



TEACHING TIPS FOR TAs:

Recommendations for First Time TAs

1. Be organized and prepared.
2. Make sure at the beginning of each class that students know your plan and goals for the session. Refer to it periodically and conclude with it at the end of the session.
3. Begin and end the class on schedule. Students are extremely time conscious, especially when distance is a factor between buildings.
4. Be careful about copyright laws in regard to the use of articles and videotapes.
5. Academic freedom is not academic license. Explore all arguments, all perspectives.
6. Check with people in the back row to see if they are hearing your words and seeing your visuals adequately.
7. Let humor arise from the interaction of the class. Avoid telling jokes (unless you're a master at it, and then do it sparingly) and never create humor at someone's expense. The use of profanity and slang usually offends students. Profanity can interfere with the teacher's image as a positive model.
8. Be available outside class for consultation. Keeping regular office hours is important.
9. Expect good attendance and learn student names. Students tend to sit in the same seats so you can make an informal seating chart. It humanizes the class atmosphere and makes students more accountable.
10. Do not be afraid to say you do not know the answer to a question. Tell the student where s/he is likely to find the answer, offer to look it up yourself for the next class, suggest that the question is too advanced for the current course and that it will be covered in a future course, or suggest that the student come to your office hour and together you will find the answer.
11. Avoid saying, "That's a good question," unless the question is truly significant. It tends to intimidate others who ask questions and often reflects merely your interests.
12. Accept the fact that in every class you will not reach or influence every student. Some students may dislike you for a variety of reasons; e.g., age, authority, image, the content of the course, or even your looks. You will be respected for being patient, cool, calm and collected.

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