course head/professor to register, unless the course is cross-listed (as in some Kennedy School courses). They may also need your help gaining access to the course website, the on-line sectioning tool, and getting included on the official course list and course-wide e-mails.

For Harvard-affiliated cross-registered students (e.g. Kennedy School, HBS, etc), you will need their Harvard-affiliated e-mail addresses and their school ID numbers. Because they are not part of FAS, they might not show up on the official FAS list from the FAS Registrar Office. If you are doing On-line Sectioning, you can use their e-mail address or school ID to manually add them to the class list so they can access the On-line Sectioning Tool (that is, if the professor expects them to attend section). You will also want to add them to the course list through the course website by using their e-mail or ID.

For non-Harvard-affiliated students, if they do not have some kind of Harvard University ID number already, they will need to get an XID here: <https://xid.harvard.edu/xid-apps/>. Once they have some kind of Harvard ID or XID, you should be able to add them to class lists in the same way.

Auditors

Whether or not students are allowed to audit the course is the decision of the course head. If auditors are allowed, the professor might set some pre-conditions for their level of participation (it is usually minimal for lecture courses but it might be more involved for more discussion-based courses). Most auditors, especially if they are undergrads, will probably not even come across your radar as a busy TF. However, Harvard courses sometimes end up with auditors from all walks of life—people from the community, staff, other faculty, fellows, etc. Depending on the preferences of the professor and yourself, it is not unheard of to invite some of these auditors to sections, as they can often offer interesting perspectives to class discussion. But it is not necessary—if you might feel uncomfortable running a section with someone significantly older than yourself, do not feel obligated to have them in your section.

Returning Graded Papers/Exams:

"Most instructors return exam booklets, papers, and other academic work to the students enrolled in their courses. Work that is not returned to students must be kept in a safe, accessible location on campus for at least one year after the end of a course. By law, students have the right to review all materials submitted to a course, and for a reasonable charge, may have copies of any originals not returned to them. Course heads should be sure to collect from section leaders and tutors any course assignments that have not been returned to students for appropriate storage. Faculty who are leaving the FAS or who will be on leave and away from the University should make appropriate arrangements for maintaining the availability of students' work." (*GSAS Handbook for Instructors*)

There are three options for returning your graded exams/final papers:

- 1) Distribute graded materials on your own;
- 2) Scan each exam, send the electronic PDF to each student (a good idea for smaller courses), and give original to undergrad coordinator for storage.
- 3) Give exams/papers to the Faculty Services Office which will distribute them as needed. If you would like to use this option:
 - **Arrange exams alphabetically by student name.**
 - Put all exams in a manila folder, with the course name and number clearly marked and the contact information of an instructor or TF.
 - Drop them off with the Receptionist or the Manager of Faculty Services.
 - Inform students they can pick up their exams/papers from either the Receptionist or the Manager of Faculty Services.
 - Because they will be stored in a locked cabinet, exams/papers DO NOT need to be in individual envelopes.

V. Other TF Grunt Work

Note: It is a good idea to first check about these issues with the course head's faculty assistant, if one exists, because some of these tasks (including placing readings on reserve, ordering books, website administration etc) are sometimes taken care of by a course head's assistant.

Getting Readings on Reserve

Readings are now placed on reserve directly through your course website. The tool maintains reserves lists from previous semesters and allows you to submit requests directly to the library that supports your course. Students can use their course Web site to access reserves lists with links to the HOLLIS records or with direct links to library digital resources. Instructors and students are able to see the current status of course readings as they are being processed by the libraries.

For a quick-guide on how to do this, see: <http://hcl.harvard.edu/info/reserves/instructions.html>

Although reserves requests will be accepted throughout the semester, turning in your lists well in advance of the semester ensures that reserves materials will be ready at the beginning of the semester.

For more information on reserves, including digital reserves, and materials not owned by the library, see <http://hcl.harvard.edu/info/reserves/>.

Copyright issues

Many professors are now opting to place readings (in pdf or word format) on the course website, instead of assembling a course-pack or placing readings on reserve at a library. This is quick and efficient, both for the faculty member and for the students. However, you should keep in mind several copyright issues.

Harvard's lengthy and detailed official guide for copyright issues can be found at http://www.ogc.harvard.edu/copyright_docs/index.php. The official bottom line is that in order to include any scans of book chapters or journal articles, you should obtain copyright for them from the editor. For journal articles, if you link to the article through Hollis (you can find a 'stable URL' or deep link on JSTOR), you're fine. For book chapters it's a bit more complicated, and generally the Office of General Counsel advises not to put them up without obtaining permission. But if you do (and many professors do), there are precautions you can take:

- limit the topic box with the material to "Class participants only" (you can have the rest of your website still be world-viewable, but adjust permissions for each topic box or each page, see more info on this in the next chapter)
- limit the number of pages taken from a particular book
- take down the material as soon as the class session is over (on iSites you can set a "timer" so it automatically takes down the document for you, for the date you specify).

The OGC also advises you to post the following notice on the course website:

This course website, and much of the text, images, graphics, audio and video clips, and other content of the site (collectively, the "Content"), are protected by copyright law. In some cases, the copyright is owned by third parties, and Harvard is making the third-party Content available to you

under the fair use doctrine. Fair use permits only certain limited uses of the Content.

You may use the website and its Content only for your personal, noncommercial educational and scholarly use. Some Content may be provided via streaming or other means that restrict copying; you may not circumvent those restrictions. If you wish to distribute or make any of the Content available to others, or to use any Content commercially, or to use any Content for any purpose other than your personal, noncommercial educational and scholarly use, you must obtain any required permission from the copyright holder.

Printing

All TFs are enabled to print to a special departmental printer in the 5th floor computer lab. Jobs sent to this printer will not be billed to your Papercut account. The printer (WJH553-BW-soci-faculty-staff-TF-RA) is located on the counter opposite the lab printer in 553 and should automatically appear in your printer list when you are logged into a lab machine. Lab machines default to the lab printer, so you will need to manually select this printer for any print jobs that are course-related. Printing is expensive, so we ask you to be thoughtful about what materials you print and to keep the following guidelines in mind:

- Handouts should be posted on the course iSite whenever possible rather than printed and distributed.
- If handouts are absolutely necessary, please print only 1 copy on the printer and generate the remainder on the photocopier.
- In general, students should be asked to submit assignments on paper rather than electronically.
- If an assignment is accepted electronically, we ask that TFs grade them electronically when possible (using the commenting function in Adobe Acrobat or MSWord, or typing comments in an email). Electronic assignments should only be printed when necessary.

This printer should only be used for course-related printing. Contact Gretchen Gingo (gingo@wjh) with questions on printing.

Ordering books

The instructor's faculty assistant is responsible for ordering desk copies of all required texts for courses from publishers. If desk copies are unavailable, the faculty assistant will be granted permission to purchase books on behalf of instructors and TFs. The department will not reimburse TFs for books ordered without prior permission and confirmation that publishers have denied requests for desk copies. Please check with Deborah De Laurell (deborahd@wjh, 674 WJH) before purchasing any books. If you need to purchase a course pack, save the receipt, fill out a reimbursement form, and give it to Dotty Lukas (dlukas@wjh, 682 WJH).

