TEACHING ASSISTANT MANUAL

MAKING THE DIFFERENCE:
A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE FOR TEACHING ASSISTANTS

CONTENTS

PART THREE - INCLUSIVITY AND SUPPORT

UNIVERSITY CONTACTS

OFFICE/SERVICE		WEB ADDRESS
Academic Advising	410-516-8216	https://advising.jhu.edu
Academic Calendar		https://www.jhu.edu/academics/calendars
Academic Ethics for Undergraduates (Guide)	410-516-8208	https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/policies-guidelines/undergrad-ethics
Academic Support		https://academicsupport.jhu.edu
Audio Visual Services (KIT-CATS)	410-516-6699	http://classrooms.johnshopkins.edu/avservices
Bookstore (Barnes & Noble)	410-662-5850	https://johns-hopkins.bncollege.com
Campus Security Escort Services	410-516-4600	http://security.jhu.edu/services-for-you/escort-program
Center for Teaching Excellence and Innovation	410-516-7181	https://cer.jhu.edu
Center for Language Education	410-516-4520	https://krieger.jhu.edu/cle
Counseling Center	410-516-8278	https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/counselingcenter
Recognizing Students in Distress	410-516-8278	https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/counselingcenter/worried/facultyandstaff
Custodial Services	410-516-8063	http://www.jhfre.jhu.edu/services/maintenance_and_repair/custodial
Dean of Student Life, Office of	410-516-8208	https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/student-life
Digital Media Center	410-516-3817	https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/dmc
Event Calendar (The Hub)		https://hub.jhu.edu/events
FERPA-University Policy		https://www.jhu.edu/assets/uploads/2017/01/ferpa.pdf
Graduate Representative Organization (GRO)		https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/gro
Health, Safety, and Environment		https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/hse/offices_and_programs.html
Health and Safety Training		https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/hse/training
Hopkins Emergency Response Organization	410-516-7777	https://heru.jhu.edu
Hopkins Universal Design for Learning (HUDL)		https://hudl.jhu.edu/
Institutional Equity, Office of (OIE)	410-516-8075	https://oie.jhu.edu
Instructional Enhancement Grant Program	410-516-7181	https://ctei.jhu.edu/programs-and-services/instructional-enhancement-grant-program
International Services, Office of (OIS)	667-208-7001	https://ois.jhu.edu
Innovative Instructor Article Series		https://cer.jhu.edu/ii
Innovative Instructor Blog		https://ii.library.jhu.edu
International TAs ESL Program	410-516-4520	https://krieger.jhu.edu/cle/language-programs/esl
IT@JH (Information Technology)	410-516-4357	https://it.johnshopkins.edu
J-Card (Hopkins ID Card)	410-516-5121	https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/jcard
Lab Safety	410-556-5525	https://labsafety.jhu.edu/
Learning Den Tutoring Services		https://academicsupport.jhu.edu/learning-den
LGBTQ Life	410-516-2452	https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/lgbtq
Life Design Lab	410-516-8400	https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/life-design/
Maryland Poison Center	800-222-1222	https://www.mdpoison.com

OFFICE/SERVICE		WEB ADDRESS
Mid-Semester Evaluation Forms		https://cer.jhu.edu/teaching-academy/tati/resources#taresources
Multicultural Student Affairs	410-516-8730	https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/oma
Peer Counseling — Undergraduate	443-823-2459	http://pages.jh.edu/aptt
PILOT Peer-Led-Team-Learning		https://academicsupport.jhu.edu/pilot
Policy & Document Library		https://policies.jhu.edu
Pre-Professional Programs & Advising	410-516-4140	https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/preprofadvising
Registrar	410-516-8080	https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/registrar
Religious & Spiritual Life (Holy Days Calendar)	410-516-1880	https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/campus-ministries/religious-holy-days
Security Office—Information	410-516-4600	http://security.jhu.edu
Sexual Assault Helpline	410-516-7333	https://sexualassault.jhu.edu
Sheridan Libraries	410-516-8335	https://www.library.jhu.edu
Academic Liaisons		https://www.library.jhu.edu/library-departments/academic-liaison
Citation Guide		http://guides.library.jhu.edu/citing
Reserves Services and Electronic Reserves	410-516-8377	https://www.library.jhu.edu/library-services/course-readings
Borrow and Request Materials		https://www.library.jhu.edu/library-services/borrow-and-request-materials
Research Consultation	410-516-8335	https://www.library.jhu.edu/library-services/research-consultation
Reserves Request Form		https://www.library.jhu.edu/library-services/course-readings/reserves-request-form
Special Collections	410-516-8348	https://www.library.jhu.edu/library-departments/special-collections
Shuttle Services	410-516- 7275	http://ts.jhu.edu/Shuttles
Student Disability Services (SDS)	410 516-4720	https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/disabilities
Teaching Students with Disabilities		https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/disabilities/faculty-information
Student Health and Wellness Center	410-516-8270	https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/student-health/
Student Wellness		https://wellness.jhu.edu/
Student Information System (SIS)		https://sis.jhu.edu/sswf
SIS Help Guide		https://uis.jhu.edu/sis
Study Consulting Program		https://academicsupport.jhu.edu/study-consulting
Teaching Academy	410-516-7181	https://cer.jhu.edu/teaching-academy
Teaching Assistant Training (Homewood)	410-516-7181	https://cer.jhu.edu/teaching-academy/tati
Technology Classroom Reservations		http://classrooms.johnshopkins.edu
Transportation Services (Parking, Shuttles, etc.)	410-516-7275	http://ts.jhu.edu
Turnitin Plagiarism Detection Service		https://cer.jhu.edu/tools-and-tech/turnitin
Weather Hotline	410-516-7781	https://www.jhu.edu/alert
Writing Center	410-516-4258	https://krieger.jhu.edu/writingcenter

INTRODUCTION

As a new Teaching Assistant (TA), there are doubtless many questions you will have as you approach the first day of class. **This handbook outlines the boundaries and expectations of the Teaching Assistant position at Hopkins.** It will serve as a quick reference guide to answer your questions, provide some examples and suggestions, and direct you to resources available on campus.

This handbook is updated by graduate students who are experienced TAs. We try to provide you with the information and resources that will be most useful to you based on our own personal experiences in the classroom. We have also drawn on the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL) to apply accepted best practices of university teaching to the TA role.

It is divided into three sections - One on essentials necessary for all new TAs, a second on tools for effective teaching strategies, and a third on inclusivity and support - both for your students as well as yourself. Keep this guide handy and refer back to it whenever necesssary.

The Center for Teaching Excellence and Innovation (CTEI) has made this manual available online (with active hyperlinks) along with other materials you might find helpful at (*https://ctei.jhu.edu/teaching-academy/teaching-toolkit#tamanual*). These include teaching resources and videos from the TA Orientation sessions for you to draw on whenever you need ideas on how to handle situations in the classroom.

Teaching is both an art and a science. There is no one right way to become a good teacher. TAs will encounter different situations depending on their experience, their personalities, departmental demands, and the students gathered in their classrooms. In this handbook, we try to cover the most important aspects of what TAs do at Hopkins. As each TA will have different experiences and challenges, not all of the sections may apply to your particular situation.

Teaching can be a rewarding experience if you choose to make it one. Remember that you are not alone in this experience; you have plenty of resources at Hopkins, beginning with this handbook. Draw on the experiences of others by talking with your professors, your peers, and even your students. If you maintain the idea that you are all working toward a common educational goal, you will do well.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

On the previous two pages you will find a list of University Contacts. Throughout the document, underlined text followed by an asterisk (*) indicates items that may be found with the URL spelled out on the list. This will be convenient if you are using a print form of the document.

PART ONE - ESSENTIALS

EXPECTATIONS OF A TEACHING ASSISTANT

Your Expectations

Becoming a Teaching Assistant is a requirement of graduate students in many departments. Nevertheless, it is important to consider how this *obligation* may offer you a valuable *opportunity* to develop your experience and skills not only as a researcher, but also as a teacher. Being reflective about your teaching practice will make TAing a more rewarding experience for you and your students.

Take a moment to consider your own personal and professional goals for teaching:

- What skills would you like to develop as a TA?

- How can this role support your growth as a teacher and researcher?

- What would you like your students to take away from the course?

- What kind of learning environment would you like to cultivate?

Consider **the amount of time TAing will take**. Be realistic about the workload, which includes preparation time, time spent running labs or discussions, holding office hours, and grading.

Talk to TAs who have previously assisted with the class to get a sense of what to expect.

Self-Advocacy as a TA

Some TA roles will involve minimal contact with students or responsibilities beyond grading. Even if you find yourself in such a role, there are ways that you can enhance the experience to enrich your professional development as a teacher. For example, you might:

- Give one of the course lectures, perhaps related to your field of research.

- Write or revise exam questions, problem sets, paper topics, or other assignment descriptions.

- Plan an activity or lead a discussion in one of the seminar sessions.

- Facilitate writing workshops to help students practice the skills necessary for the course.

Since TAing is not just a requirement to fulfill but a chance to practice and grow as a teacher, we encourage you to **talk to the professor supervising the course and advocate for yourself to pursue roles that will be meaningful to you.**

Your Professor's Expectations

Building rapport with the course's primary instructor is one of the most important facets of becoming a TA. Professors, even those within the same department, may have *vastly different expectations* of the responsibilities of their TAs. The best way to clarify what your professor expects of you is to **start the semester with an in-person meeting**. During this first meeting, you might want to discuss:

Overview and Logistics

- What is on the syllabus?

- What are the professor's goals for the course?

- What are your goals for developing as a teacher?

- How much time will you commit to TAing?

- How often will you meet with your professor?

- How should you structure your section time?

- How will you contact the professor in case you need advice or feedback?

Your Responsibilities

- What is your role in the course?

- Will you do some or all of the grading?

- Will you design your own grading rubrics?

- Will you write exam questions or paper topics?

- Do you need to discuss grades with the professor before you return them?

- How should grades be recorded and tracked?

- Will you take attendance or grade participation?

Classroom Policies

- What are the policies on participation and attendance?

- How will you penalize late work?

- What is the policy on re-grades?

- How will you handle student complaints and academic integrity issues?

- How you will make the class an inclusive space?

- How will you accommodate student disabilities?

The important thing in this meeting is that you **get the clarity you need** to be an effective TA. Not all professors will arrange a meeting, so *you may need to take initiative* and reach out to them.

Plan to **meet with the professor on a regular basis** throughout the semester. *Don't be afraid to ask* if you need guidance on a professor's policy or help handling a situation with students. Be persistent! Know when the professor is available and find out the best way to contact them when you need immediate feedback.

Your Students' Expectations

Different students will have different expectations of their TA. While you may not be able to meet all of them, what *is* important is that you follow a set of professional standards to help each student get the most out of the course. Most students will expect:

Defined Goals. Students will expect that the course description, syllabus, and learning objectives are clearly articulated so that they can determine whether or not the course will meet their intellectual interests and educational needs.

Preparation and Organization. Students will expect you to come to class prepared, organized, and on time. They will expect technology in the classroom to work and not to have excessive reschedulings or delays.

An Engaged Classroom. Students will expect to be active learners in the classroom. They will want to participate in the learning process as opposed to simply receiving the information you have to offer them. When students speak up, try to find some merit in every response and acknowledge that the student has contributed to the conversation. Your passion and enthusiasm for the material will be contagious!

Relevant Content. Students will expect the course materials to be relevant to their interests and up-to-date with current research. Try to keep the material fresh by drawing connections between course material and the lived experiences of your students.

Getting to Know You. While you should not try to be the students' buddy or best friend, they will expect to get to know you on a professional level. Share your research interests with them (even if they do not directly relate to the course material). Try to get to know all of their names as quickly as possible to grow these connections.

An Inclusive Space. Students of diverse identities, backgrounds, and experiences will all expect to be valued, respected, and given an equal chance to succeed in the course. They will expect you to intervene on their behalf in case someone in the class makes them feel marginalized, and they will expect to be treated fairly by you, the professor, and their peers, according to established classroom and university-wide policies.

Accessibility and Resources. Students will expect to be able to meet with you in a timely manner if they have any issues related to the course. They will also expect you to be able to direct them to relevant campus resources in case they are experiencing challenges or issues that could benefit from additional support.

Clear Expectations and Grading Policies. Students will expect that you are clear about your grading practices and classroom policies. Make sure to clarify the policy on class participation. When handing back assignments, they will expect to understand why they received the grade they did, using as objective criteria as possible to ensure fairness.

Timely and Constructive Feedback. Students will expect to receive constructive feedback on their work in addition to a letter grade. They will expect to know where their weak points are and what they can do to improve their performance. They will also expect this feedback to be given in a timely manner. Getting feedback to students early in the semester is also important, since they will need to make a decision about whether to continue in the course.

Undergraduate TAs

Some departments hire undergraduate Teaching Assistants. In some cases, these undergraduate TAs might co-teach with graduate TAs in some courses. **As a best practice, undergraduates should not be involved in grading in a course for which they are a TA.**

If grading by an undergraduate TA is absolutely unavoidable, the instructor should de-identify papers and exams to avoid biased grading practices. Canvas can be used to anonymize papers submitted electronically - see a guide to this process here: *https://community.canvaslms.com/t5/Instructor-Guide/How-do-I-add-an-assignment-thatincludes-anonymous-grading/ta-p/769*.

The instructor should set expectations early with undergraduate TAs, especially around access to and dissemination of course materials. These expectations should cover topics including but not limited to:

- Only accessing course materials in the scope of your TA role
- Not providing access to these materials without appropriate permission from the course instructor

Additionally, as course instructors are granting access to course materials, they should consider what materials it makes sense to provide undergraduate TAs within the context of their specific role and responsibilities relating to the course.

GUIDANCE FOR SPECIFIC ROLES

The roles of TAs across the University are immensely varied. The following sections offer advice on some of the specific functions TAs may take on.

Discussion Sections

Discussion sections can take a number of forms. You may use the time in a physics class to go over problems, in an English class to analyze and discuss literature, or in a sociology class to explain and dissect theories. Regardless of the specific goals of your section, you will help students improve their skills in writing, speaking, critical thinking, and problem solving if your teaching strategies actively engage them in learning. One effective way of promoting active engagement is to provide students with opportunities to talk about what they are learning in the classroom through a discussion section. Discussions engage students, help the class to examine and clarify confusing concepts, and frequently raise valuable questions.
1

Goals of a Discussion Section

- Give students opportunities to apply lecture concepts. Allow students to cooperate and learn from each other.

- Increase students' sensitivity to other points of view and alternative explanations.

- Allow you to gain feedback on how well the goals of the course are being met.

- Provide motivation for further learning.

Starting a Discussion

There are a number of techniques you can use to open up a discussion. Here are a few examples:

- Ask open-ended questions that get students thinking about relationships, applications, and consequences. Show a short video or distribute a relevant news article and ask for reactions.

- Provide questions that highlight important ideas in the next lecture to form the basis of class discussion. Have students write about an idea or question for a few minutes at the start of class.

- Have students bring in discussion questions of their own. Be clear that these questions should elicit class discussion rather than serving as a recapitulation of lecture material.

- Ask for reactions to specific portions of assigned readings or lectures.

- Assign questions or tasks to small groups. This may help students feel less shy about contributing. Provide structure for these group activities, or they may lose focus. Circulate around the room to monitor activity.

Facilitating a Discussion

There are usually two main challenges of moderating a successful discussion:

1. *Unproductive Silence.* One of the hardest parts of moderating a discussion is getting it going, and keeping it going. While students may need some time to process a question and think of a response, blank stares can be awkward and a sign that a different question or approach may be helpful.

2. *Dominance.* You may get a discussion going that particularly resonates with just a couple students. Or you may have a few students who are always ready to speak, even if they aren't particularly interested in the topic. *TAs and instructors can also dominate discussions.* Remember that a discussion is an opportunity for your students to share ideas. It's not a discussion if you do most of the talking.

There are a variety of important techniques you can employ to overcome these two challenges, no matter the topic of discussion. First, regarding silence:

Be Relevant. Students will be silent when they do not see the point of engaging, or when they feel alienated from the question that is being asked. They may not understand what you mean, they may not have an opinion, or they may not see why they should care one way or the other about what they are supposed to be discussing. Most students are unwilling to engage in a perfunctory discussion/ It is your job as a facilitator to help students find meaning in the subject up for discussion. Do not take for granted that they should care. You may have to spell out relevant connections between the material and its lived applications and relevance.

What existing interests and aspirations might link up with this new material? How might their experiences be relevant to the topic under discussion? Here are some ways to help students identify meaning in a topic:

- Begin with a personal story of what you find compelling about the topic or something that had confused you when you were first introduced to it.

- Identify an example the central concept, technique, or text at work in the world – in history, in our contemporary experience, in an

industry, in nature, etc.

