

**DEPARTMENT of MUSIC
T.A. HANDBOOK**

2009-2010

GUIDELINES AND POLICY

TA Duties and Responsibilities:

- To assist in the instruction of an upper or lower division course at the University under the supervision of a faculty member. The TA primarily assists the faculty member in charge of the course by conducting discussion or laboratory sections that supplement faculty lectures and by grading assignments and examinations.
- To assist with the development of assignments or exams as needed, hold office hours and proctor examinations. The general instructional content of the course, as well as the official assignment of student grades and decisions on grade appeals, are the responsibility of the faculty member in charge of the course. Teaching assistants may not be assigned responsibility for the entire instruction of a course.
- To realize both carefully and thoroughly, by using explanation, exposition, and dialogue, the course content as laid out by the Music Department and the instructor.
- To add personal insight into the topic relevant to the students' understanding.
- To foster the best possible working and learning environment, UCSD strives to maintain a climate of fairness, cooperation, and professionalism among faculty, staff and students. UCSD faculty, staff, and students are expected to practice the **UCSD Principles of Community** as individuals and in groups. TAs should become familiar with the principles, as well as campus policies on sexual harassment, confidentiality of student records, and academic dishonesty (see later section). These are available in CTD's handbook as well as on the web at <http://ctd.ucsd.edu>.
- TA, Reader, and Associate positions are covered by a collective bargaining agreement between the University and the UAW. The agreement, including applicable benefits, is found at: http://atyourservice.ucop.edu/employees/policies_employee_labor_relations/collective_bargaining_units/academicstudentemployees_bx/agreement.html.

TA TRAINING AND SUPPORT

Campus & Department Training Requirements

Participation in departmental and campus TA training, for both first-time and continuing TAs, is **MANDATORY**. Meeting times are scheduled and communicated well in advance so that all can attend. Although excellent instructional support and services are offered on an on-going basis by CTD (see section below), the following training constitutes minimum department requirements:

- Welcome Week departmental training meeting (first-time TAs)
- Center for Teaching Development (CTD) campus orientation (first-time TAs)
- Two additional Fall quarter training sessions (first-time TAs)
- Fall quarter WLH Stereo/AV use presentation (All TAs)
- Quarterly departmental TA Faculty Advisor meeting (All TAs)

In addition to these group meetings, the TA faculty adviser will visit a section meeting of each first-time TA, usually during spring quarter; she is also available for other observations on request.

The Center For Teaching Development (CTD)

The Center for Teaching Development gives each new TA a complimentary copy of their ***Graduate Teaching Assistant Handbook***. It contains important and useful suggestions for improving teaching skills, grading procedures, etc. New TAs are required to attend orientation meetings held at the start of Fall quarter. This handbook and another useful and extensive one put out by UC-Riverside are available for reference in the Grad Lounge. CTD has a very friendly and helpful staff who can suggest teaching techniques and offer useful advice. It is a UCSD requirement that a CTD consultant contact every new TA to make arrangements to observe you teach and to meet with you to suggest ways in which you can improve your teaching. TAs should take advantage of this useful service! Also, the faculty TA Adviser and especially the Senior TA are always available for questions or advice (or just good gossip). TAs who have taught in the same course in past years can also be a most helpful—try to get in contact with them.

MUSIC TA RESPONSIBILITIES AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH FACULTY

What is Essential:

- TAs should contact the faculty instructor of their course before the first day of the class, to find out if he or she has particular things the TA needs to know before the course begins.
- TAs should attend all lectures in order to keep abreast of current course content and take notes on lectures and discussion (if applicable to section preparation). They may also be asked to assist with lecture in whatever ways the instructor finds helpful.
- For courses with TA discussion sections, TAs should be prepared to discuss all reading and listening material provided by the instructor.
- Accurate Record Keeping: Grading criteria should be clear and easily substantiated. Grading and attendance become even more significant when class discussion and demonstration cover material not available in textbooks, class reserves, or in the library.
- Office Hours: TAs should establish fixed weekly office hours that are convenient to their own schedules as well as for their students; these can be at any fixed location. There are two TA offices in the CPMC building available for you to reserve for regular hours (sign up early!).
- Time Requirements: Actual time spent on TA work and the number of hours you are contracted for should be equivalent. Be sure to pre-arrange your work time with your faculty to coincide with your agreement with the department. Hours and percentages are covered in the ***Graduate Teaching Assistant Handbook***. (In general, work times are stated as quarterly totals, allowing for large week-to-week variations.)