Audio-Visual

LCD projectors are installed in 455, 501, and 601 WJH. Sociology also has an LCD projector, laptop, DVD/VHS, digital audio recorder, and two simple overhead projectors that can be reserved. To reserve equipment, complete an [Equipment Reservation Form](#) on the [Sociology intranet](#), which can be accessed from the Quick Links section at the bottom of the Sociology website (sociology.fas.harvard.edu).

Media & Technology Services (MTS) in Science Center B-02 also offers a variety of equipment that is free of charge for course use. See the MTS website: ims.fas.harvard.edu/services/rental/ for more information and the NEW on-line form to request equipment.

Copying

There is a copier located in 676 William James Hall that may be used for course-related copying. The department cannot reimburse for copies made through external vendors (e.g. Kinkos, Staples, FlashPrint).

Scanning

The photocopier also functions as a black-and white or color scanner. TFs can e-mail their scanned documents to themselves directly from the photocopier. Please stop by the front desk to have this functionality customized for individual use and to get a quick tutorial.

Food

Note that the Department can no longer reimburse you for food/snacks you provide for your section meetings.

Meals for Undergraduates

If your section conflicts with dinner (or lunch), undergraduates have the option of ordering a bagged meal from their dining hall. Bagged meals are free of charge to anyone enrolled in the undergraduate board program and can be requested online at: <http://www.dining.harvard.edu/myhuds/>.

THE NUTS AND BOLTS OF A COURSE

I. Course Websites

A course website is your friend! All Harvard students regularly check the course website, and it's the best place to post info about the course and do several useful things:

- ➔ collect assignments and papers: neat, time-stamped, and students can't complain about an email getting lost or similar excuses
- ➔ set up discussion boards, for general discussion or for weekly response papers
- ➔ send an email to the entire course (or create section lists) without having to type in separate email addresses yourself; and also always having a list of all emails sent to the class over the entire semester
- ➔ post handouts, readings, links, assignments, or any other files

It's also very easy to use the online course platform ("iSites")! Below is a quick-start guide to setting up your course website, but there are also many other ways to get help with your course website:

- iCommons website: http://isites.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=course_isites_help a comprehensive help section designed to help with most problems
- Workshops: there are 1-hour workshops every day for the first three weeks of each semester to go over the basics of creating or managing a course website
- Consulting Hours: ATG offers consulting hours every workday 1-5pm in the Science Center (Technology Showcase, SC 209) where you can always find two consultants on duty ready to assist with any problems or to walk you through using iSites
- Email help: you can also email help@fas.harvard.edu if you have immediate problems or need special attention.

Getting Started

In order to locate the website for a course, go through the Registrar's class listings. At the very beginning of the semester, the professor of the course will have three options:

1. to begin creating the site from scratch
2. to begin creating the site using the site from the last time the same course was offered
3. to delegate this task to someone else

If the professor chooses option 3 and adds you as the administrator, you will automatically get "administrative" access to the website.

If the professor needs to manually add you as an administrator once the website already exists, s/he will need to go to: "course site admin" (upper left-hand corner) and then click on the link "manage the list of site administrators". They'll need your fas address in order to add you.

The Course Website

The basic structure of the site is the PAGES (listed on the left-hand navigation menu), which usually include: Home, Syllabus, Assignments, Handouts, Readings, etc.

Each of these pages then consists of TOPIC BOXES (the little boxes on each page), which are the actual site content. These are already template-ready for you to use: there are specific ones already pre-created for announcements, for documents, for images, etc.

When you open the site, what you see on the screen is almost *exactly* what the students see, with the exception of the "course site admin" (upper left-hand corner), "enter design view" (upper right-hand

corner”) and “edit” (pencil icon) links, which allow you to modify content. These are the only three things you will ever use to make changes to the site.

- “*course site admin*”: allows you to make site-level changes, such as adding pages, adding or deleting administrators, viewing the course list, changing permissions (restricting to class members only, for instance), emailing the course, etc.
- “*enter design view*”: allows you to make page-level changes, such as adding topic boxes to that particular page.
- the *pencil icon*: allows you to make box-level changes, including adding text, documents, etc.

Adding Content

You first need to decide how many pages your site will have. If you have very little information (i.e. just the syllabus and some readings), you can add all of these onto the main page and not even bother creating additional pages. However, if you have a lot of material, you might want to organize it either according to categories (a separate page for Assignments, for Handouts etc), or by weeks (a separate page for each week).

Step 1: Add pages.

Click on “course site admin” in the upper left-hand corner of the site, then click on the “manage the pages” link. Then click on “add a page” and type in the name of the page (for instance, “Assignments”). Add as many pages as you need. Then click on “exit course site admin” in the upper left-hand corner in order to get back to your site.

Step 2: Add boxes.

Now go to whichever page you want to start “populating” with content. Once you are on the page you want to add content to, click on the “enter design view” link in the upper right-hand corner. Here you can choose what kinds of topic boxes you’d like to add. More below on the most commonly used topic boxes. Once you’re done adding boxes, click on “exit page design”.

Step 3. Add content to the topic boxes.

Once you’ve added a box, it will show up on the page, with three little icons in the upper right-hand corner of the box: a little pencil (“edit”), a red x (“delete”), and a printer (“print”). To edit the content, click on the little pencil. Then follow the instructions for how to add, delete, or change the info. Once you’re done, click on “exit edit view”.

Commonly used topic boxes

(You can find very detailed information on how to use each of these in the iSites help)

- *Course Documents*: for posting and organizing course files and links for access by participants (useful for any time you’ll need to upload files: for a box containing handouts, assignments, readings, syllabi, etc)
- *Discussions*: for setting up a discussion board with multiple forums to facilitate discussion between class members
- *Dropbox*: for collecting assignments from class members. The teaching staff sees all of the students’ assignments, but the student sees only their own assignment. Useful because it puts a timestamp on each assignment and helps you store assignments neatly.
- *Quick Survey*: for creating a poll to quickly gather input or feedback.
- *Reserve Reading List*: for creating a course's reserve reading list.

- *Shared Document Area*: for creating a sharing area for class members – everyone in the class can upload files here.
- *Sign up*: displays a calendar of office hours and events for sign up by students.
- *Text Area*: for just typing plain text.
- *Web Links*: for posting and organizing a list of websites.

Note: some of these boxes are designed for class members only, meaning two things: 1) you can't use them until students are officially registered for the course and appear on the Registrar's list (so you can't have a discussion forum for the first week of class, for instance). 2) even if you make the website publicly accessible, these boxes will be viewable only by class members.

Note about class list: only the course professor can see the full list of class members (through "course site admin" >> "manage the class list"). If you need to access to the class list, because you are in charge of sectioning, want to create email groups or view facebook by section, the professor will have to manually give you permission to see this class list. You can tell the professor to do this by: going to "course site admin" >> "site administrators" and in the list of administrators, checking the "view enrollment" box. Only the professor can check this box.

Site accessibility: The default setting for all course websites is "Harvard ID only". If you want to change this, you can do so either for the entire site (through "course site admin") or for an individual page (under "enter design view") or even for a single topic box (through the pencil icon). If you are posting a lot of copyrighted material, it is a good idea to restrict the site or pages with readings to "class members only".