- Start by asking them to do an exercise that employs the concept or topic under discussion (see the section "Active Learning Techniques" below).

Be Prepared. Review the lectures and reading material prior to the section and, whenever possible, have written examples of the material for reference. Prepare a number of guiding questions that relate to different themes and issues present within the material you want to discuss. Part of being prepared is realizing that some of your students may not be, or that they have not identified the themes you will want to discuss. Try to formulate a few discussion questions that can interest students who haven't done the reading for that week without disenfranchising the ones who have.

Ask Open-Ended Questions. One of the best ways to generate silence is to pose questions that solicit one-word answers, or that have factually correct answers. Pose questions that are open-ended such that you genuinely want to hear what the students think on a given topic. Invite their perspectives, conjectures, interpretations, and opinions, not just their factual knowledge. Make sure you are moderating a discussion, not an oral exam. Let students respond to each other—you don't have to chime in after every response.

Wait for Answers. A lull in the discussion could mean that the students need a moment to digest what they've heard. When you ask a question, give them some time to formulate a response. If students still do not talk, take this as a sign that they do not understand you, don't know what to say, have not prepared, or are not interested in the discussion and reapproach the question from a different perspective. It may be helpful to break the silence by asking students to discuss the question in small groups first, then reporting back to the whole room. Don't compensate for students' silence by doing most of the talking yourself.

Be Engaging. Your tone and enthusiasm in facilitating the discussion will carry through to students. A good rule of thumb is that if you are bored, they are probably also bored. Bring an engaging energy to the discussion that will be contagious. Show the students why you are excited as a way of sparking their own interest.

Second, to avoid domination in discussions:

Be Encouraging and Inviting. Before you begin a discussion session, be mindful of how you carry yourself and communicate with others. Your responses to students, the attitudes you display, and the beliefs you convey all indicate to students the type of dealings they can anticipate.

Avoid being condescending or dismissing students out of hand. Chastising students for wrong answers may stifle future discussion. Instead, seek to establish a comfortable, collaborative classroom atmosphere that encourages students to share ideas. Provide considered, reflective responses to student discussion, and respectfully correct or redirect students whose comments are misdirected or off-base.

> **Do not be afraid to call on individual students to participate. Students will come better prepared to engage if they know that they may be expected to speak.**

Refer to the Text. Inviting students to give their own interpretations is not the same as letting them say whatever they want. Ask your students to ground their responses in the material you are working with. They may want to read a specific passage as a part of their response. Especially when you feel that a student has misinterpreted the material, ask them to support their point with evidence from the text.

Ask Questions About Students' Questions. Rephrase students' questions to make sure that you understand what they are asking. Try to resist the temptation to answer questions immediately and instead redirect the question to the room. Ask what others think. At the end, ask if their question was answered. If a student is unclear about a response to their question, spend some time after class or during office hours going over it. Don't spend too much valuable class time trying to answer an esoteric question from a single student.

Be Professional. Avoid getting defensive or hostile when a student challenges your opinion or expertise. Remember that your students come from diverse backgrounds and not all of them will share your ideology. One good response to a challenge from a student might be "Good, I'm glad we're hearing different opinions on this subject. Are there others?" Welcome the disagreement; it can lead to a productive conversation. Give opportunities for other students to voice contrasting opinions before sharing yours.

Stay On Topic. Explain the topic of discussion in advance. Designate a certain amount of time to spend on each topic. However, leave yourself some flexibility in case the discussion is engaging students. Write key facts or information on the board as visual reminders. Allow the discussion to

go in unexpected directions. If a student takes the subject too far afield, or you feel you haven't spent adequate time on the main ideas, intervene and nudge the conversation back in the direction you intended.

Use a "Parking Lot". A good facilitator will ensure that discussion flows logically rather than fracturing into a number of unrelated monologues. It is sometimes helpful to insist that students respond to one question for a period of time, which could have arisen from the discussion itself. For example, you may say, "Ok, so what does everyone think of Michael's point? Let's stick to this question for a moment." If students have comments on related topics that arise, write them on the board in a "parking lot" to revisit after you have completed discussing the original question.

Weekly Assignments

Short weekly assignments may help ensure that students do—and think about—the readings in preparation for discussion. If you plan on giving students assignments, make sure you get approval from the instructor and that the assignments are stated on the syllabus. You want to avoid changing expectations or creating unanticipated work in the middle of a semester. You can ask students to write up discussion questions on the reading or write a short paragraph about their position in relation to the reading. You may want to have your students email their questions to you in advance of class, so you come to section aware of what interests them.

Have students bring a question on the weekly assignment, an answer to a question you posed the previous week, or a problem from the homework that they found challenging and would like to discuss. Assign one or two students each week to be a discussion leader or moderator. This puts some responsibility on students to guide the discussion and may encourage participation by having students suggest the topics they feel are important or relevant.

> **"** The best discussions are when students feel comfortable sharing their ideas and engage with the material and one another, and my role is simply to clarify and steer the discussion in the most productive directions. I also like to have the class sit in a circle to facilitate and reinforce that they are talking to each other, not just to me."
> **Katherine Reinhart, History of Science, Medicine and Technology TA**

Lecture Courses

The central objective of a lecture is to communicate a set of concepts to an audience. The following are strategies that successful lecturers use.

Planning Lectures

The lecture process begins long before class convenes. Thorough preparation and organization of ideas makes lecturing easier for both the lecturer and the audience.

Think About Objectives. Think first about what objectives you want to achieve by the end of the lecture, then structure the content accordingly. See the Backward Design section of this handbook for more information.

Plan Without Over-Planning. Many people find it difficult to engage with an instructor who reads their lecture from a transcript. Make an outline and use notes and/or slides instead. Practice giving the lecture to make sure that the content is well organized with a clear and persuasive argument. Work from notes, but devote most of your energy to presentation and engaging students.

Liven Up the Material. Focus on the particular aspects of the material that interest you. Intersperse the lecture with references to your own life, students' personal experiences, or concrete and current examples of the themes. Illustrate examples with diagrams, slides, images, videos, demonstrations, cartoons, or case studies. Consider integrating some of the *active learning techniques* described in this handbook.

Delivering Lectures

Being well-prepared before your arrival to the lecture is half the journey. The other half is delivery.

Preview and Review. Start the lecture with an overview of what will follow. Emphasize how each lecture fits into the larger picture of the course as a whole. Display an outline and refer to it as you move from point to point. Pause along the way to review what you have covered up to that point.

Know Your Voice. Speak clearly, slowly, and loud enough to be heard. Check to be sure your students can hear you, and that you are not speaking too fast. Use the microphone provided in large rooms to ensure everyone can hear. Listen for distracting speech patterns, such as repeatedly saying, "Um", "Uh-huh," or "You know," or using the same phrases frequently, and don't trail off at the end of a thought.

Repeat Important Concepts. Use tactics to alert students that the concepts about to be introduced are important, such as writing key phrases or themes on the board, or announcing, "This is a key theme we'll see repeatedly."

Acknowledge Your Limitations. When a student asks a question to which you don't know the answer, do not attempt to fake an answer or avoid the subject. Admit that you are not sure, promise to find the answer, and get back to the student and the class promptly.

Imitate Good Lecturers. Take a minute to think about instructors you've really liked, and assess what it was that made them effective lecturers.

> **Practice your lecture and time yourself. A good rule of thumb is allowing at least 20 minutes for discussion and dealing with administrative issues.**

Laboratory Sections

In a lab, students are active participants in what they learn. Instead of merely absorbing knowledge, students have the opportunity to gain firsthand experience in a given field. Most importantly, labs teach students about the process of being a good scientist. This process includes everything from keeping a detailed lab notebook to working collaboratively.

First Day of Lab

This may be the first lab course for some of your students. Go over important policies, such as "Lab notebooks must never leave this room," or "Open flames are allowed only in the hood." Include policies on grading and attendance as well as suggestions about how to format their lab reports. Include a sample lab report for guidance, as students may be unfamiliar with this style of writing.

Preparing for a Lab

Preparation is essential to running a lab section. Being familiar with the experiment in principle is not enough. Ideally you should run the entire experiment from start to finish before attempting to teach it. When this is not possible, familiarize yourself with all of the equipment and make sure you know how to operate it. Read the lab manual thoroughly, and make sure you are prepared to explain concepts and procedures.

In some departments, the instructor or head TA will demonstrate experiments before each class. This is not always sufficient preparation. Set aside a time each week to prepare for the lab. Make a point of talking to TAs who have already taught the lab and find out what the students found difficult. Remember that your students will be less efficient than experienced scientists.

Student Preparation

Students who have reviewed lecture notes and the lab manual will have a greater understanding of the day's experiment than those who come to lab unprepared. Ensure that students are familiar with the lab before they come to class by giving a short quiz based on the techniques and concepts introduced in the lab manual, or having students come to lab prepared with a statement of the experimental purpose and procedure.

Supervising the Experiment

Make contact with every student as the lab progresses to be sure that they are on the right track. As a lab TA, you will need to help students recover from experimental errors while encouraging independence. Inquire about the results of intermediate steps. If they're way off, give them some time to uncover the mistake on their own, but don't leave them floundering for too long. A hint or two may get them back on track.

Realize that you cannot help every student at once. Encourage your students to seek advice and compare results with each other when you are not available. You may have students perform the experiment in small groups or pairs. In this way they can help each other learn the material, share equipment and preparations, and answer each other's questions.

Safety in the Lab

Carelessness, lack of preparedness, and ignorance of safety procedures can be disastrous and result in injuries. Be aware of the safety guidelines and procedures at the University in case of an accident. As the person in charge, you may be called upon to act quickly in the case of a chemical spill, fire, explosion, ingestion of or contact with a toxic substance, or any of a number of other hazardous situations. Be prepared for such situations and respond accordingly, after making sure the appropriate safety personnel are contacted.

When it comes to handling dangerous materials or equipment in lab, you should always assume that your students did not read the safety warnings in the lab manual. Point out how toxic materials should be handled and how they should be disposed of properly. Inform students about hazardous combinations of chemicals and unsafe lab practices. Demonstrate potentially tricky techniques. Point out safety showers, eyewash stations, and fire extinguishers. Give students instructions on how to deal with possible problems and how to contact campus safety and security.

In case of an emergency call Campus Security at 410-516-7777. They will contact the appropriate emergency personnel and direct them to your location on campus.

For more about lab safety, please see the Johns Hopkins *Lab Safety** website.

"W" Courses

To encourage excellence in writing across disciplines, the University requires all undergraduates to take a number of writing-intensive (W) courses. The University defines a writing-intensive course as one in which students produce at least 20 pages of finished writing over multiple assignments, usually three or more papers; instructors respond to students' work in written comments, in conference, or both, and students have at least one opportunity to receive feedback on a draft and then revise. A writing-intensive course does more than assign writing; it guides students' practice in writing and makes writing an integral part of the course.

> **"**If you are teaching a writing-intensive course, it may be a good idea to establish a policy on the reading of drafts. To be fair to all students, I advise either limiting the number of drafts you will read for each assignment or the number of pages of the draft (for instance, the first two pages) you will read."
>
> **Caroline Arden, Writing Seminars**

Bring Writing into the Classroom

By asking students to write in class, you can model for students the role that writing plays in your discipline. Here are a few suggestions:

At the beginning of class, ask students to write for three to five minutes on some aspect of the reading you will discuss that day. Ask students to respond to the reading, or put a specific question on the board to help stimulate and focus discussion. What strikes them as the most puzzling, questionable, or important passage in the text? What do they see as the author's key claim, and why? Ask them to identify an important underlying assumption the author makes, or to name a particular point in the text with which they agree or disagree, and to explain their rationale.

Brief in-class writing exercises help students focus on the subject, stimulate discussion, and promote writing as a means of thinking. Use in-class writing exercises

to get started, to switch gears in the middle of class, or to give students a chance to sum up their own thoughts at the end: What do they want to take away from class today? These exercises need not be graded.

Discuss the readings as writing. How does the article/essay/report work as a piece of writing? What is the author's strategy for setting up the beginning, establishing context, letting readers know what's at stake? What are the author's sources of evidence, and how does he or she use them? How does the author handle transitions? Structure the essay? Anticipate counterarguments? This approach won't work with all readings, but many can do double duty as models for the intellectual and rhetorical moves you want your students to practice. By asking students to consider the work they're reading as writing, you engage students as fellow writers in the scholarly enterprise.

Choose secondary readings with which students can engage analytically. If a secondary reading is too sophisticated or difficult, or if students do not have access to the data on which it is based, they will be unable to grapple with the text in a meaningful way, and you will spend a majority of class time attempting to explain what the text says rather than guiding students' evaluation of it.

Make students' writing the subject of class activities. You can turn students' writing into an important text by setting up a class workshop. If you ask students to summarize a text in one paragraph (a good pre-draft assignment for a synthesis or an analysis), you can read two or three of the summaries in class and consider, in a class discussion, how well they fulfill the criteria you established for a summary. Or put students in pairs and ask them to evaluate each other's summaries. Grading is not necessary; the aim is to help students improve their writing.

You can arrange workshops for pre-draft assignments (paper proposals, tentative theses), parts of drafts (introductions, body paragraphs), or whole drafts. For whole drafts, students will need to read them ahead of time—they can email them to each other or post them on the course Canvas site. In any case, you will need to establish clear guidelines for both the specific purpose of the workshop and the logistics. Setting up in-class workshops gives students the opportunity to receive constructive feedback, teaches them that writing is a process involving revision, and takes their work seriously as writing meant for readers. Workshops also give participants the opportunity to see how fellow writers approached the same writing task and to practice their textual analysis skills.

Respond to and Evaluate Written Work

How You Respond Depends on the Goal of the Assignment. When you respond to students' writing—whether by email, in conference, or in written comments on their papers—keep in mind the objectives for the assignment. If the writing is a short, in-class exercise, the purpose may be to stimulate class discussion, in which case the interaction with classmates' ideas is both purpose and response. If the assignment is a pre-draft that asks students to summarize in a paragraph the main argument of one of the readings, students need to know whether they have provided an accurate account of the argument. If students miss the argument or only have part of it, say that, and send them back to the text. There's no point in asking students to critique an argument if they don't have a clear understanding of what the author is arguing.

Use Pre-Draft Writing Assignments to Keep Students on Track. Pre-draft writing assignments are useful checkpoints for you to make sure students are on the right track. If you assign students to develop a tentative thesis, you can use their assignments in class to discuss what makes a good thesis for the paper in question. And you can comment on their individual assignments by making suggestions that will help strengthen their thinking and, when needed, send them in more fruitful directions. Responding to students' writing is an important means of teaching. It is also evaluative; your responses are guided by your judgment about what is working well, what isn't, and how students might improve. Teaching in this way integrates the criteria for evaluating the final product into the process of producing the product.

Use Grades to Reinforce What Students Have Learned. When students submit their papers to you for grading, the teaching continues. If you determine grades based on how well students fulfill the criteria for the assignment, then grades become more than positive or negative reinforcement; they become the means of reinforcing the specific lessons and writing values that you teach. Students may not like their grades, but they should understand them in the terms of the course. Create a rubric (a list of competencies or qualities) that provides the criteria you will use to assess their work, to be shared with your students along with the assignment. Explain the grade in a formal written comment, sometimes referred to as an endnote, which provides students with an analysis of both the strong points and weak points of the paper, and what could be improved to lift it to a higher level. The endnote should address the student respectfully and by name, and should make concrete references to the paper. It's useful to number the paragraphs (or have students do it) so that you can

refer to specific sections. For instance, if one of the best parts of a paper is the student's use of evidence in paragraphs 4-6, tell them that. You might also contrast that strong section with the weak use of evidence, in paragraphs 7 and 8 so that the student can see, in the context of their own paper, where the use of evidence is effective and where it is not.

Your comments should:

- Evaluate the paper in the terms of the assignment. Point to what the student did well.

- Explain the weaknesses and the resulting consequences (e.g., how the failure to provide necessary background undermines coherence).

- Consider how the student writer can improve.

This last point regards the student as a writer whose learning is not bounded by this single assignment, and it locates grading in the context of your teaching.

Tips on Writing Endnotes. Make sure that you are fair to the entire class when writing endnotes. Avoid spending so much time writing one note that you neglect other students' work by establishing a time limit for writing endnotes on each paper. You might also jot notes to yourself on a separate piece of paper as you read so that you can quickly determine the two or three main things you want to include in your endnote. If you get stuck on a paper, set it aside, go on to the others, and return to the problem paper later.

The Art of Problem Solving

Problem solving sections are interactive by nature. TAs in problem solving sections need to be able to teach the approach to solving a problem. This may involve breaking down a problem into small parts, linking to previously covered topics, using proper terminology

> ❝When grading lengthy midterms, you may find it difficult to maintain a fair and consistent rubric… Before you start, it will help to have a clear idea of what a good answer would be for each question. Then, before assigning any grades, read quickly through several of the tests to get an idea of the range of responses."
> **Marsha Libina, History of Art TA**

and nomenclature, and untangling the problem for students.

