

University of Toronto, Fall 2018
SOC6811H: Seminar in Teaching
Tuesday, 2:30-5:30pm, Rm 385

Instructor: Christian Caron
E-mail: christian.caron@utoronto.ca
Office: Rm 286
Office hours: By appointment

Course Description

The goal is to create and deliver meaningful courses on the one hand, and to develop the ability to articulate this meaningfulness to students, colleagues, and prospective employers on the other. A key to good teaching is reflection, so that one can be purposeful and deliberate with all pedagogical decisions, from course planning to course delivery. This is also a crucial element in communicating effectively the objectives of the course and our expectations to our students. As such, this seminar is organized to provide opportunities for discussion and reflection on the what, how, and why of different aspects of university teaching. Another key to good teaching is practice. As such, the seminar will provide opportunities and guidance for hands on practice in the development of various teaching materials and classroom delivery.

The course will benefit both graduate students with and without teaching experience. For those with no experience, the seminar will sensitize you to the many components of effective teaching and provide you with guidance as you go through the process of preparing a course. For those with classroom teaching experience, the seminar will encourage you to think systematically about your teaching and to consider alternative ways of teaching. For both, this course addresses current research and practice in teaching in higher education. The course is designed to assist graduate students to develop knowledge and skills from the existing research on teaching in a university setting.

The seminar challenges graduate students to discover and hone their teaching styles, to develop a personal philosophy about teaching and learning, to learn about the teaching resources that are available to them throughout the university and elsewhere, to experiment with designing engaging courses of study, and to discover that teaching can be a rewarding and stimulating element of an academic career. The seminar will discuss the major components of a course, including course objectives, use of readings, use of class time, use of technology, evaluation of students, and evaluating yourself, dealing with various challengers, among others. In each case, we will consider the options available and their strengths and limitations.

In the classroom, it is important that we create and maintain a classroom environment that is conducive to experimentation and personal development. We need to be able to be honest and supportive with each other. To this end, all comments, suggestions, and feedback will be presented and received in the spirit of learning and with a genuine intention to help each other improve. Being respectful of each other is of the utmost importance. It is my hope that throughout the semester each student discovers her or his “teaching voice” and that we have fun doing so!

My own view is that there is no single correct way to decide each of the issues one faces in teaching. How you use class time or evaluate students depends on the course objectives, content, size, your personal preferences, and other factors as well. Thus, this seminar is not designed to indoctrinate you to a particular style. Rather, the goal is to stimulate you to think about each of these issues and make decisions about how you would teach a particular course.

Course Objectives

Broadly the course has three aims.

1. To help make sure that you have a rewarding experience in your early days as a university teacher, including helping you:
 - a) teach in an effective and engaging way so your students get a lot out of your courses and you enjoy them also.
 - b) get strong teaching evaluations.
 - c) manage your time to minimize being overloaded as a junior teacher/faculty member. A key aspect of this is being well prepared to start teaching before you begin your first full-time teaching job.
2. To help prepare you for job applications and interviews when you will be asked about teaching, and when you will want to produce evidence of your teaching ability and potential. In the job application and interview process, you may be asked to produce a teaching dossier, including a statement of teaching philosophy and other items. The teaching course aims to help you have all of these items prepared in advance, before you get your first job interview.
3. To help you situate your teaching in research and theory. The course aims to move beyond a simple “how to” class on techniques, and provide you with the opportunities to reflect on the various objectives of your courses, and thus move to the “why” behind the host of decisions affecting teaching.

Specific Learning Objectives for the Course: Participants in this course will be able to meet a number of objectives:

- 1- demonstrate knowledge and comprehension of principles of learning, principles of teaching, and their application
- 2- develop an appreciation for the diversity of learning and teaching styles and show the ability to design meaningful curricula and learning activities, assignments and exams
- 3- design a course syllabus and curriculum that takes into account research on teaching and learning and be able to justify your pedagogical choices
- 4- create a teaching dossier that reflects your professional development as teachers
- 5- articulate a teaching philosophy, including an understanding of key aspects of the professional responsibilities of the university teacher as well as ethical issues related to university teaching

Weekly Topics

Week 1 – Sept 11th

Introduction to Seminar Structure & Objectives

Resources

CR/NCR

Purposeful Teaching

Content, Understanding, and Skills

Teaching Community

Week 2 – Sept 18th

Learning

What is Active Learning

How Learning Works

Helping Students Learn

Student Engagement and Motivation

Engaging Students in their Own Learning

Teaching Students to Become Self-Regulated Learners

Week 3 – Sept 25th

Understanding Our Students

Diversity, Language, Experience, Class, Gender, Race/Ethnicity, Sexuality, Religion, Politics, Accessibility, Aspirations

Different Students Different Challenges

Expectations of Students

Ethics of Teaching

Power and Teaching

How to Treat Students

Week 4 – Oct 2nd

Getting Prepared to Teach

Teaching in Context

Identifying Stakeholders

Performing an Environmental Scan

Designing Learning Outcomes

Syllabi as Document

Communicating Expectations

Week 5 – Oct 9th

Reading to Learn and Learning to Read

Choosing and Assigning Readings

Balancing Difficulty with Quantity

How to Get Students to Read

Reading as Active Learning

Help Students Get Most out of Reading

Week 6 – Oct 16th

Writing to Learn and Learning to Write
Low and High Stake Writing
Designing Meaningful Assignments
Benefits of Scaffolded Assignments
Assorted Assignments: Strengths and Limitations