II. Managing Students

The Importance of Good Records

Generally, we think about a TF assignment as an opportunity to teach. However, part of a successful semester as a TF involves being a good administrator. It is not unusual for a TF with a normal 2 section course-load to have to manage, administer to, and keep track of nearly 40 different individuals with different interests, abilities, problems, and schedules. You might be the best teacher and best discussion leader in the world, but if you fail to administer the course “fairly”—from responding to e-mails promptly to grading work consistently—then you run the risk of drawing the students’ (and the professor’s) ire.

Perhaps the most important step in administering a class successfully is creating a system of records for the course that works for you. But here is a list of things you will probably want to keep track of:

- Create a spreadsheet for each section to keep track of all the grades. This should be relatively easy to do before the semester by looking at the assignments on the course syllabus. Confer with fellow TFs, as they might have already created one that you can borrow. As you fill it out throughout the semester, make sure you keep it confidential and make sure you keep back-up copies of it—print it out every time you change it if you need to—as computers fail for teachers almost as much as they do for students.
- Create a spreadsheet for attendance, if necessary. Some professors have pretty strict attendance policies for lectures and/or sections, so make sure you are keeping track of it because you want to give students credit for their efforts. Whether you take attendance by roll call, by eye, or by sign-up sheet, it is not a bad idea to keep a paper record in addition to electronic records.
- Create an electronic file for all course-related e-mails and correspondences with students. First, this will help keep your overflowing Inbox smaller, and more importantly, it will help you keep track of e-conversations in case any problems or questions arise. You should also get in the habit of cc’ing yourself for all course-wide/section-wide e-mails you send out as well.
- Class participation is graded very differently from course to course. For some professors, they expect you to give a grade for each meeting, while other professors go by an “impression” obtained by the end of the semester and use participation as a potential “fudge factor” as to whether a student’s calculated grade gets moved up or down. The more participation counts as part of a student’s grade and the more strictly it is graded, the more important it is for you to take 20-30 minutes after each section to grade and/or write notes about what students said in section. Generally, trying to do this during section is distracting to you and your students, so it is best to do it afterwards.
- Depending on the course head’s preference, you might want to have a file/folder for each section you teach for the various pieces of paper that students might hand to you over the course of the semester—doctor’s notes, letters of accommodation for tests, etc. Keep it somewhere safe, as these things are usually confidential.

It might seem like worrying about good records and paperwork might turn you into a bit of a bureaucrat, but really, the reason behind these efforts is to ensure that you are being as fair and impartial to your students when it comes to their grades. There might be other things you will need to keep track of for individual courses—don’t be afraid to approach former TFs about their methods.

Attendance Policy

A course's attendance policy is determined by a professor and enforced by you. This means that you want to make sure it is clear to you so you can explain it to your students and so you can enforce it fairly. There are some questions you will want to know the answer to. Is lecture attendance mandatory or not? If it is mandatory, how many unexcused absences is a student allowed without consequence—3, 4, etc? And if a student exceeds the limit of unexcused absences, what are the specific penalties? What if a student greatly exceeds the limit? Is section attendance mandatory? Do section absences only affect a student's class participation grade? And if so, how? Or is there an additional penalty? Are there ways to "make up" absences—such as extra response papers, etc? What are acceptable excuses for an absence?

Exceptions and Excuses

Harvard students tend to be over-involved in life outside of the classroom. This means that a lot of them will need to miss class because of extra-curricular activities and because of serious illness or injury. The Harvard University Faculty Handbook is pretty clear:

Student Attendance

All students are expected to attend classes regularly. Absence from academic exercises for whatever reason, including representing the College in extracurricular and athletic activities, does not relieve a student from responsibility for any part of the work required by the course during the period of absence. Students who, by their classroom absence, neglect work in a course may be excluded from the course. (See "Addressing Student Problems": Neglect of Academic Work by Students: Exclusion.)

Students should not leave the Cambridge vicinity during Reading Periods or Examination Periods or for an extended time during the term without the permission of their Resident Dean.

If a student claims that a serious injury or illness has prevented them from attending class, then you will want to give them the benefit of the doubt (i.e. don't express skepticism) and ask them for a doctor's note or a note from their Resident Dean. Students with real injuries or illnesses will have no problems getting a note. If a student claims to be suffering from mental health issues, it is important to extend them the same courtesy as well and it is entirely appropriate to ask for a note from a doctor or Resident Dean. If a student misses an extended period of time and class assignments due to some kind of health issue and you have documentation of the health issue, then you should, in consultation with the course head, allow the student a fair amount of time to make up the missed work.

If a student does not provide a note, you should feel free to contact the Resident Dean and explain the situation and express your concern. Again, it is important to avoid sounding skeptical or antagonistic in these situations. Try to be sympathetic and concerned. Often times you will find out there is more to the student's story when you contact his or her Resident Dean (see the attached list of Resident Deans in the Appendix).

As for students who miss class because of their involvement with a sports team or another extracurricular activity, the course policy should be determined by the professor. It is generally a good idea to allow for a certain number of unexcused absences to allow students to miss the occasional class for just such occasions. If there is course policy excusing some absences for extracurricular activities, it needs to be applied fairly and evenly, from the football team to the debate team. As a rule of thumb, if a student approaches you and tells you that he or she will miss

every Thursday lecture because of team practice then you might advise them to speak to the professor or to look for another class.

Dealing with Late Assignments and Extension Requests

Every course should have a clear policy about how late assignments—from minor responses posted on the course website to final papers—will be treated. For minor assignments, such as brief response papers, this might mean receiving no credit, or receiving a minor deduction (e.g. from a check to check minus). For a more significant assignment, like a paper, this might mean some standard deduction per day late (e.g. 3 points per day late or one-third letter grade per day, etc.).

If a student approaches you before an assignment is due about an extension (and they will), then you should confer with the professor. Serious medical issues are certainly reasons for extensions, as are deaths in the family. Express your sympathy and concern and politely ask for a note from a doctor or Resident Dean at their earliest convenience. However, you will also encounter a variety of ambiguous excuses—“my team is going away for a tournament this weekend”; “my computer crashed”; “I broke up with my boyfriend”—that will require a judgment call. Discuss each case with your professor or Head TF. The most important question is whether or not it is fair to the other students to offer this student an extension. Would you offer the same extension to anyone else in this situation? However, don’t be afraid to enforce deadlines. For example, if a student needs to take an extra day to write a better paper because of a debate tournament this weekend, then losing one-third of a letter grade is a fair trade off that student should be willing to accept if your policy is well-established and fairly enforced.

Dealing with Missed Exams

There are two types of exams: “hour and midterm examinations” (scheduled by the professor and usually occurring during class time), and “regularly scheduled exams” (final exams scheduled during exam period and proctored by University staff). The rules on missed exams differ for the two types.

The rules for students who miss *hour and midterm exams* are clearly stated by the Faculty handbook:

Hour and Midterm Examinations

The administration of hour and midterm examinations is the responsibility of the instructor; these exams should normally be scheduled during regular class meeting times. In cases where hour and midterm examinations must be given outside regular class meeting times the course head must offer a makeup examination for documented academic conflicts. Ordinarily, the Office of the Registrar has no role in the administration of hour or midterm examinations. Instructors are required by law to offer makeup examinations to students who are absent from hour and midterm examinations for the observance of a religious holiday. Instructors are not required to offer makeup examinations to students who are absent from hour and midterm examinations for other reasons.