Do's and Don'ts of Problem Solving

Advance **preparation is key** to running a successful problem solving section. You will want to go over all of the problems to be covered in class to be sure that you are familiar with the approaches to finding solutions. Identify the elements of the problems and where the potential pitfalls for students are likely to occur. This will help you to guide students as they work through the problem. Make sure that you have examples that are similar to the problems students will have on their homework and tests.

As a coach, you will want to engage the class to take ownership of the work and encourage class participation. Remember that **you are teaching the students how to think broadly, not just solve a single problem**. You should not be lecturing or providing the answers for the students.

Think about the topics you want to cover in each session and design your presentation for clarity. *Don't skip over parts of the explanations*—what may be evident to you may not be for your students. Take your time and be sure that everyone is following along by looking at body language and asking if there are any questions. It is important to check for student understanding at each step, before moving on.

Pay attention to sticking points or obstacles for your students and be prepared to show alternate solutions or offer additional explanation for clarification. *Peer instruction* can be valuable for those who are struggling. A student who has been challenged by a problem and discovered the method for solution may be able to explain the process to a fellow student. Where appropriate, encourage students to collaborate.

Don't hide errors or lack of knowledge. If you encounter a problem or question you cannot answer, tell students you will look into it and get back to them at the next session. In order to maintain trust and respect with your students, make sure to actually follow up when you commit to getting back to them.

> **A clear and effective essay rubric will not only communicate your expectations to students, but also make grading easier, more efficient, and less arbitrary.**

GRADING AND ASSESSMENT

An important part of good teaching is successful assessment. The evaluation process entails more than marking answers right or wrong. Homework, papers, and exams provide important feedback to students about their level of learning through grades, comments, and suggestions. Similarly, they provide feedback to you about your effectiveness as a teacher.

Here are some important ideas to keep in mind, no matter what type of exam you are preparing:

Timing. Be mindful of the amount of time a student will have to answer a question. Students may take considerably longer to complete an assignment than you would. If possible, time the assignment by doing it yourself, and then add extra time to come to a reasonable duration for your students.

Administrative Details. Establish both the format of the examinations and the grading criteria at the beginning of the semester.

Variety. If using the same or similar assignments over multiple years, rearrange the logic and the requirements of questions so that the general concepts remain the same, but the specific details or cases change.

Proofread Your Questions. Make sure your questions are written clearly and that there no typing errors to ensure students understand what you are asking.

Formative and Summative Assessments

When designing assessments, it is often helpful to balance formative with summative assessments.

- **Summative assessments** are designed to help instructors measure what their students have learned, often at the end of the course or at the end of a unit. *Examples include:* midterms, final exams, final projects, and standardized tests.

- **Formative assessments** are designed to help students identify their own strengths and weaknesses in a certain area. This is usually done continuously throughout the semester so that students can diagnose their weak points before they dramatically impact their grade. *Examples include:* short in-class quizzes or papers, active learning exercises, homework assignments, and clicker questions.

These two "types" of assessment are not always mutually exclusive, and most assessments incorporate some elements of both.

Think about assessment not only as a measuring tool for you, but also as a learning tool for your students to see where they can improve.

When structuring assessments throughout a course, it is often helpful to incorporate a number of lesser-weighted or participation-based formative assessments leading up to a more heavily weighted summative assessment. This will give your students an opportunity to learn from their mistakes before they have a major impact on their grade. This also supports an inclusive learning environment for those coming with less background knowledge in the subject.

For more information on Formative Assessment, see: *https://ctei.jhu.edu/ii#formative-assessment*.

True/False and Multiple-Choice Questions

True/false questions generally test facts and definitions, while multiple-choice questions can be used to test the correct use of facts, definitions, concepts, or abstract thinking. Both types should be used only when there is a clear "right" answer.

How to Write Questions. Consider these tips when creating questions.

- Avoid qualifying terms like "may," "some," or "to a considerable degree."

- Do not create false statements from true statements through the use of negatives (e.g., "True or false: It is not the case that X = Y"). Instead, use straightforward declaratives (e.g. "True or false: X = Y").

- Make an effort to be truly random in the pattern of correct answers. If a, b, c, and d are possible answers, randomly order the correct letter.

- The answers (d), "all of the above," or (e), "none of the above," should be used sparingly.

Essay and Short Answer Questions

Within each question, limit the number of sub-questions. Each question should attempt to get students to integrate two or three broad themes in the course. Experiment with the format of questions. For example, combine short-answer questions with an essay-length question. Give students some options, such as choosing to answer one of two essay questions.

Designing Writing Assignments

Decisions about how you will use writing in your course and how you will design writing assignments

are determined by the discipline, the level, and the goals of the course. What do you want the writing assignments to accomplish? Work backward from your objectives, and design your assignments to help students achieve those objectives.

There is a big difference between assigning one large final paper and assigning a series of shorter papers over the course of the semester. The one-paper approach can be effective for advanced students, but rarely provides adequate guidance and progress throughout the semester. An alternative approach is to assign shorter papers at first, either as sections of a longer paper or as separate assignments, which will allow for feedback throughout the semester. Whether you're teaching an introductory-level or a more advanced course, you can use a mix of ungraded and graded assignments to help students master the intellectual and rhetorical skills they will need to write the most complex assignment of the course.

For each assignment, provide a series of questions to help focus students' thinking, state explicitly that you do not expect students to answer every question but rather to formulate an arguable thesis in response to some of these questions. Ask students to turn in a research question or proposal, an annotated bibliography, a draft beginning or a tentative thesis, a presentation on the research, or a draft before the final paper.

For more information about writing assignments, see the previous section on "W Courses."

> **❝** Many classes require a participation score, which can be tricky to calculate. I've found it is helpful to keep careful track of attendance, as well as some specific notes on student participation throughout the semester. That way, at the end of the semester, you aren't just basing class participation on a gut feeling – and you have some backup in the event that a student disagrees with your assessment!"
>
> **Katie Gray, History TA**

Grading

When responding to students' written work and assigning grades, keep in mind the purpose of the assignment and what you want students to learn.

Use a Rubric. By basing grades on the rubric, the criteria for the assignment and your grading will be clearer and more consistent. Tie the rubric to the course's learning goals and objectives, then define the criteria you will use to measure students' progress towards those objectives. Consider providing students with a copy or summary of the rubric when the assignment is given.

Grade What You Teach. Determine grades based on how well students fulfill the criteria for the assignment—the criteria you taught—so grades become an important teaching tool, a means of reinforcing specific lessons and principles. Even if students are not satisfied with their grades, they should be able to understand them in terms of the course and the rubric provided.

Think about Process and Product. When developing the rubric, consider how much to weight correct content versus correct methods. How important is it to factor in a student's effort or ambition, even if the assignment demonstrates shortcomings in its execution? The relative weight will depend on the course and the specific learning objectives you are trying to measure.

Start with a Review. When you're grading papers, you can speed up the process and increase consistency by skimming through several papers before commenting or assigning grades. This will give you a sense of the papers as a group, how they compare, and what characterizes the stronger papers. After you finish grading, it's a good idea to double-check papers in the same grade range to make sure they are commensurate.

Respond in Writing. Commenting in the margins of written work can help you track the work as you go. You might make notes for yourself seperately, and then put only those comments in the margins that address important points. You can explain the grade on a comment sheet that provides students with an analysis of *both the strong points and the weak points* of the paper. Make sure to relate your comments to the rubric and mention what could be improved to elevate the grade to a higher level. Be careful not to over-comment, however; excessive marginal comments can overwhelm students, in addition to being time-consuming to produce for every student.

Keep Accurate Records. Have a system, maintain the security of your records, and make sure you have a backup or copy. If attendance and participation are factors in final grades, record attendance at every class (not later). There are a variety of ways in which you might do this: calling attendance, passing around an attendance sheet, incorporating active learning techniques that require attendance (e.g., clicker questions), among others.

Record the submission of all homework and pre-draft assignments on the days you receive them. If you ask students to submit an electronic version of their papers in addition to a hard copy, you will have an accurate record of when all papers were turned in. Retain your attendance and grade sheets after the course is over.

Stay Current with Grading. The information you provide to students by responding to and evaluating their homework, pre-draft assignments, tests, and papers is an important part of your teaching. It helps you and students keep track of what they've learned and what they still have to learn. This information must keep pace with the course.

Have a Clear Policy on Re-grades. If your course allows re-grades, put the instructor's policy in writing, and make sure your grading criteria are clear (see above). If you find mistakes, correct them. If you're unsure of how to handle a grading problem, refer the student to the professor.

If your responsibilities include grading, be aware that some weeks, particularly around midterms and finals, may be busier than others. Budget your time wisely!

Some students may react strongly when they receive a grade lower than what they think they deserve. Try to diffuse the situation, but do not back down. Let the student know they are welcome to ask the professor if they feel they are being graded unfairly. Click on the picture below for a video of a TA responding appropriately to an irate student:

Evaluating and Improving Your Teaching

Assessment is not only useful for evaluating students, but can also be used to improve your teaching. Emphasize to students that you take their suggestions and evaluations seriously. The more you do this, the more likely you are to get thoughtful feedback. The following are general strategies for improving teaching through evaluation:

Don't Wait for Final Course Evaluations. Get feedback throughout the semester. This can help you adapt to students' needs in real-time, as opposed to waiting for a new group of students. Consider using the *Mid-Semester Evaluation Forms** which can be found online here: *https://ctei.jhu.edu/teaching/mid-semester-surveys*.

Experiment and Adapt. While certain modifications to your section (content or grade distribution modifications, for example) should only be made prior to the beginning of the semester, do not be afraid to experiment with different ways of running your section. Develop those techniques that are effective and well-recieved by students, and drop those activities that are less useful.

Ideally, you should find a regular weekly pattern that works best for you and your students. Teaching is a skill that takes time and experience to learn, and trying new methods of delivery is the only way to become a more versatile teacher.

Explore Teaching Resources. Hopkins offers a variety of resources for diagnosing and problem-solving common issues that can emerge in almost any classroom. Take some time to explore the resources available to you through the Center for Teaching Excellence and Innovation (*https://ctei.jhu.edu/*), the Teaching Academy (*https://ctei.jhu.edu/teaching-academy*), and HUDL (*https://hudl.jhu.edu/*).

Don't Blame the Students. It is important to recognize that teaching is a dynamic process, and the relationship between students and teachers has to be cultivated. *Students may not be conforming to your expectations because you have yet to find the right way of connecting with them.* Reflective teaching means that an instructor is continuously thinking about and evaluating their own performance in the classroom, and make the necessary adjustments. Remember that teaching is more than conveying content, and that it is part of your job to engage students where possible in the process of learning.

Sources of Information

Students. If you encourage students to meet with you individually during the course, you can use these meetings to ask them about your teaching, or the course structure. To help stimulate discussion, depersonalize your questions (e.g., "Was this assignment unclear? Why?") You could also take a few moments during class to talk with all your students about how the course is going.

Anonymous written comments often allow students to be more free and thoughtful. If you want to write your own evaluation form, ask questions that are both specific and open-ended, such as: "Were comments on papers or exams helpful?" "To what extent was the TA approachable?" or "Did the TA encourage participation? How?"

Faculty and Peers. Form a Peer Review Group with fellow TAs in which you each take turns sitting in on each other's classes. Such processes provide relatively unbiased commentary on specific classroom practices and expose people to a variety of teaching styles and techniques.

There is also a lot to be learned from faculty about teaching. Some faculty members make a habit of visiting TA discussion sections or labs and offering commentary. Being observed and evaluated by a faculty member can be more stressful than being observed by a peer, but having a supervisor familiar with your teaching can be worthwhile for future letters of reccommendation.

The Center for Teaching Excellence and Innovation (CTEI) also offers services to watch and provide feedback for TA sections.

Self-Evaluations. Video and audio taping sections are two ways for you to see how others see you. Observing yourself can lead to some startling discoveries about how you interact with your students. Sit down and think about what the information you are gathering is telling you. If a section goes particularly well or poorly, take some time to reflect and diagnose. Learning to teach is like learning anything else—it's an ongoing process.

Academic Misconduct

An important part of being a TA is administering the policies that preserve academic integrity at Hopkins. You are not alone in this endeavor. It is your responsibility to recognize problems and report them immediately to your supervising professor. Your pro-

fessor, the Associate Dean for Student Conduct, and the Undergraduate Academic Ethics Board will work together to enforce the academic policies.

The *Homewood Undergraduate Academic Ethics Policy** defines academic misconduct as: "any action or attempted action that may result in creating an unfair academic advantage for oneself or an unfair academic advantage or disadvantage for any other member or members of the academic community. This includes a wide variety of behaviors such as cheating, plagiarism, altering academic documents or transcripts, gaining access to materials before they are meant to be available, and helping another individual to gain an unfair academic advantage."

It is important for you to document academic misconduct clearly and to inform your instructor immediately. Your instructor will contact the Associate Dean for Student Conduct and may request a direct settlement or hearing request. If a hearing in front of the Ethics Board is necessary, your instructor will be expected to present an account of the case as well as provide supporting evidence.

The full policy includes specific examples of what counts as cheating, plagiarism, forgery/falsification/lying, facilitating academic dishonesty, and unfair competition.

Cheating

The best way to combat cheating is to provide an explicit definition of cheating in the context of the course at the beginning of the semester. According to the policy, *Academic Ethics for Undergraduates**, cheating is defined as "the act of stealing ideas, information, and words. Any act that violates authorship or takes undue advantage is cheating." Cheating can take on different forms. While cheating during an exam is the most obvious type, students can be called to the Ethics Board for knowingly facilitating cheating, creating unfair competition, lying, or collaborating inappropriately with other students on assignments.

To prevent cheating before it happens, you should minimize the temptation to cheat as much as possible. An attentive eye may be enough to discourage most students from cheating. For quizzes and exams put an empty seat between each person if possible, and reiterate the policy before the exam begins. Another option for some classes may be to require students to turn in an outline and rough draft before the final paper.

Clearly define the rules on student collaboration on assignments, papers, and exam preparation. It is critical that you explain these policies, as they vary greatly among departments and professors. Make sure that the cheating policy is enforced equally for all students. Don't change policies mid-semester. If you feel that you must make a change, communicate the new policy and your reasons for the change during class. If you treat cheating seriously, your students will do the same.

Plagiarism

The Academic Ethics for Undergraduates policy describes plagiarism as "representing someone else's information, ideas or words as your own by failing to acknowledge the source." Clearly define plagiarism on the first day of class and before the first paper is due. Plagiarism is a serious problem that can have very serious repercussions—make sure your students understand the rules and the consequences before they start writing. Refer your students to proper citation resources such as the *Sheridan Libraries Citation Guide**.

If you suspect plagiarism, copy the original paper and then go through the student's work and the texts carefully. Document all cases of plagiarism, whether verbatim use of an author's works or stolen ideas.Remind students that they are not permitted to reuse assignments from other classes without express permission from the instructor of the course. And, since the professor is ultimately responsible for dealing with plagiarism, discuss issues with them as soon as possible.

Turnitin.com Plagiarism Prevention

JHU has a University-wide site license for the *Turnitin Plagiarism Detection Service**. This service provides an easy-to-use method for instructors to check the content of papers for unoriginal material. The Center for Teaching Excellence and Innovation offers Turnitin training and information for KSAS and WSE instructors. Instructors can request a Turnitin account by sending an email to *turnitin@jhu.edu*. Requests from TAs need to be coordinated with a sponsoring faculty member.

PART TWO - EFFECTIVE TEACHING

CLASS DESIGN AND PREPARATION

While TAs are primarily responsible for aiding in the *implementation* of a course that has already been designed by the professor, some TAs will be asked to participate to various extents in the *instructional design process*. This could include anything from soliciting your advice on the course syllabus, or asking for your help in determining learning goals, to giving you the freedom to run your own lab or discussion section.

The rest of this chapter will review some basics of instructional design that you should keep in mind while structuring your section or your role in the course. Even if you aren't involved to a great extent in the course design process, these principles can help you think strategically about where you fit into the learning process.

Before the Semester Begins

Before the semester starts, consider doing the following:

3. ***Meet with your professor*** to discuss their expectations and what your role will be.
4. ***Meet with previous TAs*** to get advice on how to be successful based on their experience.
5. ***Ensure that the course syllabus is ready*** and review it beforehand with your professor.
6. ***Budget time*** for all your TA-related activities, balancing them with your own research.
7. ***Obtain copies of all course materials*** and make sure they are accessible to students.
8. ***Get access to the course Canvas page*** and other relevant technologies.
9. ***Review the course website*** to ensure material is online and links are working (if applicable).
10. ***Prepare a one-page TA introduction*** listing your name, email, field/interests, office hours, and expectations for the section.
11. ***Prepare any course materials*** you may need for the first few weeks.
12. ***Check out the classroom*** and make sure all of the technology you will need is working properly. If you are leading your own section and the classroom does not meet your needs, check with your department administrator to discuss alternatives.

