BI 512: Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) Training & Development
Oregon State University
Fall, 2018

**Instructor:**
Adam Chouinard, Ph.D.
Instructor, Integrative Biology
Email: adam.chouinard@oregonstate.edu
Office Hours: Happy to meet by appointment!
Office: 3016 Cordley Hall

**Class Meetings:**
Day/Time: Mondays, 11:00 – 11:50pm
Location: TBD
CRN #: TBD | Credits: 1 (repeatable for up to 3 credits)
Grading: A – F | Pre/co-requisites: None
Fun Level: Very High

**Teaching Assistants**

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<tr>
<th>BI 512 TA</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mentor TAs</td>
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The BI 512 team (Adam and his merry band of TAs) is here to help! Don’t hesitate to get in touch, stay after class, or set up a time to meet for office hours. Our goal is to help you become as informed, prepared, confident, and capable in your teaching as possible. Likewise, each of us is here to invest in our own professional development, and continue improving our teaching, just like you!

**Course Description**

This course will provide instructional support to graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) in biology. The material covered will equip GTAs with the skills and knowledge necessary for effective teaching, facilitation, and assessment of student learning. Students will reflect and improve upon their current instructional toolkit, with the goal of becoming more informed, intentional instructors – instructors who employ “best practices” in college and university teaching. The overall program goal is to provide teaching theory and methods to support GTAs in their time as graduate students, as well as a solid foundation for quality instruction, facilitation, and leadership in their future careers.

**Course Outcomes**

By completing the learning experiences and assignments in this course, it is intended that you will be able to:

- Discuss and implement sound instructional practices, including: effectively planning and facilitating curricula, designing and delivering assessments, and creating engaging and inclusive learning environments.
- Practice quality classroom management skills, including the ability to effectively respond to classroom challenges such as low engagement, disruptive behavior, academic misconduct, and others.
- Identify strengths in one’s own teaching, as well as areas for improvement, and develop a plan to continue improving and growing as educators.
- Objectively assess the teaching practices of colleagues, to identify practices that may work in your own teaching, and collaborate in furthering your professional development.

**Instructor Philosophy and Student Expectations**

I believe in education as one of the most important aspects of human evolution (yes, literally!), and quality education depends upon quality instruction. Our task in this course is to hone our craft as instructors in the field of biology; but doing so requires an earnest, honest, and open-minded commitment.

As the instructor, I do not claim to be an ultimate authority on “best practices” in college and university teaching. Rather, my task is to guide our group in a constructive, inclusive manner as we explore these topics together. Group cooperation and collaboration will be the fundamental means by which we investigate teaching theory and methods, and work to incorporate our findings into our teaching.
Instructor Philosophy and Student Expectations (cont’d)

In participating in this seminar, students will be expected to:

- **Actively engage** with and **contribute to** course discussions and activities, and assessments. This will often require us to step outside of our “comfort zones” to genuinely reflect on our teaching and share with our peers.
- **Think critically** about what they know about teaching from scholarship, consultation with colleagues, and personal experience; this includes the need to **question** some of our own thoughts, assumptions, and biases.
- **Be free from technological (and other forms) of distractions** in class time. Technology will occasionally be used in class activities, but should otherwise be put away and out of sight.
- **Respect others at all times**, including the use of polite language and tone. Students should indeed be encouraged to “push back” against the ideas of others, but **criticisms or counterpoints should be framed in a constructive fashion**, and should focus on the idea, not its progenitor.
- **Comply with the OSU Student Conduct Code** and standards for **Civility at OSU**. In all capacities, students are expected to **act in a professional manner**, as befits university students and employees.
- **Have fun and share your passion** for teaching and biology with your colleagues!

**Academic Integrity and Misconduct**

As noted above, you will be expected to conduct yourself in a professional, honest, and ethical manner, and adhere to all OSU academic policies. As such you will be held to the highest standards regarding academic integrity. Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to: cheating (the intentional use of unauthorized materials, information, or study aids); fabrication (falsification or invention of any information); assisting (helping another commit an act of academic misconduct); tampering (altering or interfering with evaluation instruments and documents); plagiarism (intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another person as one’s own); multiple submissions of work; and unauthorized recording and use. For more information on academic misconduct at OSU, see the [Student Conduct Code](http://ds.oregonstate.edu).

**Statement of Accessibility**

Accommodations for students with disabilities are determined and approved by Disability Access Services (DAS). If you, as a student, believe you are eligible for accommodations but have not obtained approval please contact DAS immediately at 541-737-4098 or at [http://ds.oregonstate.edu](http://ds.oregonstate.edu). DAS notifies students and faculty members of approved academic accommodations and coordinates implementation of those accommodations. While not required, students and faculty members are encouraged to discuss details of the implementation of individual accommodations.