In cases other than absence for a religious holiday, if an instructor is satisfied that the absence is necessary and that omitting a grade for the missed hour or midterm examination will not affect the student’s course grade, final evaluation of the student’s work in the course may be determined from the remainder of the course work. The instructor may also elect to give a makeup examination. The responsibility for such decisions rests with the instructor

only and not with the Dean's Office or the Administrative Board. Instructors may also decide whether to require the attendance of graduate students at hour and midterm examinations.

Although instructors are obligated to offer makeup examinations only in the case of absence for the observance of a religious holiday, students who have obtained proper Harvard University Health Services (HUHS) documentation of illness may not be penalized for their absence from hour and midterm examinations. The appropriate form must be signed by a HUHS medical professional and given to the student's Resident Dean who will write the student a letter acknowledging receipt of the HUHS form. This letter may be presented to the instructor as certification of the student's illness.

Students who will miss an exam for religious reasons should inform you or the professor well in advance of the exam. If students do not show up for an exam unexpectedly, you should follow up with them as soon as possible. If they missed it for a medical reason, then they will need to provide the appropriate documentation. If they missed it for another reason, then the professor will need to decide as to whether or not the absence is excused. Students whose absences are excused should be offered a fair make-up exam (usually a different exam from the one the rest of the class took).

For missed exams during exam period ("*regularly scheduled exams*"), the matter is out of the course-head's hands and dealt with by the Registrar and Administrative Board. Procedures for dealing with this are outlined in the Faculty Handbook:

Students who miss a regularly-scheduled midyear or final examination administered by the Office of the Registrar during the Midyear or Final Examination Period are given a failing grade of Absent (ABS) which will be changed only if the student is granted and takes a makeup examination. Unexcused absences are counted as failures. No other grade can be accepted. Exam substitutions not administered by the Registrar's Office, including take-home examinations and special final projects, are not "*regularly-scheduled*" examinations; therefore, ABS cannot be used in these cases. If, after an absence from a regularly scheduled midyear or final examination, a student is granted a makeup examination by the Administrative Board, the appropriate grade is then submitted after completion of the examination. A special grade sheet is provided for this purpose.

The Administrative Board of Harvard College has sole jurisdiction over granting makeup examinations for undergraduates. The Registrar's Office has been authorized by the Graduate School to approve or deny makeup petitions for graduate students. Course heads may not give a makeup midyear or final examination without notification from the Office of the Registrar. Moreover, course heads may not give a makeup examination at any time or location other than that specified by the Office of the Registrar. The granting of a makeup examination by the Administrative Board does not imply that the student may receive credit for any assigned work in the course not submitted by the end of the Examination Period.

Makeup examinations are ordinarily granted by the Administrative Board in cases of medically documented illness or extraordinary circumstances over which the student had no control, such as a death in the family. Makeups are

sometimes granted to undergraduate participants in intercollegiate competition, but only when examinations *in absentia* cannot be arranged. By vote of the Faculty Council, makeup examinations may also be granted when a student who is in good standing in the course misses an examination because of inadvertence, provided the petition is supported by the course head and filed on time. Undergraduate and graduate students in the FAS may be granted a makeup examination on the grounds of inadvertence only once during their tenure at Harvard.

If called upon to do so, course heads must prepare appropriate makeup examinations and grade them. Makeup exams are usually administered the third week of the term. Ordinarily a makeup examination should not be a duplicate of the original exam. Course grades dependent upon makeup examinations should be reported to the Office of the Registrar no later than one week after the date of such examination.

Grade-Grubbers and Re-Grades

One of the greatest joys of teaching at Harvard is getting to work with such smart and ambitious students. One of the greatest challenges of teaching at Harvard is getting to work with such smart and ambitious students. At some point in your TF career a student will probably question a grade you gave him/her. They might approach you directly or they might go to the professor without telling you. In all fairness to the students, you might have made a mistake in calculating the grade, marked a right answer wrong, or misunderstood their paper. However, that is often not the case.

Ideally, your course has a clear re-grading policy. And hopefully, that re-grading policy is not seen as an easy way to turn an A- into an A—otherwise you and the professor will be inundated with requests. This is something you will want to discuss with the professor and make clear to the students, usually well before the first major assignment. Typically, if you have given your student the grade, the professor or perhaps the Head TF will do the re-grade. Some professors will not allow any re-grading. Some professors will be willing to help any student who comes along. Some will only re-grade assignments with grades below a certain level (say C+). One clever way to handle re-grading that discourages a flood of grade-grubbers (i.e. students just looking to get any extra points they can) is this: any assignment will be re-graded upon request, but the grade given might go up or down. Most professors have their TFs' backs when it comes to grades. If the grade you gave is changed, don't feel insulted. Grading can be difficult and subjective, no matter how hard we try to make it otherwise. And students know this.

As such, grade-grubbing often extends beyond single assignments. Many smart, ambitious students are very good negotiators and have enormous amounts of confidence in getting what they want. Sometimes they might appear bold, if not brazen, in their attempts to get a better grade in the course, but a lot of the times it is more subtle. Some will go behind your back to the professor. Rather than get insulted or upset by this behavior, the best way to handle it is by speaking to the professor about the student in private. If the student is pestering you, tell them you will speak to the professor about his or her request because the professor decides the grade (which is somewhat true). The professor is the ultimate arbiter when it comes to grades and it is his/her responsibility to resolve disagreements regarding grades. If the student is going to the professor about it, then you want to make sure the professor hears your honest and often more familiar evaluation of the student and his or her work. Ultimately, you want the student's grade to be a fair and accurate evaluation of his or her work, especially in consideration of fairness to other students.

Students with Difficulties

(sections adapted from FAS “Head TF Guide”)

Instructors and Teaching Fellows are not responsible for counseling students on personal or emotional difficulties, even when those problems affect academic work. Undergraduate students who seem to be unusually upset or who are in need of special help should be referred to their Resident Dean (Allston Burr Resident Dean or Resident Dean of Freshmen). Student’s House affiliations are listed on the final course enrollment list (sent to the course head early in the semester). See attached list of resident deans by House, and do not hesitate to contact them should you have questions or concerns about a particular student.

Other useful resources are:

- The Mental Health Service of the University Health Services (495-2042)
- The Bureau of Study Counsel (495-2581)

Students with Disabilities

It is important to get information about students with disabilities as early in the semester as possible. You might need to make accommodations for students who have hearing or vision problems, writing problems, or particular needs in terms of note-taking, exam taking, access, section room arrangements, the taping of lectures, extra assistance, etc. Therefore, it is a good idea to make this announcement and ask students to contact you if they need special consideration as early as your first section, and well in advance of the first major assignment or the course midterm. The student in question should bring you a letter from the Accessibility Education Office stating that s/he needs extra time for assignments or exams or similar adjustments (see appendix for sample letter from AEO). You can contact the AEO at Holyoke Center 486, 496-8707 or see <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~aeo> .

Failing Students

If at any time during the semester you believe that a student is in danger of failing, you should communicate this with the student, speak to the course-head, and contact the student’s Resident Dean. In the middle of the semester, the Registrar will also send the course head grade sheets and mid-term reports for students. These forms (only filled out for those students doing unsatisfactory work) go to Resident Dean’s. Please make sure you fill out one of these if you think a student is in danger of failing the course.