Backward Design

Backward design is a framework for thinking about instructional design. **The organizing principle of backward design is to first identify the learning goals and objectives for the course, and then to work backwards to see what assessments, materials, and experiences will help students achieve those goals.**

Rather than starting with the content you need to get through, backward design suggests starting with the end in mind, so that you can be *intentional* about structuring your course.

Backward design takes place in three stages:

1. ***Identify desired results.*** What do you want your students to know and be able to do by the end of the course? What concepts should they be able to apply? What kinds of writing or analysis should they be able to perform? What types of problems should they be able to solve?

    First, think of 3 to 5 broad *learning goals* that you hope the students will achieve over the entire semester. Be sure to include both *content-related goals* and *non-content goals*, such as developing research skills or learning how to conduct a literature review.

    Once you have developed broad learning goals, think about specific *learning objectives* that can apply to each unit of the course. Learning objectives should be more tangible and more explicit than learning goals, and they should be as *easy to measure* as possible. It may be helpful to break down each learning goal into 3 to 5 specific objectives.

2. ***Determine acceptable evidence.*** How will you measure if students have met the course's goals and objectives? This requires you to *align* your assessments with the objectives you outlined, so that you can verify the extent to which students are meeting each objective.

3. ***Plan learning experiences and instruction.*** How will you design instruction for each class that will adequately prepare the students for their assessments and allow them to meet the course goals and objectives? This will involve thinking about the kinds of lectures, readings, labs, discussions, etc. you will need to conduct with the class.

It is important to remember that the backward design process will never be able to capture the full range of what students learn in a given course. Defining specific goals and objectives does not preclude you from **embracing the unexpected journeys** students will take in furthering their own education. It may be helpful to think of the backward design process as a baseline as opposed to a finish line. What do you want *all* students in the class to know and be able to

do at the end of the class? What are the *fundamentals of the field* that it is necessary for them to master at this stage?

For more information on Backward Design, see: *https://ctei.jhu.edu/ii#using-backward-design-for-course-planning*.

Writing Learning Goals and Objectives

Learning goals state what topics or issues will be addressed over the entire semester, while learning objectives clarify what students should learn during each unit. **Consider how you as a TA will help students meet these goals and objectives.**

Consider distributing a list of goals and objectives to your students at the start of the semester, perhaps as part of your syllabus. If you will be running your own section or lab, it may also be helpful to define learning objectives specific to that portion of the course, if your professor has not already done so. You can also include objectives on assignment sheets, so students know what is expected for each assignment.

SMART Goals and Objectives

When writing goals and objectives, think about the following principles:

- **Specific.** Concise, well-defined statements of what students will be able to do

- **Measurable.** The goals and objectives should suggest how students will be assessed.

- **Attainable.** The goals and objectives are pitched at the right level and are reasonably paced.

- **Relevant.** The skills and knowledge described are appropriate for the course.

- **Time-bound.** State when students should be able to demonstrate each goal or objective.

Bloom's Taxonomy

Bloom's Taxonomy is framework that can be used to categorize learning goals and objectives. Below is a summary of the different taxonomic levels along with some action verbs that could be used in writing learning objectives. The continuum begins with the lower-order thinking skills and works its way up to higher-order ones.

1. **Remembering:** cite, define, list, name, recall, label, reproduce
2. **Understanding:** describe, explain, identify, paraphrase, classify, recognize
3. **Applying:** demonstrate, choose, solve, interpret, illustrate, hypothesize, use
4. **Analyzing:** contrast, distinguish, categorize, compare, examine, critique
5. **Evaluating:** appraise, defend, support, judge, predict, argue, persuade, recommend
6. **Creating:** develop, construct, assemble, design, imagine, invent

This continuum should not be thought of as a hierarchy but as a series of building blocks. "Creating" is not *better than* "remembering"—it just comes at a more advanced stage in the learning process.

It is helpful to design objectives and assessments at different points on the continuum, based on the level of the course (introductory, intermediate, or advanced) and your own priorities. For example, introductory courses may focus more on remembering and understanding the material, whereas more advanced courses will ask students to evaluate competing ideas and become knowledge creators by contributing to an ongoing area of research.

Consider including *non-content goals and objectives* such as conducting a literature search or improved oral/written expression.

For more information on Bloom's Taxonomy, see: *https://ctei.jhu.edu/ii#blooms-taxonomy-action-speaks-louder*.

Examples of Learning Goals and Objectives

Examples of **learning goals** include the following.

"By the end of this course, students will be able to...
- "Propose a cognitive neuroscience experiment that justifies the choice of questions, experimental method, and explains the logic of the proposed approach." *(Cognitive Science)*
- "Articulate specific connections between texts and historical, cultural, artistic, social, and political contexts." *(German and Romance Languages and Literatures)*
- "Design and conduct experiments." *(Chemistry)*
- "Make well-reasoned historical arguments supported by appropriate primary and secondary sources." *(History)*
- "Design a system to meet desired needs within realistic constraints such as economic, environmental, social, political, ethical, health and safety, manufacturability, and sustainability." *(Biomedical Engineering)*

Examples of **learning objectives** include the following.

"At the end of this unit, students will be able to...
- "Identify and explain major events from the Civil War." *(American History)*
- "Analyze kinetic data and obtain rate laws." *(Chemical Engineering)*
- "Interpret DNA sequencing data." *(Biology)*
- "Discuss and form persuasive arguments about a variety of literary texts produced by Roman authors of the Republican period." *(Classics)*
- "Evaluate the appropriateness of the conclusions reached in a research study based on the data presented." *(Sociology)*
- "Design their own mock fiscal and monetary policies." *(Economics)*

These examples were taken from the articles on Learning Objectives and Learning Goals in the Innovative Instructor.

For more on Learning Goals, see:
https://ctei.jhu.edu/ii#writing-course-learning-goals.

For more on Learning Objectives, see:
https://ctei.jhu.edu/ii#writing-effective-learning-objectives.

Inclusive Course Design

The following strategies will help you design your course in a way that is accessible to all students.

Diversify course materials. Where possible in your role as a TA, think about what's on the syllabus. Have you provided materials from a variety of socio-cultural contexts? Who is represented in and by the materials you will be working with? Are you working with authors from a breadth of experiences and identities? What forms of homogeneity exist across the course content, and how can you be explicit with students about the limitations of the syllabus you are working with? Be open about some of your own potential blindspots and, when possible, take responsibility for them by doing additional research to shore them up.

Diversify assessment strategies. Different students will be comfortable with different forms of assessment. For example, students who struggle with multiple-choice questions may excel in a short-answer format, or with a group project. Allow your students to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways. This could also mean incorporating some low-stakes formative assessments that won't dramatically affect the students' grades, but can help them understand how to improve in the course. For example, submitting the draft of a paper for peer review before it is formally graded. For more, see the "Formative Assessment" section above.

Diversify teaching strategies. Like assessments, different students will respond to different teaching techniques more favorably than others. Try to mix up your teaching strategies—for example, through Active Learning exercises—to cater to different students' preferences. See the section on "Active Learning Techniques" below for more information.

Plan for varied levels of academic preparation. Apart from official prerequisites, don't assume your students will already have a basic knowledge of the field. Students at Hopkins are given tremendous freedom to take elective courses that may be totally outside their primary area of study. Especially for introductory classes, be prepared to teach students who may not have any background in the subject. Take time to explain concepts you might otherwise take for granted, and pitch your level of assessments accordingly. Scaffold the course so that you begin with foundational concepts and gradually work your way to more complex ones.

Section Design Resources

Hopkins has a variety of resources available to instructors to help them develop sections and courses in a way that is effective, goal-directed, and inclusive. These resources are available to TAs at Hopkins of any discipline or level of experience.

The Teaching Academy

The Teaching Academy at Johns Hopkins (*https://ctei.jhu.edu/teaching-academy*) offers regular courses, workshops, teaching practicums, and fellowships to help graduate students develop the critical pedagogical skills necessary for a career in academia. In addition to these programs, specialists are also available to provide personalized, one-on-one consultation sessions with graduate students to give advice and suggestions regarding the design of their sections. Consultations may be requestedd by emailing *teachingacademy@jhu.edu*. For more details on the programs and services offered by the Teaching Academy, see "Additional Teaching Resources".

Hopkins Universal Design for Learning (HUDL)

Universal Design for Learning (UDL), is a pedagogical-framework designed to eliminate common barriers to learning for students of all backgrounds. All instructors at Johns Hopkins University have access to a UDL research library through *https://hudl.jhu.edu*, which includes video lectures, academic articles, templates, rubrics, and examples of UDL implementation in Hopkins courses to inspire and guide TAs in effective and inclusive section design. UDL ambassadors to Hopkins are also available to provide advice and feedback to TAs looking to improve their content delivery.

IN THE CLASSROOM

The First Day

The first class provides an opportunity to set the tone for the semester. The following are some pointers to help you start the semester off on the right foot.

Before the First Class

If your contact information is not already on the course syllabus, consider **making a handout** with your name, the course name and number, and your contact information (email, campus address, office location, and office hours) as well as your expectations for the section.

Get to the room at least a few minutes early to address problems, arrange chairs, organize notes and papers, and write announcements on the board. Make sure that you have the appropriate equipment. This includes making sure that everything in the classroom is operating properly and that your laptop and mobile devices are compatible with the technology in the room. Visit the classroom before the start of the semester to ensure compatibility and alert your department administrator if the classroom will not meet your needs.

At the First Class

Introduce Yourself. Use the first class to get to know students and to introduce yourself to them. Verify their correct names and pronouns (they/them, she/her, he/him, etc.). Let the class know what you are researching, how long you have been at Hopkins, and what your background or interest is in the course.

Clarify Your Role. Undergraduates often find it helpful for the TA to outline their role early in the semester, and to clarify standards and expectations directly, preferably in writing. This can include whether you will read early drafts of papers and how far in advance you want to see them. Also considering outlining what kinds of questions should students address to you, and what they should address to the professor.

Get to Know Your Students. Ask the students targeted questions, going around the room so that everyone speaks. A brief icebreaker, where students tell each other their names, past experience or particular interests in the course, is often useful. Try to connect the learning objectives of the course to the students' personal experiences so they can *appreciate the relevance and importance* of what they will be learning.

Review Learning Goals and Objectives. Provide a thumbnail sketch of the broad goals of the course and what you expect students will learn from studying these concepts. Show students that you are well prepared and excited for what is to come.

Go Over Classroom Policies and Set Expectations. Explain your criteria for classroom participation, assignments, and grading. Spell out exactly what level of preparation you expect from them. Include information about issues such as late penalties, style requirements, and attendance. Remind students of the rules for working together on labs, homework assignments, problem sets, and papers, as well as studying for exams.

Establish an Inclusive Classroom Climate. It is your responsibility to make sure that everyone in your class is afforded the same educational opportunities. Let students know that you intend to provide an inclusive learning environment for all. See the "Diverse Classrooms and Inclusive Teaching" section of this handbook for specific strategies.

> **"** I try to memorize each student's name as quickly as possible, and in one large class got their permission to take their pictures with them holding name cards in front of them so that I would have flashcard pictures to practice memorizing their names at home!"
>
> **Amy Breakwell, History TA**

Remind Students that You Are a Resource. Students may reach out to you as someone who will listen and understand their concerns. Respecting students, and addressing their concerns, can build mutual respect that will carry over into the classroom. Make clear to students that you are there to support their academic and personal growth throughout the course. Tell students to reach out in case they need disability accommodations or are feeling distressed with the course or with life. Provide an open and non-judgmental space for students to express their concerns. Offer to help connect students to appropriate campus resources when necessary.

Finally, S-L-O-W Down! New teachers—especially on the first day—have a tendency to rush through material. Pause to elicit questions and re-emphasize important points.

Preparing Course Content Delivery

Depending on the course in which you are a TA, you may or may not be required to deliver course content (e.g., giving lectures or leading discussion). If you do, here are some tips to get you started.

Set Objectives. In backward design, you begin by thinking about your goals and objectives for the lesson you are going to give. What do you want the students to know and be able to do by the end? See the section on "Backward Design" in this handbook for more details.

Develop a Lesson Plan. Prioritize the items on your list of objectives. Then chart the basic flow of the ideas to be covered in the section, including time for questions and discussion.

Keep Course Material Fresh. Whenever possible, incorporate current events or topics of interest to students in your discussion or assignments. Use multimedia sources, such as blogs or YouTube videos, on topics related to the course. Consult with a librarian to find out what resources are available.

> **Group work is an excellent way to get students to engage with one another, especially those that find it intimidating to talk in front of a large group. However, groups can also quickly lose focus. Keep group activity well-structured with clear expectations and incorporate time for the whole class to reconvene and share.**

Incorporate Active Learning. Try not to think of the lesson only in terms of the content you need to convey. Also consider how best to *communicate* that information, and how to get the students *involved* in the learning process. Active learning can also incorporate formative assessments to help students diagnose and cure frustrations. See the sections on "Active Learning Techniques" and "Formative Assessment" below for more details.

Solicit Student Input. It is often useful to allow students to discuss the concepts they are learning during class. Here are some tips to help you encourage student input without allowing the class to stagnate or be dominated by a few voices:

- Limit the number of questions you ask that you already know the correct answer to. Instead, solicit conversation on open debates or problems which could have a variety of valid responses.

- Avoid questions that single out students. The result may be humiliating for the student and embarrassing for you.

- Be alert for ways to include reserved students in class activities.

- Implement group work or active learning techniques (See below).

- Set expectations for class discussions to ensure civility and respect for differing opinions.

Include "Soft Time". Build flexibility into your section schedule. This is particularly important at the beginning, when you are still figuring out how much material you need to fill a section hour. Don't cram too much material into one section, but have backup material prepared in case you finish early. Students in sections have different personalities, and some classes may move more quickly than others.

Practice. If you are overseeing a lab, run through it ahead of time. If you plan to give a lecture or explain a particular concept at length, practice and time yourself. You may be surprised by how different the material sounds and how much longer it takes when you say it aloud. Always speak more slowly than you think is necessary—don't rush through the material.

Active Learning Techniques

It is important to be mindful of **engaging students in the learning process**. Active learning techniques allow opportunities for students to *participate* in their education. These techniques are not meant to replace the traditional lecture format, but to supplement it by making lectures more effective and meaningful to students. For seminar-based classes, active learning exercises can be used to complement the standard whole-group discussion format.

Below are a few active learning techniques to consider integrating into your lessons.

Think-Pair-Share. First, ask students to "think" individually about a question or problem. You may pause

to give them a couple minutes to collect their thoughts and write them down. Second, ask the students to "pair" with someone sitting next to them. Third, ask the students to "share" with each other what they thought. You may then ask a few pairs to share their discussion with the whole class.

> **When planning classroom activities, consider how the arrangement of seats changes the dynamic of the classroom. Feel free to have students move and rearrange their desks to work in clusters, make a circle for a discussion, or pair up for one-on-one peer work.**

Clarification Pauses/Pause for Reflection. This is a simple technique that can be incorporated into almost any lecture. After presenting a key concept, stop and allow the students to reflect on what they have just heard. After a prolonged pause, allow the students to ask any questions they may have thought of while reflecting.

Case Studies. Students work in groups to respond to a "case" that is presented to them. Groups could be given different cases or the same one, sharing some of their strategies for tackling the case with the whole class. These are often helpful in social science fields.

In-Class Media Discussion. Bring in a short video clip or passage of text that was not assigned as homework. Students watch the clip or read the passage together, then discuss in small or large groups.

Quick Write/Minute Paper. Students are given a short writing prompt and 1 to 5 minutes to respond. This activity can be graded or shared with a partner. It can be a way to determine whether students have done the reading assignment for the day, or just to get them thinking about some of the themes that you want to discuss in the upcoming class.

Clicker Polls. Use clicker or other polling technology to see how students are reacting to the material in real-time. Clicker polls can be combined with think-pair-share or other active learning activities, where students discuss with one another why they responded the way they did. Some clicker programs require only a cell phone to participate, and so can be implemented without requiring students to purchase their own device.

Individual and Group Quizzes. A variant of polling, give students a short quiz in class that is not graded. After taking the quiz individually, the students form small groups and take the quiz again. Afterwards, you can review the correct answers with the whole class.

Collaborative Note-Taking. After discussing a topic you think might be especially difficult, pause and ask the students to compare their "notes", either written or mental, with a partner. This can help students iron out the details of difficult concepts and fill in the gaps in each other's understanding.

