Biology 550: Professional Workshop for Teaching Assistants
Fall 2014 Syllabus

Instructor: Mari Aanenson
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Office hours: Monday 3:00 – 4:00 pm; Tuesday 10:00 am – 11:00 am; Wednesday 9:00am – 10:00 am; Thursday 1:00 pm – 2:00 pm

Department of Biological Sciences: http://www.wiu.edu/cas/biological_sciences/
Class: Section 009;
Meeting: August 20 – 8:30am-5:00pm WG 378
August 21 – Faculty Assembly 10am-12pm Union & 1-5pm WG 378;
August 22 – 8:30am-5:00pm WG 378
Tuesday Sept. 16 – 12-1pm WG 105
Oct 14 – 12-1pm WG 105
Nov 18 – 12-1pm WG 105
Corequisites: TAship in the Department of Biological Sciences

COURSE OVERVIEW and GOALS

Course will cover techniques in helping you help students learn through science laboratory activities. In addition, you will learn issues related to safety in the science lab, handling of equipment and materials, preparation of assessment materials, grading, and classroom management.

Through this workshop, the TA’s should be able to:
1. Clearly state the responsibilities of a TA as defined by the Department of Biological Sciences, the Graduate School, and the University.
2. Clearly state, demonstrate, and implement all safety procedures appropriate for the labs that they teach.
3. Develop quizzes that appropriately assess students’ knowledge and skills related to the labs they have completed.
4. Recognize students who have academic difficulties and either assist them or appropriately refer them for assistance.
5. Analyze their teaching by reflecting upon what has worked well and what has not worked well in relation to their experience and the readings of the course.
6. Develop a repertoire of teaching skills appropriate to teaching and managing college level introductory courses.

TEXTBOOKS
UNIVERSITY AND DEPARTMENT POLICY INFORMATION:

Below are several websites that address various University and Department Policies. You are responsible for being familiar with the information (including required forms, definitions, and time lines) contained therein. You should access these web sites and carefully read the information they contain, your instructors will hold you responsible for knowing this information. If you have questions about any of the information contained in the web sites, ask your instructor:

Student Rights and Responsibilities:  http://www.wiu.edu/provost/students/
Academic Integrity Policy:  http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php
Final Exam Policy:  http://www.wiu.edu/policies/finexam.php
Final Exam Schedule:  http://www.wiu.edu/registrar/exams.php
Grade Appeals Policy:  http://www.wiu.edu/policies/gradeapp.php

COURSE POLICIES

This is a professional course and as such you will be expected to exemplify the professional behavior.

Professional Conduct (Dispositions are exhibited through your professional conduct):
Attendance/Conduct:  Since this is a professional course, you are expected to be present, on time, and prepared for each class session as you would expect to be for your own classroom. In order for this class to be productive for all, everyone is expected to participate and be respectful of others and their ideas. Class attendance will be recorded. Just as you would expect to lose salary or benefits for excessive tardies or absences by an employer, you can expect to lose credit for excessive absences or tardies in this class— we only meet a few times. Tardies will be noted after breaks and the start of each day.

Excused absences include those due to a personal illness, family emergency (e.g. death of an immediate family member – parent, sibling, child, grandparent), illness of a dependent, participation in a wedding as part of the wedding party (bride, groom, groomsmen, bridesmaid, etc), presenting at a professional teaching/science conference. Absences resulting from family vacations, oversleeping, working on projects, etc., routine medical check-ups, advising or similar appointments, etc., are considered unexcused. If you know you must be absent in advance, and are unsure whether it will be considered excused or unexcused, please ask Mrs. Aanenson. In order for an absence to be considered excused, documentation must be provided. If you are absent, it is your responsibility to find out what you missed including any assignments you missed. See assignments policy.

Assignments:  You are expected to submit all assignments in final form on the specified due dates. Any sample quizzes or other assignments you are to submit are to be typed and follow the accepted rules of English grammar.

Academic Dishonesty:  The faculty of the Department of Biological Sciences ascribes to a definition of plagiarism as expressed by V. E. McMillan in Writing Papers in the Biological Sciences (Bedford/St. Martin’s Press, New York, pg. 16).

“Plagiarism is the theft of someone else’s words, work, or ideas. It includes such acts as (1) turning in a friend’s paper and saying it is yours; (2) using another person’s data or ideas without acknowledgement; (3) copying an author’s exact words and putting them in your paper without
quotation marks; and (4) using wording that is very similar to that of the original source but passing it off as entirely your own even while acknowledging the source.”