Departmental Writing Fellow

In collaboration with the Harvard Writing Project and the Writing Center, the Sociology Department has created the position of Departmental Writing Fellow (DWF). The purpose of the position is to provide pedagogical support for the undergraduate curriculum. The DWF will be available for one-on-one consultations with students enrolled in departmental courses who wish to improve their writing. Consultations will be tailored to individual student needs and will include assistance in developing, assessing, and structuring arguments, as well as in understanding the conventions and expectations of writing sociology. The DWF will hold regular office hours and schedule individual appointments. In addition the DWF will also organize and conduct department-wide initiatives to improve student writing as well as the quality of writing instruction that the department provides. Christy Ley (cley@fas.harvard.edu) is the Departmental Writing Fellow for fall semester 2013. Jeremy Levine (jrlevine@fas.harvard.edu) takes over in spring 2014.

III. Working with Your Professor and Fellow TFs

Below is a list of some topics and questions you might want to bring up with the professor and your fellow TFs. It is by no means extensive and it is based on a lot of the topics covered throughout this handbook. Working for a large course will be very different for a small course, but getting some of these things figured up front will help things go more smoothly.

Course policies

- Attendance
- Grading
- Late Work
- Extensions
- Re-grading
- Professor's Expectations for TFs
- What is the role of the course section in relation to the lectures? Is it discussion or clarification and elaboration?
- How should you grade student assignments, such as reaction papers? How should you grade class participation? Is there a target distribution for the assignment or course?
- Are assignments (e.g. weekly reaction papers or major papers) already written, or will TFs be expected to help develop?
- How much guidance will the professor want to give for section? Or will the TFs be expected to work relatively independently?
- Will there be weekly (or bi-weekly) meetings for section planning with the professor and all the TFs?

TF's expectations for each other

- How will you divvy up the various administrative tasks, especially at the beginning of the semester? (If you are in a large course, the Head TF is usually responsible these things, but usually they can use your help.)
- Will you share section planning (e.g. alternating "taking the lead," typing notes, etc)? Will you meet weekly, even without the professor? Or will you work independently?
- Will you allow occasional "section switching" when a student from another's section needs to make up a section by attending yours? If so, how will you handle it?
- How will you handle grading major assignments like exams or papers? Will you have "grading parties"? Will you grade exams or papers "blindly"? Will you be responsible for only your own students? Will you "swap" some papers or exams to ensure your grading standards are calibrated fairly?

Appendix

- a) List of Resident Deans
- b) 2013-14 Academic Calendar
- c) TF Pay Scale (2013-14)
- d) Grading Rubric – two samples of grading rubrics
- e) ASA Citation Guide
- f) Sample Section Syllabus
- g) Media Request Form – for getting media equipment from Media and Technology services for courses that happen on a weekly basis (except in the Science Center
- h) Accessible Education Office sample letter –students need to obtain this in order to receive extra time (or other adjustments) to class requirements
- i) Book Scanning Instruction sheet – for using our department copier as a scanner

a) 2013-14 List of Resident Deans

House or Office	First	Last Name	Position	Office Location	E-mail	Office Phone
Adams	Meghan	Lockwood	Interim Allston Burr Resident Dean	Adams C-12	ad-abrd@fas	495-2260
Cabot	Emily	Stokes-Rees	Allston Burr Resident Dean	Cabot A Entry	ca-abrd@fas	495-8744
Currier	Laura	Johnson	Allston Burr Resident Dean	Currier House	cu-abrd@fas	495-8101
Dudley	Karen	Flood	Allston Burr Resident Dean	Lehman Hall 3rd Fl.	dd-abrd@fas	495-2256
Dunster	Carlos	Diaz Rosillo	Allston Burr Resident Dean	Dunster J-36	dn-abrd@fas	495-2263
Eliot	Michael	Canfield	Acting Allston Burr Resident Dean	Eliot K-11	el-abrd@fas	495-2275
Kirkland	Cory	Way	Allston Burr Resident Dean	Kirkland H-12	ki-abrd@fas	495-2276
Leverett	Lauren	Brandt	Allston Burr Resident Dean	Leverett F-5	le-abrd@fas	495-2279
Lowell	Caitlin	Casey	Allston Burr Resident Dean	Lowell House Office	lo-abrd@fas	495-2283
Mather	Luke	Leafgren	Allston Burr Resident Dean	Mather House Office	ma-abrd@fas	495-4829
Pforzheimer	Lisa	Boes	Allston Burr Resident Dean	56 Linnaean St.	pf-abrd@fas	495- 8176
Quincy	Judith	Flynn Chapman	Allston Burr Resident Dean	Quincy 100	qu-abrd@fas	495-2286
Winthrop	Greg	Peeples	Acting Allston Burr Resident Dean	Winthrop J-23	wi-abrd@fas	495-2296
FDO – Elm Yard	Jasmine	Waddell	Resident Dean of Freshmen	6 Prescott St.	elm-rd@fas	495-1577
FDO – Crimson Yard	Catherine	Shapiro	Resident Dean of Freshmen	6 Prescott St.	crim-rd@fas	495-1577
FDO – Ivy Yard	Michael	Ranen	Resident Dean of Freshmen	6 Prescott St.	ivy-rd@fas	495-1577
FDO – Oak Yard	Madeleine	Currie	Resident Dean of Freshman	6 Prescott St.	oak-rd@fas	495-1577

**Office of Student Life <http://osl.fas.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do>
where full directory may be found.**

Academic Calendar 2013-14

GSAS Registration	Aug.28 (W)
Registration Deadline for all Undergraduate students	Sept.3 (Tu)
Academic year begins. First meeting of fall term classes.	Sept.3 (Tu)
University Holiday: Labor Day	Sept.2 (M)
Study Card Day	Sept.10 (Tu)
University Holiday: Columbus Day	Oct.14 (M)
Classes will be held on Veteran's Day.	Nov.11 (M)
Thanksgiving Recess begins	Nov.27 (W)
Thanksgiving Recess ends	Dec.1 (Su)
Last Day of Fall Term Classes	Dec.4 (W)
Fall Reading Period Begins	Dec.5 (Th)
Fall Reading Period Ends	Dec.11 (W)
Fall Term Final Examinations Begin	Dec.12 (Th)
Fall Term Final Examinations End	Dec.20 (F)
College:	
Winter Recess Begins	Dec.21 (Sa)
Limited Opening for Pre-Approved students	Jan.2 (Th)
Wintersession Begins for Undergraduates choosing to return	Jan.17 (F)
Wintersession ends for Undergraduates	Jan.26 (Su)
Winter Recess Ends	Jan.21 (Tu)
Graduate School:	
Winter Recess Begins	Dec.21 (Sa)
Winter Recess Ends	Jan.1 (W)
January @ GSAS Begins	Jan.13 (M)
January @ GSAS Ends	Jan.24 (F)
University Holiday: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	Jan.20 (M)
Spring Term begins. First meeting of spring term classes	Jan.27 (M)
Study Card Day	Jan.31 (F)
University Holiday: President's Day	Feb.17 (M)
Spring Recess begins	Mar.15 (Sa)
Spring Recess ends	Mar.23 (Su)
Last day spring classes	April 30 (W)
Reading Period begins	May 1 (Th)
Spring Reading Period ends	May 8 (Th)
Spring Examinations Period begins	May 9 (F)
Spring Examination Period ends	May 17 (Sa)
Harvard University Commencement	May 29 (Th)
University holiday: Memorial Day	May 26 (M)
Summer School Begins	Jun.23 (M)
Summer School Ends	Aug.8 (F)

c)