Sequence Reconstruction. Give the students jumbled steps in a process, for example on strips of paper, and ask them to reconstruct the proper sequence.

Concept Mapping. Give students a list of terms and ask them to arrange them into cohesive map to show the relations between them. Ask students to work together or individually, then compare with their peers.

Demonstrations. Especially in STEM fields, there may be physical demonstrations that can help students connect with the theoretical concepts they are learning. For example, bring in an electrical circuit to demonstrate how currents flow under certain conditions.

Jigsaw Discussion Groups. Students divide into groups to discuss different yet related topics. After these groups have completed their discussion, the groups reorganize themselves, such that each new group has at least one person from each of the previous groups. For example, if you originally had three students each in Group A, Group B, and Group C, the second grouping would have three groups where, in each, one student was from Group A, one student was from Group B, and one student was from Group C. In these new groups, students share what was discussed in their previous group. This is a way of getting all students exposed to each topic without spending the time on a whole-group discussion.

Review Discussions. At the beginning of class, ask the students to recall what they learned or discussed in the previous class. This could be done as a whole class, in small groups, or written individually. Alternatively, end class by asking students what the two or three most important take-aways from that day were.

Peer Review. Usually used in classes with writing as-

signments, students can submit a draft of their writing to a partner. The partner then gives feedback on the writing either in class or electronically. Students may be evaluated on the quality of the feedback they give.

Student Presentations. Each week, assign students to give a group presentation to kick off the class discussion or lecture topic. This gets students to work together and engage in the material before you even introduce it. Presentations should be followed by a Q&A period where the class is allowed to engage with the presenters on the material they have presented.

Inquiry Learning. A variant of student presentation, inquiry learning is when students are asked to research and present information relating to material that has not yet been covered in class. This can be done in a variety of ways, ranging from take-home group or individual assignments, to in-class research projects in which groups of students make a poster about a topic related to the class but which has not been covered. This could be initiated by providing the students with a question or major concept that they need to investigate for themselves.

Teaching Tips

Know Yourself. Where do your own values fall on the spectrum from egalitarian to hierarchical, from individualism to cooperation, from informal to formal? Teaching styles vary depending on an instructor's personality. Learning how to play to your strengths will help you become more authentic in the classroom.

Time Management. Come early, start on time, end on time, and leave late. By coming early, you are able to greet entering students and get prepared. By starting on time, you reward students' timeliness. By ending on time, you show you respect for students' schedules. By leaving late, you make yourself available to address one-on-one student concerns.

Office Hours. Choose a quiet, comfortable, and accessible location, such as departmental lounges or campus cafes during off-hours. If you are sharing your office with other TAs, be sure to arrange non-conflicting office hours.

Keep a list of campus resources readily available so that you can refer students to programs that offer special assistance, such as assistance for ESL learners, tutoring, writing help, and counseling. Contact information can be found in the University Contacts list at the beginning of this manual.

White/Blackboards. Use the board sections in a structured way. Create headings so that students, copying down what you write, will understand references to your notes. Remember **not to talk while your back is turned**. The ensuing pause gives students a chance to catch up. Write clearly in a readable size. Walk to the back of the room after class and see what you can read, or ask during class if everyone can read what you wrote. Don't erase anything until all the boards are filled. Put important concepts in boxes or use colored chalk for emphasis.

Classroom Seating. This is a crucial part of the classroom environment, and it can help foster or deter classroom activities. Students should be able to see the blackboard and the instructor.

PowerPoint. If you use PowerPoint in your section, keep the information on each slide concise, highlighting the salient facts, and avoiding overly busy and text-heavy slides.

You might offer hard copies or online access to your slides in advance of the section meeting so students don't spend the class transcribing slides. However, talk with the instructor before you distribute any copies of PowerPoint slides of lectures or sections.

Zoom. Another option to communicate with students outside the classroom is an online collaboration platform called Zoom. You can learn more about this tool, which permits real-time audio and video communication, through the Center for Teaching Excellence and Innovation website: *https://ctei.jhu.edu/tools-and-tech*.

Classroom Conduct

Absences

On the first day, indicate that you and the professor insist on class attendance. Be specific about your policies, and clearly articulate how absences will affect students' grades both directly and indirectly. It's better to prevent the problem than to deal with it after it develops.

If you encounter students who are chronically absent, **reach out to them by email.** Arrange a private meeting to ask them what's going on and how you can support them. Sudden absences may be a sign that a student is in distress (for more information, see "Supporting Students in Distress" in this handbook). Reiterate the class policies on attendance and remind them that their presence contributes to the learning experience for everyone.

Of course, some students have legitimate excuses for their

absences (e.g., serious illness, religious holiday, death in the family). These reasons must be respected. In cases of excused absences, it is the student's responsibility to notify the faculty and TAs of upcoming holidays or events and to make arrangements to complete missed assignments or exams. _Religious & Spiritual Life_* provides an updated list of religious holy days that TAs should be aware of.

Late Work

Be sure you understand the professor's late assignments policy. If the professor has not explicitly laid out a policy regarding late work, ask them directly and include that information on your TA introduction sheet.

Attentiveness in the Classroom

Explain to students on the first day that you expect them to be present and focused in the classroom. Students occasionally disrupt class discussion by having separate conversations, texting, or doing other work. Do not ignore this type of behavior - doing so sends the message that the material being covered is not important for the course. Arrange to meet with students privately if a problem arises.

Laptop Policy

The course syllabus should lay out the classroom policy on laptop use during lecture. This will depend on the preferences of your professor. Your role as a TA will be to help implement the policy and ensure that students are using their laptops for legitimate purposes, such as note taking. You may want to allow laptops for section, but ask students to close them when they are no longer needed—for example, during a class discussion. If you see students habitually using laptops or cell phones for reasons not related to the course, speak with them after class to let them know that their behavior is distracting to others and detracts from the learning environment. Remember that some students may have a disability accommodations letter from Student Disability Services that permits them to use laptops, even in classrooms where there is a policy prohibiting their use.

Classroom Disruptions

You may encounter a student who disrupts the learning environment. Some students are rude to their classmates or to the TA, while others monopolize class discussion. First, consult with the professor or other experienced TAs to offer advice. Then, ask to speak with the student after class to discuss their behavior.

Keep in mind that _students look to you as an authority in the classroom_, and they expect you to prevent any one student from antagonizing, interrupting, or confronting classmates. Keep the classroom atmosphere _conducive to learning_. If a serious disruption emerges during a class, report the disturbance to your professor or department chair. Even the subtle forms of bigotry or otherwise discriminatory comments compromise the quality of a learning environment, and they should not be tolerated.

Student Conduct Code

All students are bound to the Student Conduct Code outlined by the university. For more information, see: _https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/policies-guidelines/student-code/_.If you believe a student to be in violation of the code, you may choose to report the violation to Student Conduct at _studentconduct@jhu.edu_.

Dealing with Concerns or Emergencies

As a TA, you should be aware of how to handle emergency situations in case they arise. The following information will guide you.

Medical Emergencies in the Classroom

If a student in your class has a medical condition for which your assistance might be necessary, they are instructed to bring you a letter at the beginning of the semester that outlines how to handle an emergency situation. For example, if a student has an allergy and must carry an EpiPen, they should inform you during the first week of class and give you instructions on how to help if they are incapacitated.

Sometimes, unexpected medical emergencies may arise. If a student becomes seriously ill, faints, has a seizure, or there is another type of medical emergency, you should immediately **call Campus Security at 410-516-7777 or dial 911**. If you call 911 first, it is important to call Campus Security afterwards to alert them to the situation. They will dispatch members of the _Hopkins Emergency Response Organization_*.

If Safety in the Classroom Is Compromised

Safety in the classroom is not always guaranteed. If a situation arises where you feel you or your students' safety is compromised, or if a student expresses a direct threat to themselves or others, or acts in a bizarre, highly irrational, or disruptive way, **contact Campus Security (410-516-7777) or call 911 as quickly and safely as possible.**

PART THREE - INCLUSIVITY AND SUPPORT

DIVERSE CLASSROOMS AND INCLUSIVE TEACHING

Hopkins students come from around the world with incredibly diverse backgrounds and experiences. While you and the professor may be the experts in your field, your students will come to the classroom with a wealth of knowledge and valuable perspectives that can also enrich the learning process. As a TA, your role is to be aware of your students' strengths and potential growth areas, and to support each student to meet the objectives of the course.

This section will provide strategies for creating an inclusive learning environment that allows all students to feel respected and valued in the classroom.

Inclusive Teaching Practices

Know Your Students

Get to know your students. While sometimes it is not possible to get to know each student in large lecture classes, try at least to get to know the students in your section. Consider sending out an introductory survey before or immediately after the first class to demonstrate your commitment to learning more about them. Calling on students by name helps them feel acknowledged and also helps other students in the class learn. Beyond learning their names, get to know their backgrounds, interests, and future aspirations. What do they hope to get out of the course? What experiences, inside or outside of the classroom, informed their decision to take this course? Getting to know your students on a professional level can help you be mindful of the ways that your classroom practice may be adapted to meet their individual needs and interests.

Use correct names and pronouns. Part of knowing and respecting your students is knowing their names and pronouns (they/them, she/her, he/him, etc.). Students find it alienating when you mispronounce their name, tell them that their name is too complicated, call them by a name they do not use, or to misgender them by using incorrect pronouns. On or before the first day, find a way to verify with each student the name they go by and the pronouns that they use. (See the section on "Names and Pronouns" below for more details.)

Incorporate student interest. Where possible, try to tailor the course to align with the interests of students in the class. This could be as simple as highlighting a lesson that may have special relevance to someone, say, with a background in a certain field of research. This will require to know your students and what their academic and career goals are.

Emphasize Clarity

Be explicit about expectations and assumptions. In working with students from diverse backgrounds, it is important to be as clear as possible in everything that you do. Be mindful about things you would usually take for granted and make those things explicit. Talk openly about what you're doing and *why* you're doing it that way. This is especially true when working with first-year students who might not know, for example, how to find a book in the library, access a journal, or use Canvas.

Clarify grading expectations. Grading is something to make sure you are particularly clear about. Students will have been evaluated in a variety of different ways before coming to your classroom. Be as clear as possible with them about the process you will use for grading, and share rubrics or examples of high-quality work with them when possible.

Give clear and timely feedback. Providing timely feedback on assignments allows students to be aware of their standing in the class. Students who are struggling will especially need your feedback on their assessments to be clear and constructive. They need to know more than that they haven't done well. They need to be able to understand *what* exactly it is that they have not yet mastered and *how* they can go about improving their weak points. Providing constructive feedback in a timely manner will give students the best chance to improve for the next assignment.

Be mindful of language and technical vocabulary. Some classes have prerequisites where it is assumed that students have already covered certain material. In general, though, you should be mindful that students may not be familiar with some of the terms you are using. This does not mean that you should only speak in plain language – presumably one goal of the course is to help students understand the language specific to an academic field. However, you should make sure that students have the resources to understand the terms that are being used. Pause to explain a term when you first introduce it, or direct students to a reliable resources, such as a field-specific companion or encyclopedia, to look up difficult terms. Or encourage students to interrupt you and ask a question if you start to use a term they are unfamiliar with.

It is important to consider what *culturally-specific idioms* and references you may be using. This is especially the case when working with international students who may not, for example, have an in-depth understanding of American history.

Be an Equitable Facilitator

Model respectful dialogue and address offensive, discriminatory, and insensitive comments. Especially in discussion-based seminars, it is important to model and to facilitate respectful academic dialogue. If a student makes a comment that is subtly or explicitly discriminatory, you or the professor has an obligation to take moral authority in the classroom. *Even if you believe that the offended group is not represented by someone in the class*, it is necessary to intervene in the discussion and draw attention to the problematic nature of the comment that was made. This need not entail telling the student that they were wrong, but rather can be approached as a learning opportunity that highlights *why* the remark that was made could be seen as offensive.

Indicate to the student that while that might be their opinion, some may find it offensive for such-and-such reasons and therefore it is not appropriate dialogue for your classroom. It may help to recenter the discussion by using professional language, showing how the discriminatory remark has no place in the particular academic conversation at hand.

Be mindful of gender dynamics and discourage interrupters. Studies have shown that, even when women are the majority in a classroom, men often dominate class discussion or interrupt women as they are trying to make their point. Stop interrupters of all genders by saying, "Let's allow her to finish first." Whenever possible, try to amplify and encourage the voices that are not getting equal respect or time in the classroom.

Provide multiple ways to participate. Some students are *introverted*, and some have serious fears of speaking in front of large audiences. At times it can be valuable to encourage your quiet students to speak up by letting them know that their insights are valuable and that the class is better off with their perspective. However, it may also be advantageous to gauge participation in more ways than speaking up in front of the whole class.

As a TA, try to monitor a student's engagement in class. Have they done the relevant readings for the course? Ask explicitly about which elements they found confusing or difficult to grasp. You can also work with the professor to provide opportunities to submit online questions through discussion posts, or integrate small-group discussion activities into class that may provide a more welcoming environment for introverts to share their perspective with peers.

Believe in All Your Students

Foster a growth mindset in the classroom. Research has shown that student achievement is tied to instructor expectations. Don't believe your students, as individuals or as a collective, are incapable. Having a **"growth mindset"** means that you do not see intelligence and ability as things that are *fixed* and *unchangeable*. Rather, you believe all students can succeed in the course if they work hard and in the right kinds of ways. Having a growth mindset means that you do not see failure as proof of natural inability. Rather, failure should be seen as a temporary situation that can lead to opportunities for growth and improvement.

Grade on substance and clarity over style. In classes where writing assignments are given, try to distinguish your students' style from the content of their ideas. Writing styles may vary greatly by culture and academic background, so it is important to state very clearly if you expect your students to conform to certain stylistic standards. While it is perfectly acceptable to evaluate a student's grammar if it is simply incorrect, there are many "correct" ways to write. Try to distinguish between cases where the student did something wrong and cases where they didn't express themselves in the same way you would have.

Remember they are adults. You may be older than most of your students and more knowledgeable in your field, but avoid talking down to or otherwise condescending and infantilizing your students. Remember that they have their own goals, motivations, challenges, and personal lives that relate to the course you are teaching in different ways. If you trust their abilities and treat them like responsible adults, they will usually respond accordingly. Try to think of yourself as someone who has more skills and knowledge in this particular area, not someone who is superior to them.

Make Yourself Available

Be accessible to students during office hours and by email. Some students have been taught that instructors are unapproachable, or fear they will be belittled or laughed at by asking "stupid" questions. Ensure that your students know when and where your scheduled office hours are, and encourage them to come by for *any* questions or issues they may have. For students who seem to be struggling, it may help to be proactive by inviting them to meet with you to discuss their progress and strategies for improvement.

Names and Pronouns

Use preferred names. Students may choose to go by a name that is not on their legal documents for a number of reasons. They may go by a shortened version of their name, a nickname, or an "Americanized" name. Some students may also go by a name that reflects their gender identity. In all instances, call students by their preferred name. Students are able to input their preferred name into SIS. They may also choose to tell you verbally or in an email. For students who indicate a preferred name, *treat their legal name as confidential data.*

Learn to pronounce names correctly. Some students may have names that are initially hard for you to pronounce. It is your responsibility to learn the names that students choose to go by, not something that is familiar to you or easy for you to say. You may need to ask a student to repeat their name until you are able to say it correctly. When asking the student to say their name again, *avoid making marginalizing comments* such as "That's such a complicated name!" or "I'm never going to be able to say that correctly!" Consider writing down a phonetic spelling so that you can remember and practice later if necessary.

Learn students' pronouns. Students are not yet able to indicate their pronouns (they/them, she/her, he/him, etc.) on SIS. You will therefore need to learn them on or before the first day of class. *Don't assume a student's pronouns based on your own best guess.* The only way to ensure no one is misgendered is to allow an opportunity for every student to clarify their pronouns. This avoids marginalizing or singling out students who may often get misgendered.

For some, including pronouns in classroom introductions *might be new or feel unfamiliar.* Many people are privileged to not have to worry about how others perceive their gender. To be an ally for those who do, it's important to talk about pronouns. Practice is key!

Here are some tips you can use on the first day of class to get you started:

- **Always specify your pronouns when introducing yourself.** Even if you are not often misgendered, this will normalize the practice and set an example for your students to follow. Consider including your pronouns on the syllabus.
- **Ask each student to create a tri-fold name-card (with pronouns)** out of scrap paper and put it on their desk. This not only helps you, but also the other students in the class.

- **Incorporate pronouns into oral introductions.** Simply ask students to include the pronouns they use when you "go around the room" giving introductions on the first day. For example, ask students to share their name, pronouns, major, and one experience that informed their interest in the class.
- **Send an email before class.** For larger lecture classes in which oral introductions are not feasible, you or the professor could send out an email before the first class asking students to clarify their names and pronouns.

