

## **GEO 741 - Teaching Practicum Fall 2013**

Mondays 1:00 - 1:50  
Whitehall Classroom Bldg Rm 305

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Office Hours: 2:00 - 3:15 Wednesdays or by appointment

### **Course Description**

Teaching is one of the most fundamental of human interactions. It is a mode of cultural transmission central to human (and some non-human) cultures. For entry into the teaching profession, skill acquisition can be informal and learn as you go. Becoming a teacher has also become highly formalized, with a diversity of opinions, fashions, degrees, training courses, and certifications to acquire. Borrowing from these two poles at either end of the teacher training continuum, the foci for this course are 1) to obtain basic teaching skills and practices for the college classroom and 2) to develop a richer intellectual background in issues that shape teaching. As an art form, it is unrealistic to expect that one can master teaching through this course. Knowledge, our interaction with it, as well as the nature of our students relative to ourselves changes constantly. Technology refashions teaching practices and how our students learn. At the same time, scholarship on teaching and learning provides new insight on how pedagogical practices do and don't work. Debates are always evolving about how best to teach and what to teach. Given this flux, this course seeks to cultivate a set of teaching skills that are adaptable yet still anchored to larger (but never likely to be settled) intellectual debates. Through hands-on development and presentation of a lecture and class materials, this course cultivates awareness of basic classroom protocols, teaching styles, and best management practices. Through a set of readings, we will discuss current academic debates over online courses, the legal and social facets of plagiarism, and the role of the public university.

### **Objectives**

Describe some of the unique teaching challenges that geography poses  
Describe different perspectives on debates about teaching and public universities  
Identify best practice principles for teaching undergraduates  
Identify, critique, and discuss strengths and weaknesses of a classroom performance

### **Required materials**

Posner, Richard A. 2007. *The Little Book of Plagiarism*. New York: Pantheon Books.

## **COURSE ACTIVITIES**

### **TA discussion**

As most if not all of the students in this course are working as teaching assistants, a portion of each class will be devoted to addressing questions related to teaching assignments and the experiences associated with them.

### **Weekly topics readings and discussion**

Each week you are required to complete an assigned reading and in some cases review online materials. Come to class prepared to discuss all content. Please bring the reading with you either in digital or hardcopy format. One of the readings is a small book (*The Little Book of Plagiarisms*) that you are required to purchase. Grades will be qualitatively assigned. Absences, failure to have completed the readings, or faking that you have read the readings by providing deep but tangent and/or deeply held opinions will lead to a lower qualitative grade.

### **Syllabus and course prep**

Over the course of the semester, students will develop a syllabus for an undergraduate lecture class currently

offered by our department or any other geography program. Students should chose a class they are likely to teach. This syllabus will include all the pertinent information to bring it up to university standards, including a detailed schedule of course topics and activities. Students will also be required to set up a demonstration Blackboard page. To conclude this activity, students will present a 15-minute lecture on a topic from the class to the rest of their peers. These lectures will be recorded and made available for each student to critique. Incomplete or vague syllabuses or overlong, tedious syllabuses will lower your qualitative marks for the course. Lectures pitched for an graduate audience instead of undergrads will also lower your grade. Prepare your materials as if you were going to teach the course next semester (and some of you may actually be doing just that).

### Evaluation

| Activity                 | Percent of grade | Grades will be qualitatively assigned as A, B, C, D or E. |
|--------------------------|------------------|---|
| TA discussion            | 33%              |   |
| Weekly topics discussion | 33%              |   |
| Syllabus and lecture     | 33%              |   |
|                          |                  |   |

### COURSE SCHEDULE

|      |    |   |
|------|----|---|
| Sept | 2  | <b>Introduction</b>   |
|      |    | Douglas, K. 2010. Culture club: all species welcome. <i>New Scientist</i> (November 24).  |
|      | 9  | <b>Reflection on teaching</b>   |
|      |    | Rose, M. 2009. Blue-collar brilliance. <i>American Scholar</i> (Summer).  |
|      | 16 | <b>Teaching geography?</b>  |
|      |    | Dante, E. 2010. The shadow scholar. <i>The Chronicle of Higher Education</i> (November 12).                                       |
|      | 23 | <b>Preparing a syllabus</b>   |
|      |    | Turkle, Sherry. 2011. <i>Alone Together: Why We Expect More from Technology and Less from Each Other</i> . New York: Basic Books. |
|      | 30 | <b>Teaching styles</b>  |
|      |    | X, Professor. 2008. In the basement of the ivory tower. <i>The Atlantic</i> (June).   |