This includes information in textbooks, lab manuals, honors and masters theses, web sites, all writing assignments, and images. The faculty of the Department attempt to monitor student writing assignments (essay exams, papers, laboratory reports, and other writing assignments and exercises) for incidence of plagiarism.

If plagiarism or any other form of academic dishonesty (e.g. using someone else’s lessons, cheating, etc) is found, the faculty will discuss the situation with the student and indicate to the student the penalty for this academic dishonesty. Potential penalties include those cited in the academic dishonesty section of the WIU web page for Student Rights and Responsibilities:
http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php

Students with Disabilities: “In accordance with University policy and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), academic accommodations may be made for any student who notifies the instructor of the need for an accommodation. For the instructor to provide the proper accommodation(s), you must obtain documentation of the need for an accommodation through Disability Resource Center and provide it to the instructor. It is imperative that you take the initiative to bring such needs to the instructor's attention, as he/she is not legally permitted to inquire about such particular needs of students. Students who may require special assistance in emergency evacuations (i.e. fire, tornado, etc.) should contact the instructor as to the most appropriate procedures to follow in such an emergency. Contact Disability Resource Center at 298-2512 or disability@wiu.edu for additional services.”

COURSE ACTIVITIES AND EVALUATION

1. Quiz
You are required to complete the TA Workshop Quiz available on WesternOnline no later than noon on August 29th. This quiz must be passed at the 85% level prior to teaching your first lab. Students will be allowed to take the quiz 2X before a remediation plan will be put in place. Any student who is required a remediation plan must satisfactorily complete that plan no later than noon on Sep 3rd. The score used for the course will be the average score. Those needing a remediation plan cannot get a score above 85 for the course. [40% of grade]

2. Flinn Scientific Safety Certification
You are required, as part of this course, to complete the Flinn Scientific Safety Certification for the High School level. To verify completion, you are to submit a PDF version of the certificate via WesternOnline. This will take you approximately 15 hours to complete so you will want to do this in parts. Those who submit the successful completion certificate by 8am Friday Sep 5th, will receive a 100%; those submitting it by 8am Friday, September 12th will receive a score of 90%; those submitting it by 8am Friday Sept. 19th will receive an 80%; those submitting it after that time will receive a 0%. Those who do not submit it by the end of the semester will lose 50% of their professional development grade. This is worth 25% of the course grade.

3. Professional Development (Participation, Homework, etc)
To gain the most out of this course, active involvement in class discussions and activities is necessary. This requires that you be present and on-time for each session (loss of 5 points for each tardy, loss of 10 points for each unexcused absence). In order to be prepared for each session, you will need to have completed the associated reading and writing assignments. The guidelines for these assignments will be posted on WesternOnline. You will also be asked to complete a few short homework assignments tied to your TAship; these will be incorporated into this part of your grade. [35% of grade]

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<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage of Points Earned (Range)</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>96.0-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90 – 95.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87 – 89.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83.0 - 86.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80 – 82.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77 – 79.4</td>
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<td>C</td>
<td>73 – 76.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70 – 72.4</td>
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<td>D+</td>
<td>67 – 69.4</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>63 – 66.4</td>
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<td>D-</td>
<td>60 – 62.4</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>59.4 and below</td>
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### Tentative Topic Outline and Assignment Due Dates

**Syllabus and Due Dates Subject to Change with Notice**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assignments etc.</th>
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| Aug 20 | - Introductions  
- Life as a TA  
- Teaching Issues and Duties                                           | Read TA Handbook                                                                 |
| Aug 21 | - Student Learning  
- Assessment                                                          | Review Policies from Handbook                                                    |
| Aug 22 | - TA Handbook                                                        | Take Quiz; must complete the quiz with an 85 or higher prior to first teaching day. |
| Sept 16| - Quiz Development and Assessment  
- Identifying students who are likely to struggle with the course.  
- Tutoring strategies                                                   | Submit 2 quizzes that you have written by 8am the Friday prior to the meeting (Sept 12).  
Read Chapters 1-3 from Willingham book – submit reactions to reading by 8am Monday Sept. 15 |
| Oct 14 | - Assisting Students through Lab and BAC who are struggling to pass  
- SAFETY Issues  
- BAC tutoring strategies continued                                      | Read Chapters 4-6 from Willingham book – submit reactions to reading by 8am Monday Oct 13. |
| Nov 18 | - End of term struggles and issues  
- Debrief from semester.  
- Eat Pizza! 😊                                                            | Read Chapters 7-9 from Willingham book – submit reactions to reading by 8am Monday Nov. 17. |