TF Pay Scale - 2013-14
Department of Sociology

Position	Fraction	Per Term	Section Size
		Salary	
Departmental TF *	0.20	\$5,050	n/a
Departmental Writing Fellow *	0.20	\$5,050	n/a
Head TF (enrollment over 100)	0.20	\$5,050	n/a
Lecture Course (intro and 100 level)			
First Section	0.20	\$5,050	18 - 20
Additional Section	0.20	\$5,050	18 - 20
Methods Course (Quantitative and Qualitative)			
First Section	0.25	\$6,312.50	15-18
Additional Section	0.25	\$6,312.50	15-18
Sociology 97 (Sophomore Tutorial)			
First Section	0.30	\$7,575	8 - 10
Additional Section	0.30	\$7,575	8 - 10
Head Teaching Fellow *	0.10	\$2,525	n/a
Sociology 99s (Senior Thesis Writing Seminar)	0.20	\$5,050	12 - 15
Sociology 99r (Senior Thesis Advising) *			
First Student	0.07	\$1,768	n/a
Additional Students	0.07	\$1,768	n/a
Concentration Adviser *	0.10	\$2,525	40
* Annual Appointment			
Annual Base Salary (Senior Rate)	50,500		

updated March 28, 2013

Sample - Grading Rubric 1

1. The criteria for **grading papers** are:

- a. writing style and format
- b. clarity and organization
- c. focus; cogency of argumentation
- d. extent to which paper makes good use of appropriate evidence
- e. extent to which paper presents the material and the analysis in an original, thought-provoking way

2. **Grading of papers:**

- A. Papers and examinations in the **A range** exhibit strikingly thought-provoking, original thinking and/or modes of presentation and argumentation, expressed in clear, cogent, error-free writing. Only work that makes excellent use of evidence and offers insightful analysis will be considered for an A grade.
- B. Papers and examinations in the **B range** exhibit mastery of the evidence and offer a good analysis expressed in clear, cogent, error-free writing.
- C. Papers and examinations in the **C range** exhibit inadequate understanding of the evidence and inadequate analysis and/or deficient, error-plagued writing.
- D. Papers and examinations in the **D range** exhibit wholly inadequate understanding of the evidence or analysis combined with deficient, error-plagued writing.

Pluses, minuses, or flat grades within any of these ranges reflect the instructor's judgment of the merits of the paper or examination relative to other papers in the same range.

Sample – Grading Rubric 2 *

Research Paper Grading Report

Name:

Writing Quality

Criteria	Credit
<i>Length:</i>	/5
<i>Spelling, Grammar, Punctuation:</i>	/15
<i>Organization of Information:</i>	/15
<i>Documentation:</i>	/15

Substance

Criteria	Credit
<i>Content:</i>	/20
<i>Integration of Course Material:</i>	/15
<i>Analytical thinking:</i>	/15

TOTAL POINTS: 0/100

COMMENTS:

ASA Style

E. H. Butler Library

American Sociological Association (ASA)

The *ASA Style Guide* was designed for use by authors preparing manuscripts for publication in American Sociological Association journals. This Butler Library guide to ASA style is intended to aid students who are directed by their instructors to use "ASA style" when writing research papers. Consult the *ASA Style Guide* for answers to questions not covered herein.

American Sociological Association. 1997. *ASA Style Guide*. 2nd ed. Washington, DC: American Sociological Association. **Ref HM 73 .A54 1997**

American Sociological Association. 2005. *Quick Style Guide for Students Writing Sociology Papers*. Washington, DC: American Sociological Association. Retrieved April 27, 2005 (<http://www.asanet.org/apap/quickstyle.html>).

Students are expected to use a specific bibliographic style to help foster clear communication. Using a bibliographic style gives evidence of the students' careful scholarship and helps them avoid plagiarism. As with any writing assignment students should pay attention to grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, usage, and accuracy. Should the instructor give directions that vary from ASA style, students should follow those directions.

MANUSCRIPT FORMAT

- Use a word processor and a good printer.
- Choose 12-point type and print on 8½ by 11 inch white paper with 1¼-inch margins on all four sides.
- All text must be double-spaced including the references.
- Use the word processor's *italics* feature for book and periodical titles.
- Have a separate title page giving the full title of the paper, author, etc.
- If required, on another separate page provide a short (150 – 200 words) abstract headed with the title of the paper.
- Begin the text on a separate page headed with the title of the paper.
- If section headings are used in the paper, follow this sequence:

THIS IS A FIRST LEVEL HEADING
(All caps, centered or left justified)

This is a Second Level Heading
(Italics, upper and lower case, centered or left justified)

- The beginning of the paper should NOT have a heading, i.e. do not use

INTRODUCTION

- Use citations in text. The citation includes the last name(s) of the author(s) and the year of publication. Page numbers should be included to identify the source of direct quotations. The page numbers follow the year of publication and are separated from the year by a colon without spaces. The format of the citation may vary to suit the style of the writer. See examples below.

CITATIONS IN TEXT

- DIRECT QUOTES – Whenever an author’s exact words are used, document the source.
 - For shorter quotes:
Quotations in text must begin and end with quotation marks; the citation follows the end quote mark and precedes the period.

“In 1998, however, the data were reported by more specific job type which showed that technologically oriented jobs paid better”
(Hildenbrand 1999:47).

Hildenbrand reported that “in 1998, however, the data were reported by more specific job type which showed that technologically oriented jobs paid better” (1999:47).

Use p. (lower case p period) for the page number when the author and year do not accompany it in the citation.

Hildenbrand (1999) stated that “in 1998, however, the data were reported by more specific job type which showed that technologically oriented jobs paid better” (p. 47).

- For longer quotes:
Set longer quotations off in a separate paragraph or block quotation that is indented from the text, single-spaced, and in a smaller type size. Do not use quotations marks. The citation follows the period in a block quotation.

If necessity is the mother of Invention, then perhaps desperation might be Inspiration’s father. How many useful innovations that seem to others like bright and shiny new ideas are created as the result of a last-ditch attempt to fix a part of the world that had just been noticed to be “out of order?” Perhaps that is not a very romantic view of change, but it often fits experience. And if a new idea works, by bringing about needed improvements, it looks better and better. (Besemer et al. 1993:69)

If the author's name is in the text followed by the year in parentheses, put the page reference, preceded by P. (upper case P period) in parentheses following the end period of the quote.

According to Besemer et al. (1993):

If necessity is the mother of Invention, then perhaps desperation might be Inspiration's father. How many useful innovations that seem to others like bright and shiny new ideas are created as the result of a last-ditch attempt to fix a part of the world that had just been noticed to be "out of order?" Perhaps that is not a very romantic view of change, but it often fits experience. And if a new idea works, by bringing about needed improvements, it looks better and better. (P. 69)

- **PARAPHRASES** – When using an author's ideas or re-phrasing his or her words, even though not quoting directly, document the source. Use the same format as shown above for the citations in text, but omit the page number.

