

Department of Sociology

Policies Concerning Graduate Instructors

We vigorously encourage students, particularly those without previous teaching experience, to take our graduate teaching seminar. We also encourage students to participate in college-sponsored seminars and workshops and in the Graduate School/Graduate Union seminars. When possible, students are encouraged to first serve as Teaching Assistants or get other teaching experience before being a solo instructor in their own course.

The qualifications of any student who wishes to be a Graduate Instructor will first be assessed by the Chair and/or Director of Graduate Studies. If deemed necessary, the student will be required to participate in training activities such as those described above before being allowed to teach.

Before teaching their first course, all graduate instructors will meet with the chair and/or director of graduate studies. At that time, they will be apprised of such things as University honor code policies, policies on racial and sexual harassment, reasonable expectations concerning student workload, and typical content of any courses they are teaching which have also been offered in the past. When appropriate, the student will be referred to other faculty who can offer more specific advice on the course being taught. Students will be encouraged to contact the chair, director of graduate studies, or other faculty members when they feel they need help with their teaching.

At least once each year, the chair or another faculty member will sit in on a class taught by each graduate instructor. More frequent observations will be made if conditions seem to warrant it. The faculty member will, of course, offer his or her suggestions for improvements in teaching.

The chair or other faculty member will formally investigate any complaints concerning teaching by graduate instructors and discuss them with the parties involved. The chair will also make a point of conveying any praise or positive comments that a graduate instructor receives.

Teacher Course Evaluations (TCE's) will be reviewed each semester. Diagnostic feedback will be provided. Graduate Instructors will be informed when improvement is necessary in order for them to continue teaching in the future.