Practice using gender-neutral pronouns. Some students may use gender-neutral pronouns, such as they/them/theirs. If you are not accustomed to using gender-neutral pronouns to refer to an individual, it will probably be helpful to practice in order to avoid misgendering those students. As a preparation for teaching, construct full sentences related to the course with different pronouns (e.g., "Let's talk about their point in more detail.")

What if I make a mistake? Misgendering happens, and everybody slips up occasionally. If you use the wrong pronoun and realize it immediately, start the sentence over (e.g. "I'm sorry, I mean to say…"). If you realize it after class, apologize to the student in private. When you apologize, *don't talk about how bad you feel or how difficult it is to use that particular pronoun.* You will show respect for the student when you simply acknowledge your mistake, correct it, and move on. Avoid focusing the attention on yourself by trying to excuse or justify your mistake.

Be an ally. It is important to act as your students' ally. If you hear someone else use an incorrect pronoun, simply correct them by saying, for example, "Robin uses the pronoun 'she'." If someone is repeatedly misgendered by another student, talk to the student who is being misgendered in private. You can say: "I am aware that you are being misgendered. I understand that this can be hurtful. Would it be ok with you if I talked to the other student about your pronouns?" Respect your student's comfort level!

Avoid gender binaries. Another way to marginalize students who use gender-neutral pronouns is to use gender binaries in everyday language. Use gender-inclusive language by avoiding words and phrases that imply there are only two genders: "Welcome, ladies and gentlemen," "Do they have a husband or a wife?" "Every man and woman…" "He or she…".

For more information on using preferred names and pronouns, instructions for students to change their name in SIS, as well as resources for supporting transgender students, see the following link provided by _LGBTQ Life_*:
https://studentaffairs.jhu.edu/lgbtq/trans-resources/.

Awareness of Implicit Biases and Assumptions

It is important to be aware of your own biases and assumptions, especially those that may affect the students in your classroom. The following section is designed to help TAs think about some of their potential biases in order to acknowledge and counteract them.

Implicit Bias

Implicit bias refers to an unconscious stereotyping that affects a person's behavior and understanding. Implicit bias is often related to confirmation bias: when you believe a student is going to perform or behave a certain way, you tend to interpret their actual performance and behavior in a way that confirms your pre-existing stereotype. This also means you are likely to overlook evidence that would contradict your previous assumptions.

The best way to counteract implicit bias is to first identify and acknowledge them in oneself, to question them when judgements emerge, and finally to resist acting in accordance with them. The kinds of biases you may have to actively resist in the classroom will depend on the individuals in your course.

As mentioned in the previous section, it is important to foster a "growth mindset" in the classroom. This means that you believe all of your students are capable of learning and doing well in the class, regardless of what they look like, how they speak, how they dress, how old they are, what abilities and disabilities they may have, what groups they are a part of, what they know about your field on the first day of class, etc.

Problematic Assumptions

The University of Michigan has published a list of some implicit biases that should be kept in check:

1. **"Students will seek help when they are struggling with a class."** Many students may not feel comfortable reaching out for help, or not feel confident in their ability to articulate what they find difficult. It can help to be proactive in reaching out to students who are struggling.

2. **"Students from certain groups are not intellectual, are irresponsible, lack ability, or only have ability in particular subjects."** It is extremely important to have high expectations for _all_ of your students. Try to foster a "growth mindset" in your classroom. This means that you do not see intelligence as a fixed ability that cannot be changed. Rather, students should be encouraged to see that they are capable of succeeding if they put in the right kind of effort.

3. **"Students who have an accent or students whose first language is not English are poor writers."** Avoid stereotyping your students' writing abilities based on how they speak or when they learned English. Additionally, it is important to appreciate cultural differences in writing styles. What you take to be "good" writing might not have been tolerated in a student's educational upbringing. Be clear with students about what _your_ expectations are, and be flexible when their writing demonstrates high-level thinking, even if it is not expressed in the same way you would have written it.

4. **"Poor writing suggests limited intellectual ability."** Poor writing can have a variety of causes, from staying up too late to not doing the relevant readings. You should never suggest that your students' writing indicates their limited intellect. Again, remember to foster a "growth mindset" that suggests all students can improve if they are willing to put in the work.

5. **"Students with certain identities can be treated as representative 'experts' of those identities."** Avoid "tokenizing" students, and don't assume they will want to speak on a certain issue that may reflect on a group they are a part of. Pose questions to the entire class, inviting them to respond in light of their background and experiences. If students feel comfortable opening up, they will do so on their own.

6. **"Students with similar identities have similar ideas."** Do not assume that all students who share an identity will share the same perspective on a topic, whether it relates to that identity or not. Allow students to speak in their own words and avoid drawing out connections or distinctions between ideas that may not exist, based solely on who is speaking.

For the full article on "Creating Inclusive College Classrooms" from the University of Michigan, see the following link: *http://www.crlt.umich.edu/gsis/f6*.

Stereotype Threat

Many students—especially those from marginalized groups—are frequent victims of implicit bias, stereotyping, and tokenizing. **"Stereotype threat" refers to a person's fear of being judged or treated in accordance with a stereotype.** Experiencing stereotype threat can cause a person's well-being to suffer, and for their academic performance to be affected. Your role as a TA is to be aware of this threat in the classroom and to be an advocate for students to be able to express themselves in their own words and on their own terms. Students will feel that your classroom is inclusive when they do not feel pressure to conform to a fixed expectation about the things they should do, say, like, believe, know, or be.

It is important to let students bring up the identities and groups that are meaningful to them when they choose to do so, not when you or others feel like they should. For example, a woman should not be called on to give a "woman's perspective" on a classroom discussion, even if it relates to gender. All students should be treated with equal respect and with an equal belief in their academic *capabilities*, even when their academic *performance* is not currently at the same level. Students should be evaluated on the merits of their ideas and their progress towards the course goals.

Students with Disabilities

As a function of the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) of 1990, students who disclose a disability to the University must be reasonably accommodated both in the classroom and in extracurricular activities. Although the term "disability" is more easily applied to noticeable conditions—such as mobility, hearing, or visual impairments—many disabilities that you encounter in the University setting will be hidden. These include conditions such as Attention Deficit Disorder, learning disabilities, chronic medical issues, and psychological disorders. The ADA mandates that individuals with any of these disabilities be provided reasonable and appropriate accommodations to ensure equal access to, and participation in, the programs and services offered by the University. When these accommodations are provided, students with disabilities can be expected to meet course requirements in a manner comparable to their classmates.

Accommodations

Each student is accommodated on a case-by-case basis. Accommodations can include extended testing time, use of a private testing space, note takers, digitized textbooks, or priority course scheduling.

Your Role as a TA

Before a student receives accommodations, they must contact the Office of *Student Disability Services** (SDS). Starting in Fall 2020, students will send their SDS accommodations letter directly to faculty. Students are encouraged to send their letters by the first week of class, however, they can send letters at any time. Accomodations are not retrospective, however. **As a TA, you should contact the instructor to determine what accommodations have been granted.**

If a student discloses a disability to you but has not yet received an accommodations letter from Student Disability Services, you should *refer that student to SDS*. Do not attempt to accommodate a student on your own. **Your students can register with SDS by going to the following link**: *https://hunter.accessiblelearning.com/JHU/applicationstudent.aspx.*

The accommodation process can take time, so be sure to instruct your students to communicate their needs to you no later than the first week of class, and then again each time they require something specific. Request that they always provide you at least a week's notice so you have adequate time to arrange the accommodation.

It is recommended that you place a statement like the following **in your syllabus**: "All students with documented disabilities who require accommodations for this course should contact me at their earliest convenience to discuss their specific needs. If you have a documented disability, you must be registered with the Office of Student Disability Services (Shaffer Hall, Suite 101, 410-516-4720) to arrange the receipt of accommodations."

TAs with Disabilities

If you require accommodations in your role as a TA, do not contact SDS. Instead, contact the _Office of Institutional Equity (OIE)_*. For more information see: _https://oie.jhu.edu/requesting-faculty-and-staff-accommodations/_

Points to Remember in the Classroom

- Confidentiality of all student information is absolutely essential. At no time should the class be informed that a given student has a disability, unless that student makes a specific request to do so. Failure to protect students' confidentiality is a violation of both the ADA and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

- Students who present you with an accommodations letter from the Office for Student Disability Services are entitled to their accommodations as a function of federal ADA law. As such, you must take all appropriate actions to ensure that they receive these accommodations in a timely manner.

- When a student asks for extended deadlines, approved absences, or rescheduled examinations, have them discuss these requests with SDS first.

- You are not entitled to know the medical reasons for the accommodations students receive. These have been verified by professionals at the Office for Student Disability Services and are kept confidential. Your role is to make the accommodations based on the letter provided.

- Flexibility may be necessary when applying attendance and promptness rules to students with health-related or mobility difficulties. All requests for flexibility due to a disability should come from the Office for Student Disability Services (and should be outlined in the accommodations letter).

- The Student Code of Conduct regarding disruptive behavior applies to all students. You should state behavioral expectations clearly and discuss them openly in your classroom, on your syllabus, and with individual students as necessary.

Teaching Students with Disabilities

Student Disability Services has published "Guidelines for Teaching Students with Disabilities". These guidelines, summarized below, can be found online: _Teaching Students with Disabilities_*.

- Begin class with a review of the previous lecture and an overview of topics to be covered that day. At the end of the lecture, summarize key points.

- Highlight major concepts and terms both orally and visually. Be alert for opportunities to provide information in more than one sensory mode.

- Speak directly to students; use gestures and natural expressions to convey further meaning.

- Provide adequate opportunities for participation, questions, and/or discussion.

- Reduce auditory and visual distractions.

- Provide timelines and sequential steps for long-range assignments. For example, for a lengthy paper (select a topic, write an outline, submit a rought draft, make corrections, turn in final draft).

- Give feedback on drafts of papers so there is time for clarification, rewrites, and refinements.

- Provide study questions and review sessions to aid in preparing for exams. Explain what constitutes a good answer and why.

- Facilitate the formation of study groups for students who wish to participate.

- Encourage students to seek assistance during your office hours and to use campus support services.

Supporting Students in Distress

Many undergraduates struggle with academic, social, and financial stress; physical or mental health concerns; traumatic experiences; and other challenges to their well-being. Early identification of students in distress can dramatically improve outcomes for students.

As a TA, you may be in closer contact with students than the professor. _On the first day of class, let students know that they can come to you if they need support._ Make clear that you are a resource to them, even if their concerns go beyond the scope of the course.

While you are not responsible for assessing or treating mental or behavioral health issues, you should be able to identify students experiencing distress, know how best to respond, and be aware of the appropriate resources that may be able to assist.

Recognizing Students in Distress

Sometimes students will take the initiative to open up to you about a problem. However, other times they will be reluctant to let you know that something is bothering them. In these cases, use the following warning signs to recognize students in distress.

Signs of **mild** distress:
- Sudden drop in class attendance or participation
- Sudden drop in grades or quality of classwork
- Marked change in mood (often with irritability/agitation), especially around acute moments of stress such as exams
- Marked change in hygiene or physical appearance
- Low self-esteem or feelings of worthlessness
- Loss of desire to socialize

In general, signs of mild distress are not disruptive to others, but communicate that something is wrong.

Signs of **moderate** distress:
- Repeated requests for extensions or special considerations
- Exaggerated emotional responses that do not seem to fit the context
- Development of inappropriate, disruptive, or strange behaviors, such as talking off subject, rambling, or laughing inappropriately

In general, signs of moderate distress *strongly* suggest that something is wrong and may be disruptive to others.

Signs of **severe** distress:
- Highly disruptive behavior (hostility, aggression, violence, etc.)
- Preoccupation with violence or death
- Loss of contact with reality
- Threats to harm others
- Expression of suicidal thoughts (see the section on "Students Who May Be Suicidal")

Signs of severe distress constitute an obvious crisis that calls for immediate intervention and professional help.

It's important to *"trust your gut"* when identifying a student in distress. While a mild display of only one or two of these symptoms may not be cause for concern, the more symptoms observed and the greater severity of the expression, the more likely it is the individual is truly distressed. These signs are especially concerning if you know that a student has a history of mental illness.

For more information, see *Recognizing and Assisting Students in Distress Guide** provided by the Counseling Center.

Talking to Students in Distress

Start the conversation. Don't be afraid to express your concern to a student, even if they don't approach you first. Arrange a time to meet privately, then tell them what you have observed that has concerned you. Ask them if they are feeling distressed. *If in doubt*, you may call the *Counseling Center**(410-516-8278) yourself before speaking with the student to ask for guidance. Do so in conversation with the professor if appropriate.

Be accepting and non-judgmental. Help the student determine what the problem might be without minimizing the student's feelings or judging them for feeling the way they do. Telling a student that their concerns are unwarranted or overblown is unlikely to improve the situation. Instead, communicate that you understand they are hurting and that you are there to support them.

Listen to learn, not to fix. Listen to the student express their concerns in their own words. As you listen, think of your role as a fact-finder, as opposed to trying to fix the problem. Your role at this stage not to offer counseling or advice but to validate their feelings. When they pause for you to speak, restate what you have heard and acknowledge their feelings. Especially in cases of mild distress, you may ask questions to help the student think of coping strategies that have worked for them in the past. Avoid empty consolations such as "everything will be alright."

Know your limits. Once you have started to ascertain the nature of the problem, direct students to the appropriate campus resources. Try to identify if the student is experiencing a mild form of distress or if their challenge is moderate to severe. This will inform what resources you recommend.

If a student comes to you in distress, it is important to acknowledge their pain and reassure them, as well as to be conscious of your own personal boundaries. Click below to see a TA supporting a student having a stressful week.

You may want to refer the student to appropriate campus resources for further support. In cases where a student appears to be in considerable distress, *offer to help arrange an appointment at the Counseling Center* (410-516-8278) or other relevant office for them at that moment. To reach the on-call counselor, dial the main Counseling Center number (410-516-8278) and then press 1.

Students Who May Be Suicidal

Students who are in serious distress may consider harming themselves. Many suicide attempts are preceded by messages that the person is considering suicide. These messages may be verbal such as, "I am going to kill myself," or "I wish I weren't here." Or they may give nonverbal signs that can include: giving away valued possessions; putting legal, financial, and university affairs in order; a preoccupation with death; withdrawal or boredom; and poor grooming and hygiene.

If you are concerned a student may be considering suicide, *it is acceptable to ask them directly*. If they respond in the affirmative, or if you get to a point where you would feel uncomfortable with a student walking

out of your office, you should indicate to the student that you need to contact the Counseling Center immediately for advice. The Counseling Center provides an on-call counselor that should be able to speak with the student directly over the phone and arrange a plan of action. **To reach the on-call counselor, dial the main Counseling Center number (410-516-8278) and then press 1.**

Do not leave a suicidal student alone. Stay with them until help arrives.

If a student tells you that they are having difficulty concentrating or completing coursework, or if they are having suicidal or disordered thoughts, or even are just persistently feeling down, ask if they would like help from the Counseling Center. Remind them that asking for professional help is a sign of strength, not weakness. Click below to see a TA helping a student who is having some difficulties with their mental health.

FAMILY EDUCATION RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT

As a TA, you will likely have access to confidential student records. You have a responsibility to protect all records in your possession. The confidentiality, use, and release of student records are governed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). To comply with FERPA, the University may not release "personally identifiable information" from an education record. Personally identifiable information is information that is directly linked or easily traceable to an individual student, such as Social Security or Hopkins ID numbers.

See _FERPA—University Policy on Family Educational Rights and Privacy_* for a comprehensive guide available in the form of a downloadable PDF document.

Avoiding Violations

To avoid FERPA violations, **do not:**
- Post grades.

- Require social security or Hopkins ID numbers on submitted materials or link a student's name and SSN or Hopkins ID in a public manner.

- Use full or partial SSNs or Hopkins IDs for grade postings.

- Leave graded tests or assignments in a stack for students to pick up by sorting through the papers of all students.

- Circulate a printed class list with names, social security or Hopkins ID numbers, or grades as an attendance roster.

- Discuss the progress of a student with anyone (including the student's parents) without the written consent of the student.

- Provide lists of students enrolled in your classes to a third party for commercial purposes.

- Provide student schedules or assist anyone other than University employees in finding a student on campus.

The ramifications for violations of FERPA are severe, including possible loss of Title IV Financial Aid Funding. **If you have questions, please call the Office of the General Counsel at 410-516-8128 or the Office of the Registrar at 410-516-7148.**

Best Practices for Returning Graded Examinations and Papers

- Return exams or papers yourself, or ask your department administrator to do so if you are unable to. Fold and staple exams or papers with only the name of the student visible on the front

- If you must post grades, use code words or randomly assigned numbers known only by you and the individual student. The order should not be alphabetical.

- Post grades to Canvas (students can only access their own information).