**Course Requirements and Evaluation of Student Performance [100 points total]**

The course has two overarching requirements:

1. **Attendance and Contribution [20 points]**
   
   You are expected to come to class prepared to contribute actively and intelligently to class discussions and exercises, and to be present and engaged in class during class time, which means that you will be free from technological and/or other distractions (as noted above). Readings this term are not required but strongly encouraged.

   Anticipated absences from class should be communicated with the instructor at least one week in advance. Unanticipated absences should be communicated as soon as is possible given the circumstances. Each absence will result in the deduction of one point unless you demonstrate within one week of the absence that all missed work, including the missed lecture, has been addressed. It is your responsibility as the student to initiate and negotiate the terms of the make-up assignment.

   **Attendance and contribution will be evaluated in terms of:**
   
   a) In-class attendance [10 pts; 1 point for each on-time and full day of attendance]
   
   b) Overall level of demonstrated engagement and intellectual contribution to the course [10 pts].
2. Assignments [80 points]

- **Online Discussion Forums [40 pts total]**
  - In conjunction with the readings due each class session, you are expected to participate in eight online discussion forums during the term. These are designed to stimulate further insight and analysis into the course content through additional peer-to-peer conversation.
  - Each forum will be framed around prompts provided by the instructors. Each student is expected to offer two posts per week:
    a) **One “initial” post** that reflects your original thinking on the topic (minimum 200 words). The initial post is due mid-week, typically by the end of Thursday (but see “Course Timeline” for specific dates and exceptions). This allows time to formulate response posts (see “b”).
    b) **At least one “response” post** (minimum 100 words) that addresses an initial post of your peers. This response should expand upon one or more of the initial post’s points, to either agree or disagree with the original poster, or discuss other issues related to the topic. The response post should take the conversation further (i.e. make a meaningful contribution to the original poster’s thoughts). Your response post is due by noon on the following Monday.
  - Please refer to the “Discussions” link in the Canvas course site for prompts. All posts must comply with the “Acceptable Use Policy;” also see “Tips for Engaging in Constructive Conversations” (Canvas Pages).
  - Online Discussion Forums will be evaluated in terms of:
    a) Whether posts/responses were submitted on time [8 pts total; 1 point per week]
    b) Overall quality and demonstrated understanding of the assigned readings, as evidenced by the initial post and responses [32 pts; 4 pts per week = initial post (2 pts) and response post (2 pts)]

- **Class Capture [40 points]**
  - As a part of your teaching assistantship, you will complete a “class capture” (video recording) of one lab session this term. This is an invaluable tool to step outside of your experience, and see what your teaching looks like from the eyes of your students. This type of self-reflection is crucial for identifying strengths and weaknesses in your own teaching, and can provide an opportunity to develop and implement strategies for improvement.
  - You will complete this process as a part of your teaching assignment, but GTAs enrolled for credit in BI 512 will also undergo a formal self-reflection process.
  - For this assignment, you are asked to:
    1. **Submit a pre-reflection** (provided in class and posted on Canvas). This short form will provide some prompts to get you thinking proactively about the class capture and reflection process.
    2. **Record and submit your class capture video.** To do so:
       a. Complete a video recording of (at least) the first **30 minutes of your lab**. This term, each GTA will record their lab on week #6 (see course outline).
       b. You are expected to handle the logistics of recording, but must **ensure that you (the GTA) and your presentation are completely visible and audible** for the whole 30 minutes. Likewise, **no students may be visible** in the frame.
       c. For recording purposes, you may use your own equipment or borrow equipment (free of charge) from OSU Student Multimedia services (http://is.oregonstate.edu/sms).
       d. Submit the video file via Canvas.
    3. **Create a self-reflection video blog** on the class capture process. To do so:
       a. Review your class capture footage. Take note of any strengths, areas for improvement, or specific teaching strategies that you notice.
       b. Create a video blog that is **no longer than 15 minutes**. You will not be evaluated on length, but by the quality and thoughtfulness in which you address the prompts.
       c. In your video blog reflection, discuss the following prompts (in order):
          - What was your experience recording and reviewing your own teaching?
• Reflect on any specific techniques you incorporated in your teaching. How well do you think you executed them? How effective do you think those techniques were?
• Did the strengths and weaknesses you identified in your pre-reflection align with those you identified in the class capture?
• What did you learn as a result of this process? How will it affect your teaching going forward?

