

**GRSC 7770**  
**Seminar for Graduate Teaching Assistants:**  
**An Introduction to Teaching History**

Fall 2011  
Mondays 5:45-7:40 pm  
LeConte Hall 102

Instructor: Tom Okie  
Email: wtokie@uga.edu  
Office: LeConte 208  
Office Hours: by appointment

Welcome to the UGA History Department's graduate program! GRSC 7770 is specifically designed to prepare you for your role as a teaching assistant in the graduate school, but it will also address the transition to academic life and the historical profession, best practices for teaching your own courses, the role of technology and the historical profession. The class will also serve as a sounding board for the challenges that inevitable arise during your first semester here at UGA. By the time we are done meeting this semester, you will have a framework for your life as a teacher and a historian -- wherever you go next.

**Texts**

Required:

1. *The UGA Handbook for Graduate Teaching Assistants*, available at <http://wwwctl.uga.edu/teachingassistant/handbook>
2. Wilbert McKeachie, *Teaching Tips: Strategies, Research, and Theory for College and University Teachers* (any recent edition is fine)
3. Various articles, available through GALILEO or eLearning Commons.

**Assignments**

There will be two kinds of assignments for this course.

1. Weekly Shorts. On a more or less weekly basis you will have short (no more than 1 page) assignments that ask you to respond to readings and formulate your thoughts on teaching and academic life. These assignments are designed to prepare you for thoughtful discussion, and will also be included in your portfolio.

2. Teaching Portfolio. The final assignment is a portfolio that organizes and presents the semester's work. This portfolio will serve two purposes. Since most of you are grading this semester, not leading your own sections, this portfolio will be a kind of resource book for that future day when you find yourself in the classroom. And, since documenting your teaching is an important part of preparing for the job market, the assignment will provide a kind of skeleton for a future professional portfolio. I will give more details about this assignment in the last few weeks of class.

**Grading and Attendance**

The course is graded on a satisfactory/unsatisfactory basis. To earn an "S" for this course, you are required to complete all reading and writing assignments on time and participate in classroom discussions. You need to be at our meetings. I will take attendance each week, and any unexcused absences may result in an unsatisfactory grade.

### **Academic Honesty**

All academic work must meet the standards described in "A Culture of Honesty," available online at [http://www.uga.edu/honesty/ahpd/culture\\_honesty.htm](http://www.uga.edu/honesty/ahpd/culture_honesty.htm). Each student is responsible to become informed about these standards before performing any academic work.

### **Disability or Health Issues**

Students with any disability or health-related issues that will impact their participation in the course should make an appointment to speak with me as soon as possible. If any unexpected crises or illnesses should arise during the semester, please let me know immediately.

## **Meeting Schedule**

### **August 15: Welcome**

*Read:*

1. UGA TA Handbook, entire <http://www.ctl.uga.edu/teachingassistant/handbook>
2. Gina Barecca, "Practical Tips for Surviving Academic Life (Part One: The Early Years)" <http://chronicle.com/blogs/brainstorm/practical-tips-for-surviving-academic-life-part-one-the-early-years/34028>
3. Paul N. Edwards, "How to Read a Book" at <http://pne.people.si.umich.edu/PDF/howtoread.pdf>

### **August 22: Assessment**

*Read:*

McKeachie Ch. 7-10

*Write:*

Sketch out an assessment plan for your own course (e.g. what sort of tests/papers/projects) and come prepared to defend it.

### **August 29: Who Are Our Students? And What Are They Learning?**

*Readings:*

1. Gerald Graff, "The Problem Problem" (available via eLC)
2. 'Academically Adrift,' Inside Higher Ed [http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2011/01/18/study\\_finds\\_large\\_numbers\\_of\\_college\\_students\\_don\\_t\\_learn\\_much](http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2011/01/18/study_finds_large_numbers_of_college_students_don_t_learn_much)

*Write:*

From your own career as a college student, describe some of the best and worst college teaching you have seen. What makes a good college professor? What makes a good course?

### **September 5: No Class (Labor Day)**

## **September 12: Doomsday for Academe**

Read:

1. William Deresiewicz, "Faulty Towers: The Crisis in Higher Education"

<http://www.thenation.com/article/160410/faulty-towers-crisis-higher-education?page=full>

2. Timothy Burke, "The Culture of Graduate School"

<http://blogs.swarthmore.edu/burke/permanent-features-advice-on-academia/features/>

## **September 19: Unnatural Acts**

Read:

Sam Wineburg, "Historical Thinking and Other Unnatural Acts"

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/20439490>

Write:

Why do you think history is important for students to learn? (This is the germ of your Teaching Statement).

See also:

- "Historical Thinking at the K-12 Level in the 21st Century: A Roundtable" in *Historically Speaking*

[http://muse.jhu.edu.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/journals/historically\\_speaking/toc/hsp.12.3.html](http://muse.jhu.edu.proxy-remote.galib.uga.edu/journals/historically_speaking/toc/hsp.12.3.html)

- Historical Thinking Matters, <http://historicalthinkingmatters.org/index.php>

## **September 26: Un/Coverage**

Read:

Lendol Calder, "Uncoverage"

<http://www.journalofamericanhistory.org/textbooks/2006/calder/index.html>

Write:

Sketch out two courses you plan to teach one day: one survey and one specialized course. Each should include a 2-3 sentence description of what the course includes, a list of potential readings and assignments, and an explanation of why your approach is the best thing ever.

See also:

<http://chronicle.com/blognetwork/tenuredradical/category/teaching/>

## **October 3: "I love technology . . ."**

CTL Guest Presentation on Teaching with Technology

## **October 10: "But not as much as you, you see . . ."**

Read:

1. Powerpoint

- <http://blog.carolynworks.com/?p=154>

- <http://blogs.swarthmore.edu/burke/2009/11/11/if-you-must/>

2. Research Software:

- <http://chronicle.com/blogs/profhacker/zotero-vs-endnote/33157>

- <http://cliotropic.org/blog/talks/camera-laptop-and-what-else/>

Write:

Bring a short "workflow" description of some aspect of your academic life: research, grading, writing, etc.

**October 17: No class (TA observations)**

**October 24: No class (TA observations and UnCivil Wars)**

**October 31: Saving the World in Your Own Discussion Section**

Read:

1. Stanley Fish, *Save the World on Your Own Time*, excerpt
2. Tenured Radical's Response

Write:

A 2 page reflection on your TA observations. What strategies did the TA use? What was successful? What wasn't?

**November 7: Becoming a Master Teacher and Letting the World Know**

Read:

Writing a Teaching Statement  
Creating a Teaching Portfolio

**November 14: The Teaching Statement**

Write:

Rough Draft of Teaching Statement

**November 21 - Thanksgiving**

**November 28: Wrap Up**

**December 5: Portfolios Due**