UNIVERSITY ETHICS AND EQUITY POLICIES

The Office of Institutional Equity (OIE)

As a TA, you may have contact with the _Office of Institutional Equity (OIE)_* for concerns relating to diversity, disabilities, harassment/discrimination complaints, or equity compliance. The Office of Institutional Equity was established to provide leadership for university efforts to promote institutional equity and a diverse university community, and to assure that the university's programs and procedures comply with federal, state and local laws and regulations as related to affirmative action and equal opportunity with special attention to disability issues.

The office develops and coordinates the implementation of the university's Institutional Equity Programs and procedures. In addition, the office provides training efforts related to disability issues and sexual and other forms of harassment. The office receives, investigates, and responds to discrimination complaints. The office also provides mediation services for University-related issues.

Discrimination and Harassment

OIE is responsible for the "Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures," found here: _https://oie.jhu.edu/policies-and-laws/jhu-policies/Johns Hopkins University Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures_.

The policy states: "The University prohibits discrimination and harassment based on any protected characteristic, which includes sex, gender, marital status, pregnancy, race, color, ethnicity, national origin, immigration status, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, military status, veteran status or other legally protected characteristic. The University further prohibits any form of retaliation, intimidation, threats, coercion, or discrimination or attempts thereof, whether direct or indirect, by any officer, employee, faculty, student, trainee, post-doctoral fellow, resident or agent of the University against a person who makes a complaint or report of discrimination or harassment, participates in any way in the investigation or resolution of such a complaint or report, or exercises his or her rights or responsibilities under the Policy, these Procedures or the law."

The following sections provide definitions outlined by their policy. This is intended for quick reference only. _For full details, see the official policy document._

Discrimination

The term "discrimination" means treating a community member or group less favorably than a similarly situated community member or group because they are a member of a "protected class."

Harassment

For purposes of this Policy, "harassment" is defined as any type of behavior which is based on an individual or group's membership in a "protected class(es)" that is: a) unwelcome and (b) creates a "hostile environment."

Harassment when directed at an individual because of their membership in a "protected class(es)" may include, but is not limited to:

- Conduct, whether verbal, physical, written, graphic, or electronic that threatens, intimidates, offends, belittles, denigrates, or shows an aversion toward an individual or group;

- Epithets, slurs, and/or negative stereotyping, jokes, or nicknames;

- Written, printed, or graphic material that contains offensive, denigrating, and/or demeaning comments, and/or pictures; and

- The display of offensive, denigrating, and/or demeaning objects, e-mails, text messages, and/or cell phone pictures.

A "**hostile environment**" results from unwelcome and discriminatory conduct that is so severe, pervasive, or persistent that it unreasonably interferes with, limits, or deprives a member of the community of the ability to participate in or to receive benefits, services or opportunities from the University's education or employment programs and/or activities.

Retaliation

The term "retaliation" means intimidating, threatening, coercing, harassing, taking adverse employment or educational action against, and/or otherwise discriminating against an individual in any way because the individual made a report or complaint under this Policy or these Procedures, participated in any way in the investigation or resolution of such a report or complaint, opposed conduct that they reasonably believed to be prohibited under this Policy, these Procedures, or applicable law regarding discrimination or harassment, or exercised any right or responsibility under the Policy or these Procedures. Retaliation includes conduct that

is reasonably likely to deter an individual from making a complaint or report under this Policy or from participating in the investigation or resolution of a complaint or report, or from opposing conduct that they reasonably believe to be prohibited under this Policy, these Procedures or applicable law regarding discrimination or harassment.

Reporting

If you have witnessed or experienced discrimination, harassment, or retaliation, you may choose to report it to the Office of Institutional Equity. Reporting can be done **anonymously**.

The Discrimination and Harassment Complaint Form can be found online here:
https://forms.jh.edu/view.php?id=164822.

If a student discloses to you that they have been discriminated against or harassed, listen to them non-judgmentally then make them aware of the formal reporting process. Graduate students are not designated as "Responsible Employees" by the university, which means that **TAs are not required to report** cases of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation to OIE, *although they may choose to do so*. However, if a TA were to share a student's disclosure with a faculty member, that faculty member would be required to report the case to OIE.

Let the student know that OIE is more than willing to answer questions about their policies and procedures before a student reports a case. Students can communicate with OIE anonymously and do not need to share any details of the issue if they choose not to.

If a student is not yet ready to make a formal complaint, make them aware of **confidential resources** available to them on campus. These resources are not required to report cases of discrimination, harassment, or retaliation to OIE. Students are able to use confidential resources and file a report with OIE at the same time.

For a full list of confidential resources, see:
https://oie.jhu.edu/confidential-resources/.

Sexual Misconduct

The Office of Institutional Equity is responsible for the "Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedures," found here: *https://sexualassault.jhu.edu/policies-laws*. These policies were updated in August 2020.

The policy states: "The University prohibits sexual misconduct, as defined below. The University also prohibits any form of retaliation, intimidation, threats, coercion, or discrimination or attempts thereof, whether direct or indirect, and including via online communications and activities such as social media, by any officer, employee, faculty, student, trainee, post-doctoral fellow, resident, or agent of the University against a person because that person made a complaint or report of sexual misconduct or participated in any way in the investigation or resolution of such a complaint or report, or who exercises their rights or responsibilities under the Policy, these Procedures, or the law."

TAs confronted with disclosures of sexual misconduct should make the students aware of the reporting process and refer students to the Office of Institutional Equity. The following sections provide definitions outlined by their policy. This is intended for quick reference only. *For full details, see the official policy document.*

The Univeristy now uses two different classifications for sexual harrassment:

Title IX Sexual Harassment

The term "Title IX Sexual Harassment" means conduct on the basis of sex that satisfies one or more of the following:
- An employee conditioning educational benefits on participation in unwelcome sexual conduct (quid pro quo);

- Unwelcome conduct that a reasonable person would determine is so severe, pervasive and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the educational institution's education program or activity; and/or

- Sexual Assault, Dating Violence, Domestic Violence, or Title IX Stalking.

Non-Title IX Sexual Harassment

The term "non-Title IX sexual harassment," whether between people of different sexes or the same sex, includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome sexual advances, re-

quests for sexual favors, sexual assault and other verbal, non-verbal, electronic or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- The respondent is a non-employee and submission to such conduct is implicitly or explicitly a term or condition of an individual's participation in an educational program or activity;

- The respondent is a non-employee and submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for academic decisions, evaluation or advancement; or

- Such conduct creates a non-Title IX hostile environment ("non-Title IX hostile environment").

Examples of such conduct that may, depending on the facts and circumstances, constitute non-Title IX sexual harassment include, but are not limited to: making comments about someone's appearance in a sexually suggestive way; staring at someone or making obscene gestures or noises; repeatedly asking someone on a date; "flashing" or exposing body parts; sexual coercion; intentional sexual in nature touching that does not meet the definition of Title IX Sexual Harassment; disrobing, spreading sexual rumors; rating peers or colleagues with respect to sexual performance; non-consensual observation, photographing, or recording of sexual activity or nudity; non-consensual distribution or dissemination of photographs or recording of sexual activity or nudity, including distribution or dissemination of photographs or recordings that were made consensually; allowing a third party to observe a sexual activity without the consent of all parties; and prostituting or trafficking another person.

Non-Title IX Gender-Based Harassment

The term "non-Title IX gender-based harassment," whether between people of different genders, or the same genders, includes, but is not limited to, conduct that does not meet the definition of Title IX Sexual Harassment but otherwise constitutes unwelcome conduct based on gender that creates a non-Title IX hostile environment. Non-Title IX Gender-Based Harassment does not include unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, which is considered non-Title IX Sexual Harassment.

Sexual Assault

The term "sexual assault" includes the following actual or attempted acts:

- *Rape (except Statutory Rape)*: The carnal knowledge of a person, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of their age or because of their temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity.

- *Statutory Rape*: Non-forcible sexual intercourse with a person who is under the statutory age of consent.

- *Sodomy*: Oral or anal sexual intercourse with another person, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of their age or because of their temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity.

- *Sexual Assault With An Object*: To use an object or instrument to unlawfully penetrate, however slightly, the genital or anal opening of the body of another person, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of their age or because of their temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity. This includes digital penetration.

- *Fondling*: The touching of the private body parts of another person for the purpose of sexual gratification, without the consent of the victim, including instances where the victim is incapable of giving consent because of their age or because of their temporary or permanent mental or physical incapacity.

- *Incest*: Non-forcible sexual intercourse between persons who are related to each other within the degrees wherein marriage is prohibited by law.

Consent

Sexual activity of any kind requires "consent," which consists of the following:

- Consent means clear and voluntary agreement between participants to engage in the specific act.

- Consent requires a clear "yes," verbal or otherwise; it cannot be inferred from the absence of a "no."

- Consent cannot be obtained from someone who is unconscious, asleep, physically helpless, or incapacitated (including, but not limited to, mentally incapacitated). A person is incapacitated when she or he is unable to make a rational decision because the person lacks the ability to understand his or her decision. A person who is incapacitated is unable to consent to sexual activity. A person can become

incapacitated as a result of physical or mental disability, involuntary physical constraint, being asleep or unconscious, or consumption of alcohol or other drugs. A person can consume alcohol and/or drugs without becoming incapacitated. A person who engages in sexual activity with someone that person knows or reasonably should know is incapacitated does not have consent and will be found responsible for a Policy violation.

- Consent cannot be obtained by pressure, threats, coercion or force of any kind, whether mental or physical. Consent means actually agreeing to the specific sexual activity, rather than merely submitting as a result of pressure, threats, coercion or force of any kind, whether mental or physical.

- Consent cannot be obtained from an individual who is under the legal age of consent.

- Consent must be ongoing throughout a sexual encounter and can be revoked at any time.

- Consent to some sexual acts does not necessarily imply consent to others.

- Past consent does not necessarily imply ongoing or future consent.

- Consent to engage in sexual activity with one person does not imply consent to engage in sexual activity with another.

More Definitions

For more definitions, including but not limited to terms such as "Dating Violence," Domestic Violence," "Non-Title IX Hostile Environment," "Non-Title IX Stalking," "Relationship Violence," and "Title IX Stalking," see the official policy document.

Reporting

If you have witnessed or experienced sexual misconduct, you may choose to report it to the Title IX Coordinator at the Office of Institutional Equity (410-516-8075, *titleixcoordinator@jhu.edu*). Reporting can be done **anonymously**.

The Sexual Misconduct Complaint Form can be found online here: *https://forms.jh.edu/view.php?id=158633*.

If a student discloses to you that they have been sexually assaulted, listen to them non-judgmentally then make them aware of the formal reporting

process. Graduate students are not designated as "Responsible Employees" by the university, which means that **TAs are not required to report** cases of sexual misconduct to OIE, *although they may choose to do so*. However, if a TA were to share a student's disclosure with a faculty member, that faculty member would be required to report the case to OIE.

Let the student know that OIE is more than willing to answer questions about their policies and procedures before a student reports a case. Students can communicate with OIE anonymously and do not need to share any details of the issue if they choose not to.

If a student is not yet ready to make a formal complaint, make them aware of **confidential resources** available to them on campus. These resources would not require the involvement of OIE. This includes the *Sexual Assault Helpline** (410-516-7333). Students are able to use confidential resources and file a report with OIE at the same time.

For a full list of confidential resources, see: *https://oie.jhu.edu/confidential-resources*.

You can also inform the student about the Sexual Assault Resource Unit (SARU). This is a volunteer **student-run peer support group** that is not required to report to OIE. They can be reached at 410-516-7887 or *jhusaru@gmail.com*.

For more information, see: *https://sexualassault.jhu.edu*.

Personal Relationships

The Office of the Provost and the Office of Human Resources govern the policies on personal relationships throughout the University. The full policy on "Personal Relationships" can be found on the University's *Policy & Document Library**.

The policy on personal relationships states: "To avoid conflicts of interest, bias, or perceived coercion, individuals must not initiate or consent to Personal Relationships with individuals over whom they currently hold academic or professional influence. In considering whether to enter into a Personal Relationship, the individuals must consider that disclosure may be required and that there may be significant consequences for their positions at Hopkins. If such Personal Relationships covered by this policy nonetheless develop, or in the case of a pre-existing or past relationship, the individuals must disclose the relationship so a written recusal plan can be developed. If there is any doubt whether a relationship

falls within this Policy, individuals in the relationship should seek guidance from Human Resources leadership or their relevant Vice Dean rather than fail to disclose."

This means that **dating, romantic, or sexual relationships between TAs and their students, or between TAs and their professor, are generally prohibited**. The policy also stipulates that individuals are prohibited from TAing students with whom they have had a relationship *in the past*.

In instances where a **prior relationship** exists between a TA and student, a disclosure and recusal plan will be necessary before the course begins, as outlined in the policy (see Appendix A). *For full details, see the official policy document.*

It is important to keep your personal life seperate from your professional work as a TA. If a student invites you to a non-academic social event or date, politely decline. You have an academic responsibility to your students - keep your interactions polite and professional. Click below to see how a TA politely declines a social proposition from a student.

It is likewise important to be conscious of the unequal power dynamic between you and your students. Propositioning a student is not only inappropriate, but also places the student in a position where they may be afraid to decline for fear of being graded more harshly. Click below to see how an unprofessional TA places a student in a difficult social position.

ADDITIONAL TEACHING RESOURCES

Center for Teaching Excellence and Innovation (CTEI)

CTEI staff are available to help you with questions you may have about teaching. The mission of the CTEI is to partner with educators (faculty, graduate student instructors, and teaching assistants) to extend their instructional impact by connecting innovative teaching strategies and digital technologies. The CTEI is located in the Milton S. Eisenhower Library.

The CTEI is jointly sponsored by the Krieger School of Arts & Sciences, the Whiting School of Engineering, the Sheridan Libraries, and Hopkins Information Technology Services. CTEI staff offer a variety of services and resources for teaching assistants such as course management system training, assistance with using the Turnitin plagiarism detection service, clickers, and temporary equipment loans.

Training, Resources, and Services

Canvas Course Management System Training. Canvas is the course management system used on the Homewood campus. It is a web environment that enables faculty and graduate students to organize online course materials, access course tools, and interact effectively with students via discussion boards. When used to its full potential, Canvas can be an effective tool to support your course. The CTEI offers both online and hands-on training for faculty interested in incorporating the program into their course. Links can be found on the *Center for Teaching Excellence and Innovation** website.

On-Demand Instructional Technology Help. The CTEI provides assistance when you need it and where you need it. Request a consultation at *cerweb@jhu.edu*, or stop by the CTEI anytime between 9am and 5pm.

Educational Tools. The Center offers assistance with the Turnitin plagiarism detection service, Panopto for lecture recording and streaming, and the in-class student response (clicker) system. The CTEI has developed and made available to instructors a web application, Reveal, for annotating content using images, audio, and video resources to illustrate visual relationships.

Communication Tools. The CTEI will provide interested faculty and TAs with an orientation to web conferencing and collaboration with Zoom and Skype.

Equipment Checkout and Multimedia Lab. The CTEI has educational technology equipment available for temporary loan to faculty and graduate student TAs who are teaching a class. There is equipment to aid in recording: camcorders, digital audio recorders, microphones, and cameras. There is equipment to assist with teaching: portable clickers, tablets, and individual laptops. A small multimedia lab with powerful computers and Adobe Creative Cloud software can be reserved. Loan periods vary and may require faculty sponsorship.

To reserve equipment for loan or space in the Faculty Multimedia Lab, visit the *Center for Teaching Excellence and Innovation** website and look under Tools & Tech for Equipment Loans.

The Innovative Instructor. The *Innovative Instructor Article Series** on teaching excellence at Johns Hopkins University is available through the CTEI website and in print form in the CTEI (located on Q level of MSEL). Written by Hopkins faculty and campus instructional technology experts, the goal is to increase communication about effective teaching solutions and how to achieve them. Through these articles instructors share successful teaching strategies, learn what colleagues are doing, and discover new technologies and skills for the classroom.

The Innovative Instructor Blog. The *Innovative Instructor Blog** builds on the successful print series of the same name focusing on Pedagogy, Best Practices, and Technology. Blog posts cover topics such as active learning, assessment, the use of case studies in instruction, classroom management, instructional design, how to engage students, grading and feedback, collaborative learning, leading discussions, hybrid instruction, and teaching methods. Posts are written by JHU faculty, staff members in teaching and learning centers, post docs, and graduate students.

Technology Fellowship Grant Program. The *Technology Fellowship Program** is a mini-grant initiative designed to help Hopkins faculty develop digital course resources by combining their instructional expertise with the technology skills of graduate and undergraduate students. The focus of this program is to create instructional resources that support undergraduate education. Faculty and students work together to develop projects that integrate technology into instruction while enhancing pedagogy, increasing or facilitating access to course materials, encouraging active learning, and promoting critical thinking and/or collaboration among students.