...whenever it occurred as reported in another study by Pain (2004).

...whenever it occurred (Pain 2004).

Additional Examples of Citations in Text

- Joint (two) authors: give both names:
(Moon and Williams 1993:343)
- Three authors: give all three names in the first citation and use "et al." subsequently:
(Scott, Treas, and Richards 2004) - first citation
(Scott et al. 2004) - subsequent citations
- Four or more authors (e.g. Kashani, Daniel, Dandoy, and Holcomb): use "et al." in all citations including the first one:
(Kashani et al. 1999) - first & subsequent citations
- For institutional or government authorship, supply minimum identification from the beginning of the complete reference:
(U. S. Bureau of the Census 1998:482)
- Separate a series of references with semicolons. List them in a single logical order throughout the paper, e.g. chronologically or alphabetically:
(Moon and Williams 1993; Kashani 1999; Scott et al 2004) or
(Kashani 1999; Moon and Williams 1993; Scott et al. 2004)
- Refer to specific chapters, tables, appendices, etc.:
(Clawson 1998, chap.2)
(Neuman 1994, table 3.3)

REFERENCE LIST

- Begin the reference list on a separate page headed with the word "References" in upper and lower case (no quotation marks).
- All references cited in the text must appear in the reference list.
- All references in the reference list must be cited in the text.
- Use hanging indentation.
- Double-space the references.
- Invert the authors' names; if there are two or more authors in a citation, invert only the first author's name.
- The reference list should be arranged alphabetically by authors' last names. If there is no author, arrange the first significant word in the title in the alphabetical sequence.
- Arrange multiple items by the same author in order by year of publication, earliest year first.
- Use six hyphens and a period (-----.) in place of the name(s) for second and succeeding occurrences of works by the same author.
- Distinguish works by the same author in the same year by adding letters, e.g. (2003a, 2003b, 2003c).
- Use city and state (U. S. postal abbreviation) for all cities except New York. For cities outside of the U. S. provide the country.
- Use *italics* for book and periodical titles; underline if italics are not available.

Examples of References

Examples are single-spaced to conserve space.

○ **Books – One Author**

Prus, Robert C. 1996. *Symbolic Interaction and Ethnographic Research: Intersubjectivity and the Study of Human Lived Experience*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

○ **Books – Second Book by a Cited Author** (i.e. Prus, the same author as in the preceding reference; use the name if other authors intervene)

-----, 1997. *Subcultural mosaics and intersubjective realities: an ethnographic research agenda for pragmatizing the social sciences*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

○ **Books – Two Authors**

Renzetti, Claire M. and Daniel J. Curran. 1998. *Living Sociology*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

○ **Books – Edited**

Turner, Stephen P., ed. 1996. *Social Theory and Sociology: The Classics and Beyond*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

- **Books – Edition Other Than First**
Booth, Barbara, ed. 1999. *Thesaurus of Sociological Indexing Terms*. 5th ed. Bethesda, MD: Cambridge Scientific Abstracts.
- **Books – No Author**
The Chicago Manual of Style. 2003. 15th ed. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- **Books – Chapters**
Neuman, W. Lawrence. 1994. "Qualitative Research Design." Pp. 316-29 in *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. 2nd ed. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- **Articles from Collected Works**
Sampson, Robert J. 1992. "Family Management and Child Development: Insights from Social Disorganization Theory." Pp. 63-93 in *Advances in Criminology Theory*, vol. 3, *Facts, Frameworks, and Forecasts*, edited by J. McCord. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction.
- **Articles from Journals – One Author**
Mehdizadeh, Shahla A. 2002. "Health and Long-Term Care Use Trajectories of Older Disabled Women." *Gerontologist* 42:304-13.

Issue number and/or exact date are unnecessary if pages are numbered consecutively within a volume.
- **Articles from Journals – Two Authors**
Schoenberg, Nancy E. and Hege Ravdal. 2000. "Using Vignettes in Awareness and Attitudinal Research." *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 3(1):63-74.

Use the issue number or exact date for journals that do not number pages consecutively within a volume.
- **Articles from Journals – Multiple Authors**
Lanz, Margherita, Raffaella Iafrate, Rosa Rosnati, and Eugenia Scabini. 1999. "Parent-Child Communication and Adolescent Self-Esteem in Separated, Intercountry Adoptive and Intact Non-Adoptive Families." *Journal of Adolescence* 22:785-94.
- **Articles from Magazines and Newspapers**
Gibbs, Nancy. 1999. "Noon in the Garden of Good and Evil: The Tragedy at Columbine Began As a Crime Story But Is Becoming a Parable." *Time*, May 17, 153:54.

Snyder, Donna. 1999. "Judge Orders Teen's Hearing in Murder Case to Be Closed." *The Buffalo News*, May 18, 1B.

○ **Articles from Commercial Electronic Databases**

Graham, Lorie M. 1998. "The Past Never Vanishes: A Contextual Critique of the Existing Indian Family Doctrine" *American Indian Law Review*, 23:1 (32,854 words). Retrieved April 26, 2005 (<http://web.lexis-nexis.com/universe>).

Alaggia, Ramona. 2002. "Balancing Acts: Reconceptualizing Support in Maternal Response to Intra-Familial Child Sexual Abuse." *Clinical Social Work Journal*. 30:41 (16 pages). Retrieved April 26, 2005 (<http://web5.infotrac.galegroup.com/>).

○ **Articles from Electronic Journals**

Jones, Bobby L., Daniel S. Nagin, and Kathryn Roeder. 2001. "A SAS Procedure Based on Mixture Models for Estimating Developmental Trajectories." *Sociological Methods and Research*, 29:374-93. Retrieved April 26, 2005 (<http://ejournals.ebsco.com/direct.asp?ArticleID=69FFFKJUPV24AHCUR77Q>).

○ **Electronic Books**

Torres, Carlos Alberto and Theodore R. Mitchell, eds. 1998. *Sociology of Education: Emerging Perspectives*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press. Retrieved April 26, 2005 (<http://www.netlibrary.com/>).

○ **Information Posted on Web Pages, etc.**

"Social Science Information Gateway: Sociology." 2005. University of Surrey Retrieved April 27, 2005 (<http://sosig.esrc.bris.ac.uk/sociology/>).

"Statistical Resources on the Web: Sociology." 2002. University of Michigan Documents Center. Retrieved April 26, 2005 (<http://www.lib.umich.edu/govdocs/stsoc.html>).

For additional information on citing electronic resources consult:

The Chicago Manual of Style. 2003. 15th ed. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. **Ref Z 253 .U69 2003**

May 4, 2005
Carol J. Richards
Librarian

Sample Section Syllabus

Sociology 190, Life & Death in the USA: Medicine & Disease in Social Context

Wed, 11am, WJH 501. Teaching Fellow: Mark Pachucki

What we're here for...

We're here to help you to question the basic premises set forth by the weekly readings; and to help you question the assumptions they rest upon, as well as the implications they hold for society in general, and for different social groups in society. Section is the place to clarify ambiguous concepts in the class, in conversation with your classmates; the place to question comments made in lecture by Professor Christakis, or made by me; the place to disagree, debate, maybe agree, or maybe to agree to disagree. That's why we're all here.

You should expect me...

