

# LOYOLA UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Department of English  
Graduate Programs

## Guidelines for Teaching Assistants in Literature Courses

The Graduate Programs Committee has formulated the following general guidelines for Teaching Assistantship work. TAs should contact their mentors as soon as they receive their assignments in order to work out the details.

1. TAs are expected to give ten hours a week on average to the course in which they serve, no more than fifteen hours in any one week. The time commitment includes attending class, holding office hours, grading papers, and preparing lessons.
2. TAs should attend every class session throughout the semester. This obligation will count toward their weekly time commitment.
3. TAs should either teach the equivalent of one week of classes during the semester *or* lead one weekly discussion section. A mentor should attend and provide feedback on at least one of the TA's classes.
4. If the TA is to lead a regular (weekly) discussion section, the mentor should make clear prior to the beginning of the semester the parameters of the student's responsibilities for that section. Those responsibilities may include the regular grading of papers and exams for the TA's section, which should be done under the supervision of the mentor—especially early in the semester.
5. If the TA is working within a section taught by a faculty member, TA and mentor should meet prior to the beginning of the semester to go over the syllabus and agree on the classes that the TA will lead, based upon the needs and preferences of both parties. In this case, the introduction of the TA into the grading of student writing should be gradual. TAs should first read and, on separate paper, comment on one set of papers or a portion thereof and discuss the grades and comments with the mentor. Later in the semester, the TA should comment on and grade one complete set of papers, which the mentor should review before returning them to the class. Alternatively, the TA might comment on and grade a portion of each set of essays (e.g., a third of each of three sets of papers). The mentor should provide the TA with sample graded papers of various grade ranges prior to the TA grading papers on his/her own.
6. Office hours for TAs should amount to no more than two hours per week, except around the times that graded assignments are due from the undergraduates.
7. TAs and their mentors should meet to discuss the class in particular and pedagogy in general at least every other week.
8. Mentors should not ask TAs for assistance with their research.

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9. At the end of the semester, mentors should prepare written evaluations of the TAs assigned to them and send those evaluations to the GPD for inclusion in students' files.