Week 7 – Oct 23rd

Teaching Inside the Classroom
Effective Lectures: Objectives
Effective Lectures: Content
Effective Lectures: Delivery
Technology in the Classroom
Classroom Conduct
Facilitating Discussion

Week 8 – Oct 30th

Teaching Outside the Classroom
Communication
Office Hours
E-mails
Using LMS (Learning Management System) Effectively
Policies: Late, Make-Up, Accessibility Services, OSAI, Grade Appeals, Ad Hoc
Training and Mentoring of TAs

Week 9 – Nov 13th

Designing Tests and Exams
Evaluating Tests and Exams
Purposes of Grading and Assessments
Grading Rubrics
Grading Best Practices
Formative and Summative Feedback
Grading Distribution

Week 10 – Nov 20th

Course Evaluations
What Students Value in Teachers
Assessing a Course: Students, Instructor, and Peers
Defining Success
Self-Evaluation and Growth

Week 11 – Nov 27th

Documenting Teaching Effectiveness
Putting Together a Teaching Dossier
Writing a Teaching Philosophy Statement
Preparing the Teaching Portion of a Job Interview

Week 12 – Dec 4th
Teaching Demo
Conclusion
Reflections
Teaching Troubleshooting
Professional Development Beyond

Deliverables

This course will be run as a workshop, and is graded Credit/No Credit. To pass the course, and get credit on their transcript, students should attend all sessions, arrive to class prepared to participate, and engage thoughtfully in all activities and discussions. The six components to complete are (most of which will become part of your Teaching Dossier):

Annotated Sample Assignment (due Oct 16th) – You will design the outline of an assignment that again aligns with the articulated learning outcomes of your prospective course. You will annotate this assignment with reflections on the what, how, and why of this assignment.

Classroom Observations (due Oct 23rd) -- Each participant should observe at two classes. You may select lectures or seminars (with visited instructor's permission). Ideally select classes on topics you are interested in, or from courses you want to teach. Each participant will be asked to prepare a brief (two pages) commentary based on those observations.

Statement of Teaching Philosophy (due Oct 30th & end of term) – This statement will be a work-in-progress throughout the semester, whereas a first draft will be due on Oct 30th, the polished version will be a component of your Teaching Dossier at the end of the semester.

Annotated Course Outline (due Nov 20th) -- Each participant will be asked to develop a syllabus for a course of her or his choice. Choose a course that you hope to teach. I encourage you to select a course in your subject area or a foundational course which is widely taught. Accompanying the traditional course syllabi are annotations justifying the pedagogical decisions you made in designing your course. For example, why did you choose a specific book/books/readings, the assignments you will make, the exam and grading policies you selected, etc

Teaching Demo (due Dec 4th) – You will prepare a teaching demo on one of the topics of your prospective course. Depending on seminar size, you will deliver a practice run of this teaching demo in person or as a recorded version to get feedback and refine a final version. You will be asked to reflect and share this experience with your colleagues.

Teaching Dossier (due end of term) -- As described by the Canadian Association of University Teachers, "a teaching dossier is a summary of a professor's major teaching accomplishments and strengths. It is to a professor's teaching what lists of publications, grants, and academic honors are to research." The teaching dossier is a key factor in hiring, tenure and promotion decisions. At this early stage, however, you may have relatively little to put into a teaching dossier but you

should start to build one and get into the habit of adding to it. A personal teaching dossier is something you will add to throughout your career. Details of how to create a teaching dossier will be presented in seminar and you will be expected to provide a draft at the end of the semester. Though most of you have not taught before, you can build your teaching dossiers with material from your teaching assistant and guest lecturing experiences and with materials developed in this course, so that you have one ready to go when you begin to apply for jobs.

Readings

We will be reading selected excerpts from the following sources (as well as additional sources to be determined later):

Ambrose, Susan A., et al (2010) *How Learning Works: 7 Research-Based Principles for Smart Teaching*

Angelo, Thomas A. & K. Patricia Cross (1993) *Classroom Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Teachers*

Bain, Ken (2004) *What the Best College Teachers Do*

Barkley, Elizabeth and Claire Howell Major (2016) *Learning Assessment Techniques: A Handbook for College Faculty*

Barkley, Elizabeth F. (2010) *Student Engagement Techniques: A Handbook for College Faculty*

Bean, John C. (2011) *Engaging Ideas: The Professor's Guide to Integrating Writing, Critical Thinking, and Active Learning in the Classroom*

Brookfield, Stephen (2015) *The Skillful Teacher: On Techniques, Trust, and Responsiveness in the Classroom*

Brookfield, Stephen (2012) *Teaching for Critical Thinking: Tools and Techniques to Help Students Question Their Assumptions*

Brown, Peter, et al (2014) *Making It Stick: The Science of Successful Learning*

Fink, L. Dee (2013) *Creating Significant Learning Experiences: An Integrated Approach to Designing College Courses*

Freire, Paulo (1970) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*

Gross Davis, Barbara (2009) *Tools for Teaching*

Grunert O'Brien, Judith (2008) *The Course Syllabus: A Learning-Centered Approach*

hooks, bell (1994) *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom*

Palmer, Parker (2007) *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*

Stevens, Dannelle D. & Antonia J. Levi (2013) *Introduction to Rubrics: An Assessment Tool to Save Grading Time, Convey Feedback, and Promote Student Learning*

Svinicki, Marilla D. & Wilbert J. McKeachie (2014) *McKeachie's Teaching Tips: Strategies, Research, and Theory for College and University Teachers*