|   |    |   |
|---|----|---|
| Oct   | 7  | <b>Tests and grading</b>  |
|   |    | Tierney, J. 2013. Why teachers secretly hate grading papers. <i>The Atlantic</i> (January 9). |
|   | 14 | <b>Classroom management</b>   |
|   |    | Kaag, J. 2013. My worst student. <i>Times Higher Education</i> (May 16).                      |
|   | 21 | <b>Public university context</b>  |
|   |    | Slouka, M. 2009. Dehumanized. <i>Harper's Magazine</i> (September).                           |
|   | 28 | <b>Teaching philosophy</b>  |
|   |    | Gatto, J. T. 2003. Against school. <i>Harper's Magazine</i> (September).                      |
| Nov   | 4  | <b>Online education</b>   |
|   |    | Carr, Nicholas. 2008. Is Google making us stupid? <i>The Atlantic</i> (August).               |
|   | 11 | <b>Plagiarism</b>   |
| Posner, Richard A. 2007. <i>The Little Book of Plagiarism</i> . New York: Pantheon Books. |    |   |
| Dec   | 18 | <b>Student Lectures</b>   |
|   | 25 |   |
|   | 2  |   |
|   | 9  |   |

## COURSE POLICIES

**Attendance.** Because this class meets once a week, absences will impact your grade. No whining if you get a B, you probably earned it by absences more than lack of capability. Students are expected to withdraw from the class if more than 20% of the classes scheduled for the semester are missed (excused or unexcused) per university policy.

**Verification of Absences.** Senate Rule 5.2.4.2 states that faculty have the right to request “appropriate verification” when students claim an excused absence because of illness or death in the family. Appropriate notification of absences due to university-related trips is required prior to the absence.

**Excused Absences.** Students need to notify the professor of absences prior to class when possible. S.R. 5.2.4.2 defines the following as acceptable reasons for excused absences: a) **serious** illness, b) illness or death of family member, c) University-related trips, d) major religious holidays, and e) other circumstances found to fit “reasonable cause for nonattendance” by the professor.

**Academic Integrity.** Per university policy, students shall not plagiarize, cheat, or falsify or misuse academic records. Students are expected to adhere to University policy on cheating and plagiarism in all courses. The minimum penalty for a first offense is a zero on the assignment on which the offense occurred. If the offense is considered severe or the student has other academic offenses on their record, more serious penalties, up to suspension from the university may be imposed.

Plagiarism and cheating are serious breaches of academic conduct. Each student is advised to become familiar with the various forms of academic dishonesty as explained in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities. Complete information can be found at the following website: <http://www.uky.edu/Ombud>. A plea of ignorance is not acceptable as a defense against the charge of academic dishonesty. It is important that you review this information as all ideas borrowed from others need to be properly credited.

Part II of Student Rights and Responsibilities (available online <http://www.uky.edu/StudentAffairs/Code/part2.html>) states that all academic work, written or otherwise, submitted by students to their instructors or other academic supervisors, is expected to be the result of their own thought, research, or self-expression. In cases where students feel unsure about the question of plagiarism involving their own work, they are obliged to consult their instructors on the matter before submission. When students submit work purporting to be their own, but which in any way borrows ideas, organization, wording or anything else from another source without appropriate acknowledgement of the fact, the students are guilty of plagiarism. Plagiarism includes reproducing someone else's work, whether it be a published article, chapter of a book, a paper from a friend or some file, or something similar to this. Plagiarism also includes the practice of employing or allowing another person to alter or revise the work which a student submits as his/her own, whoever that other person may be.

**Accommodations due to disability.** If you have a documented disability that requires academic accommodations, please see me as soon as possible during scheduled office hours. In order to receive accommodations in this course, you must provide me with a Letter of Accommodation from the Disability Resource Center (Room 2, Alumni Gym, 257-2754) for coordination of campus disability services available to students with disabilities.