  ○ Class Capture assignments will be evaluated in terms of:
    a) The quality, thoughtfulness, and timeliness of your pre-reflection [5 pts; due week #3]
    b) The timeliness of your class capture recording submission [5 pts; due week #7]
    c) The quality, thoughtfulness, and timeliness of your video blog reflection [30 pts; due week #10]

**Course Evaluation**

You are responsible for demonstrating your understanding of the basic concepts related to teaching and learning as discussed in this class and for meeting the course requirements. The extent to which you achieve the course objectives will not be compared to what other students in this course do. In accordance with University policy, you will be graded on a standard A – F grading system (see AR 17-19). See below for the range of course points attributed to each letter grade.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Points</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>A-</th>
<th>B+</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>B-</th>
<th>C+</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>C-</th>
<th>D+</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>D-</th>
<th>F</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.0 – 93.0</td>
<td>92.9 – 90.0</td>
<td>89.9 – 87.0</td>
<td>86.9 – 83.0</td>
<td>82.9 – 80.0</td>
<td>79.9 – 77.0</td>
<td>76.9 – 73.0</td>
<td>72.9 – 70.0</td>
<td>69.9 – 67.0</td>
<td>66.9 – 63.0</td>
<td>62.9 – 60.0</td>
<td>59.9 – 0</td>
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**Supplementary Texts**

Required readings for this course will be distributed in class, posted on Canvas, available through the Valley Library’s E-journals, or available for borrow from the instructor. Students are responsible for obtaining these.

For readings beyond those listed, please consider the following useful and thorough teaching texts:

**Course Outline**

See below for a weekly breakdown of the curriculum, readings, and assignments due that week. We try to align the weekly topics to be as relevant as possible to the lab curriculum. In the outline below, the gray text describes the reason we chose to cover that topic on a certain week. Key: **Class Capture** assignments, **Discussion Forum** assignments.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading(s) recommended for this class</th>
<th>Assignment(s) due for this class</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“0”</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>The First Day of Class! (First lab next week)</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>● None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Presence and Public Speaking (First lab this week!)</td>
<td>Maddern, K. (2013). The Times Educational Supplement Pedagogy, (65), 4.</td>
<td>● None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Effective Presentations (Early in the term)</td>
<td>Center for Teaching (2016). Retrieved from <a href="https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/making-better-powerpoint-presentations/">https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/making-better-powerpoint-presentations/</a></td>
<td>● <strong>Discussion Forum</strong> (initial post due 11:59 p.m. on TBD; response due by 12:00 pm on TBD)</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Identifying and Responding to Academic Misconduct (First Mid-term Proctor)</td>
<td>Taylor, B. (n.d.) p.1-6. Retrieved from <a href="http://www.academicintegrity.com/icai/assets/A_Letter_To.pdf">http://www.academicintegrity.com/icai/assets/A_Letter_To.pdf</a></td>
<td>● <strong>Class Capture:</strong> Pre-Reflection ● <strong>Discussion Forum</strong> (initial post due 11:59 p.m. on TBD; response due by 12:00 pm on TBD) ● <strong>Discussion Forum</strong> (initial post due 11:59 p.m. on TBD; response due by 12:00 pm on TBD)</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Quiz Design (First quiz next week)</td>
<td>Jensen, J. L., McDaniel, M. A., Woodard, S. M., &amp; Kummer, T. A. (2014). Educational Psychology Review, 26(2), 307-329.</td>
<td>● <strong>Discussion Forum</strong> (initial post due 11:59 p.m. on TBD; response due by 12:00 pm on TBD) ● <strong>Discussion Forum</strong> (initial post due 11:59 p.m. on TBD; response due by 12:00 pm on TBD)</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Fostering Healthy Learning Environments; Soliciting Mid-Term Feedback (Midway through the term)</td>
<td>Murphy, K. (2010). Journal of Physical Education, Recreation, &amp; Dance, 81(6), 33-37.</td>
<td>● <strong>Discussion Forum</strong> (initial post due 11:59 p.m. on TBD; response due by 12:00 pm on TBD)</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>GTA Roundtables (Midway through the term!)</td>
<td>None: spend some time to find something useful for yourself</td>
<td>● <strong>Discussion Forum</strong> (initial post due 11:59 p.m. on TBD; response due by 12:00 pm on TBD) ● <strong>Class Capture:</strong> Recording ● <strong>Discussion Forum</strong> (initial post due 11:59 p.m. on TBD; response due by 12:00 pm on TBD)</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Teaching Through Frustrations (Going into the home-stretch!)</td>
<td>Rowe, A. D., Fitness, J., &amp; Wood, L. N. (2015). International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education, 28(1), 1-20.</td>
<td>● <strong>Discussion Forum</strong> (initial post due 11:59 p.m. on TBD; response due by 12:00 pm on TBD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>No Class: Thanksgiving</td>
<td>None: spend some time to find something useful for yourself</td>
<td>● <strong>Discussion Forum</strong> (initial post due 11:59 p.m. on TBD; response due by 12:00 pm on TBD)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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