The Teaching Academy

The _Teaching Academy_* serves as an exceptional graduate and post-doctoral fellow professional development program at Johns Hopkins University. The mission is twofold: to support the learning experiences for undergraduates by training graduate student teachers, and to prepare graduate students so they may thrive in higher education as academic professionals once they graduate.

The Teaching Academy offers Ph.D. candidates and post-docs, from all divisions across JHU, teacher training and academic career preparation opportunities through courses, workshops, teaching practicums, teaching as research fellowships, and individual consultation. The Teaching Academy is administered through the Center for Teaching Excellence and Innovation (CTEI) in the Garrett Room of the Milton S. Eisenhower Library on the Homewood campus.

Programs Offered

TA Orientation and Training. Responsibilities assigned to TAs vary by department. Some are the sole instructors for a course, others lead laboratory exercises, run discussion sections, create and grade exams, or perform other course-related educational and administrative functions. Such activities provide an opportunity for graduate students who expect to pursue full-time college or university teaching to practice designing and delivering effective undergraduate instruction. These responsibilities are critically important to the delivery of undergraduate education at Hopkins. To further TA training, the Center for Teaching Excellence and Innovation will work with departments, graduate student groups and individuals. Contact Richard Shingles at _tati@jhu.edu_ to schedule an appointment.

Fall TA Orientation for First-Time TAs. The focus of this event is on preparing TAs for their immediate instructional teaching assignments. More than 200 graduate students attend TA Orientation each year. New TAs are introduced to the administrative landscape of the TA at Hopkins through a mandatory plenary session. The plenary session is followed by a series of sessions covering a variety of issues for first-time TAs, including Preparing for the First Day, Supporting a Lab, Leading Effective Discussions, Evaluating Writing Assignments, and The Art of Problem Solving Instruction.

Eyes on Teaching. A workshop series repeating topics given at TA orientation plus additional topics, targeted primarily at those with little or no formal training as educators, is offered during the academic year. These one-hour workshops are designed as general preparation for instructors to teach independently and effectively at the university level. The workshops are open to all graduate students and others with instructional appointments at JHU, and will have added value for those developing a teaching portfolio.

Participation in six Eyes on Teaching workshops fulfills Phase I of the Teaching Academy's Certificate of Completion program (see "Certificate of Completion Program" for details).

Preparation for University Teaching. A formal course offered in the spring semester for graduate students. Participants in the course engage in peer-to-peer teaching and have the opportunity to be videotaped and critiqued on their lecture presentations. The emphasis of the course is on lesson and course preparation, presentation skills, the effective facilitation of discussions, and the development of self-assessment techniques. The course is offered through KSAS (360.781) and WSE (500.781) and carries one credit. Successful completion of this course fulfills Phase II of the Teaching Academy's Certificate of Completion program (see "Certificate of Completion Program" for details).

Certificate of Completion Program. This is a certificate program for graduate students and post-docs that provides an introduction of sound pedagogical practices, explores different educational models, and helps participants acquire teaching and assessment skills through courses, workshops, and a teaching experience. Details on the Certification program can be found here: _https://ctei.jhu.edu/teaching-academy/coc_

Teaching Institute. The Johns Hopkins Teaching Academy offers a three-day Teaching Institute to graduate students and post-doctoral fellows to advance the development of university-level educators by enhancing classroom teaching skills. The three-day event is packed with information, hands-on experiences, tools, and resources. Participants benefit from getting to know one another and working together in a learning community comprised of fellow future faculty.

Teaching-As-Research Fellowships. Teaching-As-Research (TAR) is the deliberate, systematic, and reflective use of research methods by instructors to develop and implement practices that advance learning experiences and student outcomes. The TAR program is open to graduate students and post-doctoral fellows across the university; fellowships carry a stipend awarded upon submission of a final report and presentation.

Office of Academic Advising

The Office of *Academic Advising** maintains a website with useful information on deadlines (e.g., add/drop and the deadline for filing Incompletes) and services available to undergraduates such as tutoring and mentoring.

Student Information System (SIS)

The *Student Information System** (SIS) is Johns Hopkins' university-wide, web-based student information system. Faculty can use this system to print the course roster, email the entire class, and enter grades online. To learn more about how to use SIS, please review the *Student Information System (SIS) help guide**.

Resources for International Teaching Assistants

One of the main concerns of international TAs is that they may not be able to communicate effectively in English with their students. While linguistic and cultural differences exist, there are many ways to enhance your communication and make your teaching more universally accessible. Teaching may seem daunting at first, but it gets easier with practice. Reach out to your peers, colleagues, and fellow international students for support and advice. Above all, *be patient with yourself*.

If students have a hard time understanding what you are saying, write the main points of your lecture on the board. Teaching with handouts can also help. Taking the time to create handouts before class gives you the opportunity to compose your thoughts and express them clearly in English.

Make sure you understand students' questions completely before you attempt to answer, even if that means asking the student to repeat the question. Check frequently to see if the students are following along. Don't forget to maintain eye contact as you explain material. After finishing one section of a lecture, ask the students if there are questions before you continue.

Remember that your English language ability is only one of your skills. You also have your passion for the material, your cultural background, and your life experiences, all of which contribute to your teaching. On the first day, if you are comfortable doing so, tell the students where you are from and what other languages you speak. If you have studied at a university outside the United States, say so. If the classroom experience was very different at that university—for example, if there was little in-class

discussion, or if the pedagogy of teaching the subject in question was different, take a moment to share that story with the students. This will make the students more comfortable, and if they later have trouble understanding something you say in class, they will not feel embarrassed to ask for clarification.

Classes for International TAs

The Center for Language Education offers classes for current and prospective international TAs through the English as a Second Language (ESL) Program. Departments usually recommend their students for the courses, but you can also sign up on your own. If you have any questions regarding placement, contact the ESL instructor found at the *Center for Language Education's** website page for the *International TAs ESL Program**. You may be asked to appear for an assessment of your oral English language skills to help determine which courses would meet your needs.

Courses Currently Offered:
- AS.370.602 American English Pronunciation
- AS.370.603 Public Speaking in Academia
- AS.370.604 Academic Writing & Grammar

Office of International Student and Scholar Services
The primary goal of the *Office of International Services** (OIS) is to help members of Hopkins' international community acquire and maintain the appropriate visa status, and cope with the challenges of making a transition from one setting to another.

The staff is prepared to help with issues international students may face in adapting to an academically and culturally different environment. On the Homewood campus, OIS staff will be your first source of important information. It is important that you meet them soon after your arrival at Johns Hopkins University.

OIS staff members can answer your questions and advise you about immigration regulations, financial concerns, health matters, housing, employment possibilities, and other issues relating to your period of stay in the United States. Johns Hopkins University offers a wide range of student services at Homewood, and, when necessary, OIS will refer you to other offices that can more fully address your needs and concerns.

In order to attend to everyone, OIS advisors generally require students to make an appointment prior to being seen for advising; however, walk-in advising is also

available (check website for times). These walk-in advising sessions do not require an appointment.

Advising services for new arrivals, I-9 processing, and signatures on I-20/DS-2019 forms may be handled at any time during OIS office hours, and are not limited to walk-in advising hours. Contact OIS at 667-208-7001.

Office of Pre-Professional Advising

The JHU Office of _Pre-Professional Programs and Advising_* is dedicated to encouraging students interested in pursuing careers in the health and legal professions to make conscious and thoughtful decisions about their future paths. They serve undergraduates, graduate students, and alumni of the Krieger School of Arts and Sciences and the Whiting School of Engineering. Resources are available to students beginning in their first year.

Academic Support

The _Office of Academic Support_* offers academic assistance to full-time Homewood undergraduate students who want help with course material. As a TA, you can help prevent serious academic problems from occurring. Students may be having personal problems, need accommodation for disabilities, or may not have the necessary study skills or background for the class. If students do not come to you first, **make an effort to reach out to them.**

The Learning Den

The _Learning Den Tutoring Services_* provides tutoring for all registered students in Krieger and Whiting Schools. Tutoring is conducted in small group format, with a maximum of six students in each group.

Help Rooms

Help rooms are run by their respective departments and offer free drop-in tutoring for interested students. There are help rooms for Chemistry, Languages (Chinese, Japanese and Korean), Math, and Physics.

The Study Consulting Program

The _Study Consulting Program_* is designed to help students improve their academic performance. Consultants are trained graduate students or undergraduate seniors who provide general assistance with academic issues such as organizational and time management skills, pro-

crastination, test anxiety, note taking, study techniques, reading college textbooks, and self-discipline. Students and consultants meet once each week for one hour at an agreed-upon time and location. There is no charge for participation in this program, which focuses on the needs of the student.

Pilot Learning

_PILOT Learning_* is a loose acronym for peer-led-team learning. In the Hopkins PILOT program, students are organized into study teams consisting of 6-10 members who meet weekly to work problems together. A trained student leader acts as captain and facilitates the meetings. In 2020, PILOT will be offered online.

Writing Center

All writers, even highly skilled writers, benefit from feedback from a sensitive reader. Recognizing that writing is a social, collaborative process, the Writing Center provides exactly this type of support.

The _Writing Center_* offers undergraduate and graduate student writers free, individual conferences with experienced peer tutors trained to consult on all types of writing assignments or projects, including essays, research papers, introductory creative writing assignments, personal statements, applications for internships and study abroad, to name a few. Students can work with tutors on all aspects of the writing process, from organizing their thinking to revising their drafts. The Writing Center, located in the Hutzler Reading Room of Gilman Hall (Room 230) offers forty-five-minute appointments, starting on the hour, and usually maintains hours Sunday through Thursday, 2-10 PM. Although walk-ins are welcomed, students are strongly encouraged to book appointments in advance using the scheduling software, WCOnline, found on the following website: _https://krieger.jhu.edu/writingcenter/_. For more information, drop by the Writing Center or contact the director at writingcenter@jhu.edu.

Life Design Lab

The _Life Design Lab_* (formerly the Homewood Career Center) supports and serves all Krieger and Whiting undergraduates and masters students, regardless of post-graduate plans. Life design educators are embedded within academic departments and centers across the two schools, which allows students to more easily access life design programs and courses, experiential learning, and connections with alumni and employers.

Counseling Center

The *Counseling Center** assists students in maintaining their psychological and emotional well-being. Psychological problems are not a prerequisite for going to the Counseling Center; students may use these resources for personal growth and enrichment through educational and support programs. All services are confidential and free of charge to full-time undergraduate and graduate students from the Schools of Arts & Sciences, Engineering, and the Peabody Institute. Individual, couples, and group counseling are available. The Counseling Center also offers services in career decision-making, consultation, workshops, and out-reach programs.

If you notice significant changes in the work or attitude of a student, consider referring them to the Counseling Center. If a student comes to talk to you and you feel that their problems are beyond your ability to help, offer to connect the person with professionals in the Counseling Center.

Students desiring Counseling Center services can make appointments in person or by phone. In addition, a professional staff member is on duty daily for immediate assistance in case of an emergency. The Counseling Center is staffed primarily by licensed psychologists. Center services are also provided by interns who are advanced doctoral students in professional psychology and work under the supervision of senior staff. The Counseling Center has consulting psychiatrists available for medication management and consultation.

Recognizing Students in Distress

The Counseling Center's *Recognizing Students in Distress** website lists some of the signs of students in distress, including students who may be suicidal or potentially dangerous. TAs should read through it carefully. You may find yourself in a position to observe and recognize changes that signal psychological distress in students. At other times, you may become concerned with the behavior you have observed in one of your students. Being able to identify students in distress, having some guidelines for dealing with distressed students, and being aware of appropriate referral resources that can assist you will allow you to be more in control of situations which may present themselves.

The Counseling Center holds workshops for recognizing and assisting students in distress and is happy to advise you on concerns you might have.

The Sheridan Libraries

The *Sheridan Libraries** are part of the Johns Hopkins University library network and include the Milton S. Eisenhower Library, which is the principal research library at the University. Other specialized collections in medicine, international affairs, music, and space science are located across the University's campuses. Smaller collections are also maintained at satellite campuses and centers.

Library Resources for Student Research

The library provides specialized services for courses that require research. When given advance notice, subject librarians (Academic Liaisons) can lead a class session that instructs students on how to use library resources. These sessions are geared toward the needs of your particular course and can take place within the library, where students receive hands-on instruction from the Academic Liaisons, or within your own classroom. In addition, Academic Liaisons can design a customized page on the library website that guides students in conducting the specific research demanded by your course. If you don't have the time to arrange a session in the library, you can still steer your students to the library's Research Consultation information at *https://www.library.jhu.edu/library-services/research-consultation/*

Special Collections

The *Sheridan Libraries Special Collections** houses rare books, historical manuscripts, the University archives, sheet music, and digital collections. Materials are housed in three locations. The Milton S. Eisenhower Library/Brody Learning Commons houses the Rare Book Collection, the Ferdinand Hamburger University Archives, and Manuscripts. The John Work Garrett Library of rare books and manuscripts is in the Garrett family home, Evergreen House, at 4545 North Charles Street. Finally, the George Peabody Library, in its magnificent Victorian building, is located at 17 East Mount Vernon Place. For hours and directions to each location, visit the Special Collections website.

Special Collections cover the historical aspects of most disciplines, and librarians are eager to work with faculty and graduate students to use these materials to support and enhance teaching. Holding a class in Rare Books and Manuscripts offers students a tangible experience of history in the classroom setting and adds exciting depth to a course.

All Hopkins students are welcome to make use of these materials for individual research, and in most cases,

librarians can also make arrangements to support course-related research assignments.

Library Reserves

Instructors of courses offered by all divisions of the Johns Hopkins University on the Homewood campus may reserve required and recommended materials for their students. These materials include published books, book excerpts, journal articles, government documents, videos, DVDs, and audio materials.

This service also offers Electronic Reserves, which is integrated with Canvas. EReserves will digitize copies of book chapters or journal articles that are not already available online that you may require or recommend for your courses. Course reading lists may be submitted through the *Sheridan Libraries Reserves Request Form** or by emailing your syllabus to *reserves@jhu.edu*.

Library Audiovisual Materials

The MSE Library has audiovisual materials, including a wide range of audio and video recordings. If the library does not have the resources your course needs, your Academic Liaison may be able to order them.

Technology Resources and Services

At times, you may need additional resources to support teaching your course. Johns Hopkins provides you with access to audiovisual materials and support, multimedia equipment and support, and classroom technology services.

KIT-CATS - Classroom Audiovisual Technology Support

Audio Visual Services (KIT-CATS)* (Krieger IT Classroom Audio-Visual Technology Support) offers a range of technology services. These services include the delivery and setup of video conferencing technology for courses, meetings, conferences, and special events, as well as audio and video recording services at an hourly rate. KIT-CATS also provides digital conversion services for converting analog audio cassettes to MP3 digital audio files. The staff can provide consultation services relating to presentation technologies or serve in a simple advisory role on the best type of equipment for a given application. KIT-CATS provides equipment at no cost for undergraduate courses (restrictions apply; see the website for details). All equipment is available on a first-come, first-served basis. It is recommended that requests be made at least a week in advance of the event or activity.

Digital Media Center (DMC)

The *Digital Media Center's** mission is to prepare life-long learners to confidently master new technologies and to disseminate work that effectively communicates their ideas. The professional and student staff offers training and support in the use of multimedia hardware and software through workshops, peer coaching, and 1-on-1 mentoring. Students may borrow equipment such as video and still cameras, music creation/recording gear, game systems, projectors, and sound equipment for club events, academic projects, and personal recreation.

The main lab features workstations with a wide selection of software for video, audio, graphics, web, and 3D modeling. The game lab is a fully equipped development and testing center with high-end workstations. The recording studio contains a state-of-the art composition, recording, and editing system complete with synthesizers, key-boards, drums, and effects processors. The DMC is open to full-time students in the Schools of Arts & Sciences and Engineering.

Digital Tools & Support

The following technologies are available for instructional use and can facilitate online teaching. The links provided contain supporting information.

- **Canvas** (learning management system): *https://ctei.jhu.edu/tools-and-tech/canvas*
- **Gradescope** (grading platform): *https://ctei.jhu.edu/tools-and-tech/gradescope*
- **Microsoft OneDrive** (cloud storage): *https://ctei.jhu.edu/tools-and-tech/onedrive*
- **Microsoft Teams** (class discussion and video conferencing): *https://ctei.jhu.edu/tools-and-tech/teams*
- **Panopto** (lecture recordings): *https://ctei.jhu.edu/tools-and-tech/panopto*
- **Piazza** (class discussion board): *https://ctei.jhu.edu/tools-and-tech/piazza*
- **Zoom** (video conferencing): *https://ctei.jhu.edu/tools-and-tech/zoom*

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