...to be engaged, available, and helpful. In the past, I've found it effective to circulate an email a day or two prior to section outlining some significant points of the week, which we can then raise in discussion. This is just to get us started, though; for your own sakes, it's a good practice to make a list of several questions that came to you while you were doing the readings.

Office hours

Regular office hours are Mondays, 10-12n, in WJH 568. If you let me know you're coming by, it helps me be better prepared to answer your questions, but you're always welcome to just drop in. Outside of that time, I'm available most Thurs & Friday mornings as well, or by appt.

Review sections

- *Midterm review Q&A*: Monday, March 6, 10:00-12n, & Friday, March 10, 2 - 4 pm will be devoted to answering any midterm exam review questions you may have. Come by yourself, come with friends. WJH 568.
- *Group final review*: Friday, April 28, 12n-2pm. Room TBA.

Getting in touch with me

Email me at: [REDACTED]. Call me at: [REDACTED]. Drop by WJH 568 if you're in the neighborhood. But please give me the courtesy of 24 hours to respond when emailing. I check my work email at my office during the week, M-F, and if you write me, you can usually expect a response that day. I'm less available on the weekends this spring; if you write me after 5pm on Friday, I may not be able to respond until Monday AM.

Expectations of you...

For each section meeting, two of you will sign up ahead of time to begin the discussion of the readings for the current Monday, and previous Wednesday's readings. Take a look at the syllabus and pick a topic that interests you! You should arrange time with one another outside of class to prepare the material, and if you'd like, stop by my office hours on Monday and we can talk about your outline. Each set of people should be prepared to speak for no more than 20-25 minutes, just to get us started. Some ideas to include: major conclusions, methodologies employed (how did the authors study this phenomena?), persuasiveness, contemporary relevance, challenges that study of this phenomenon/social process presents to us as researchers, implications for the public. How does it fit into the rest of the week's readings? Why is it on the syllabus?

Attendance: Is mandatory. However, I realize that everyone has legitimate cause to be absent at least once during a term; you get one freebie in this respect.

Participation: What does "participation" mean? Education is a social enterprise, and we learn through engaging with one another. We all have talents and insights into different areas, and we'll benefit by sharing that knowledge. As instructors, we've tried to make all the course readings and lectures as available and easy-to-access as possible to allow you and encourage you to participate, and there's always more we can recommend.

Written work: As outlined in the syllabus, we have several written assignments to be submitted in section, and several online assignments. The standards are the same for both:

- 800-900 words. The goal of these assignments is to help you learn to make your points concisely and logically well-supported.
- You're college writers, and things like spelling & grammar mistakes (which can be all but automatically checked in almost all word-processing programs today) will not be tolerated.
- You should cite author for the purposes of response papers, but you don't need to go beyond that. Don't waste the little space you have effusively citing authors' verbatim arguments, but when paraphrasing, do give basic evidence to make or support a claim.
- All written assignments must be turned in at the beginning of class, stapled, with name/page#s (no electronic copies!) Late submissions will not be accepted.

Make-up sections: A common question often comes up: "*If I miss class, can I go to the other section?*" The answer is a qualified "no": if you'd like to sit in for your own understanding, you're welcome to, but we can't give you participation credit for attending that section. We've tried very hard to accommodate everyone into sections and to balance them so that there aren't four people in one, and 24 in another – please respect this.

Sample Section Syllabus
Sociology 128- Models of Social Science Research
Harvard University, Fall 2010

TF: Nicole Deterding
Email: deterdin@fas.harvard.edu
Office: William James Hall 543
Office Hours: Monday, Wednesday 11-12 am and by appointment.

What we're here for:

The course section of 128 is a place for us to better understand the work of sociologists: to evaluate the research design of the pieces we read, to discuss the benefits and disadvantages to the choices authors make, and to be able to articulate what makes a compelling argument about the social world. These skills will help you be a better consumer of sociology, and prepare you to think about the design of your own future projects. They will also help you be a more active and critical reader, which will be useful in your other sociology classes and your coursework more generally.

You should expect me:

to be engaged, available and helpful. As section leader, I see my job as helping to shape discussions that result in further insight about the readings and an improved understanding of the discipline of sociology. You should also expect me to provide feedback to your work that can help you sharpen your analytical skills and rigor—ideally, section will provide you with both content knowledge and broader skills that are useful outside our classroom.

I will be available to meet with you during my regularly scheduled office hours. If you let me know that you plan on coming by, it helps me be better prepared to meet you, but you're always welcome to just drop by. *Office hours are a particularly useful time to discuss your work and my feedback on it; if you do not understand how you are being evaluated, it is your right and responsibility to come talk to me about it.* I like getting to know students, so consider this an open invitation to stop by to chat about nothing in particular.

I will answer your emails sent M-F within 24 hours, but if you write me after 5 pm on Friday, I reserve the right to answer it on Monday morning.

Expectations of you:

Come to section on time, armed with questions and thoughts about the readings. I will plan sections to be active and engaging, but this format only works well if you are present, both physically and mentally. Most weeks, section will include at least some small-group discussion, which means that you will depend on one-another to be properly prepared. Section attendance and participation is 15% of your final course grade.

Attendance is mandatory. There is no way to make up the credit for missed sections, including attending the sections of other TFs. However, with another TF's permission, you may sit in a different section to gain the missed material. If you are unable to make it to our section, I appreciate an email letting me know, but absences will not be excused except for extraordinary circumstances.

You may also earn participation credit on the course website, by uploading and discussing articles you come across that are related to the topics of this class. On my section page on the iSite, there is a Wiki box, which allows you to share a link and write a sentence or two about why you think it is pertinent. You may also comment on others' articles. The goal of this exercise is to give you a chance to think about connections between the course material and discussions of sociological concepts in the real world.



HARVARD UNIVERSITY
ACCESSIBLE EDUCATION OFFICE

20 Garden Street
Cambridge, MA 02138

LOUISE H. RUSSELL, Director

www.fas.harvard.edu/~aeo/
aeo@fas.harvard.edu

617-496-8707
617-496-3720/VOICE/TTY
617-495-0815/FAX

September 1, 2007

RE: [REDACTED]

To Teaching Faculty:

This letter introduces you to [REDACTED] who is enrolled in your class and is registered with Accessible Education Office (AEO) for the current academic term.

[REDACTED] will require up to time and one-quarter for all timed exercises, including examinations. You and [REDACTED] should discuss in advance where examinations can be taken, and you are responsible for making these examinations accessible to the student. To ensure proper test taking conditions you will need to find a location that is quiet and non-disruptive for the entire time. The student should not take a test with the rest of the class and subsequently move to another location for the additional time.

Any hour or mid-term exams or written exercises (including Registrar-approved final exam substitutions) which are administered by the course staff require similar arrangements. All final examinations are administered during the final exam period by the Exams Office and the appropriate accommodations will be made in conjunction with AEO. In either case, AEO is happy to confer with you about implementing these arrangements.

It is up to [REDACTED] and teaching staff to maintain ongoing communication to ensure the timeliness and effectiveness of these arrangements. Please don't hesitate to email aeo@fas or phone us at 6-8707 with any inquiries if [REDACTED] is unable to answer directly.

Sincerely,

Louise H. Russell, Director
Accessible Education Office

CC: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] House Resident Dean
CORE office