What is Expected:

- In lab and discussion sections or office hours TAs should try to illuminate, or expand if necessary, details of the professor's lecture. Open discussion, demonstrations, assignments, notebooks or journals, quizzes, additional study guides, reserve materials, other media presentations, library references, and any other resources imaginable can be utilized by the TA within the framework of the course developed by the professor. Take note of any informational or philosophical differences and discuss them in private with your faculty. A variety of views may be welcome and interesting if presented clearly as such, with a focus the students can follow.
- Be prepared to be a *Go-fer*. The TA will often have to handle menial administrative tasks and media arrangements. Pleasant expedition of these jobs will, in the end, leave more time for the more gratifying interaction with students. Some faculty may be open to more input by the TA, particularly when arrangements are made before the term, so meet with your faculty early. In classes with several TAs, taking a class lecture of your subject interest or expertise, or even co-teaching may be welcomed. Weekly meetings with the professor are recommended for problem prevention. This also ensures consistency of material presentation between TA sections as well as grading.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS

(The nuts and bolts of the job)

- Know or be able to identify resources both within and outside of the department to send students for help: add/drop forms, academic counseling, personal problems and health, extra tutoring, the OASIS writing center, and other university business. The UCSD web site (<http://www.ucsd.edu>) the campus telephone book, and the department Undergraduate Advisor (Eileen Voreades), can guide you to any resources you need.
- You may be asked to arrange for **ALL technical and equipment needs** for your instructor. (This can include A/V, recording, room set-up, etc.)
- Music Department Audio/Visual equipment available for check-out includes a TV/VCR cart and an overhead projector and screen. Reservations must be secured at least 24 hours in advance. You are responsible for pick-up, operation, and return. Orders are taken by completing the request form located at <http://music-intranet.ucsd.edu/request.php?form=AV>.
- If Audio/Visual equipment is required that the Department does not own (see available Department equipment above), then a special order can be placed at the same website. Specify:

course number
course professor
class day/time (start and end)/room number
exact equipment needs

Reservations must be made 72 hours in advance of need. Late charges will be assessed to the professor for any request placed less than 72 hours. You will receive an e-mail confirmation once your order has been processed.

- Room set-up can include unlocking and **locking** room and stereo cabinet, arranging chairs, tables, music stands, etc., and leaving the room as you found it (or better?)

- As a group, TAs represent the eyes and ears of the department. Much money has been lost through theft and neglect. Please contact Jenn Stauffer, Production Manager, and Neal Bociek, Production Coordinator, when you see anything that needs attention.
- TA Offices are 243 and 245. The offices have an electronic lock. Contact Neal Bociek at facilities@music.ucsd.edu for the code. These are shared spaces that can be reserved for office hours. Office hours may be reserved on the sign-up sheets posted on the TA Office doors.
- Confer with the course instructor on return policies regarding exams and papers. Buckley waiver (students right to waive privacy) is required for exams or papers left outside for public view. Student can just state "Buckley Waiver" and sign the top portion of their papers or exams.
- Get grades in **on time**. This often means being prepared to process many grades all at the same time at the end of the term when your own course load and obligations are heavy. Prepare for this ahead of time! Please be very careful and accurate, since subsequent grade changes are an enormous hassle.
- Exams and/or course papers may NOT be left outside TA offices. No exceptions. Arrangements for returning exams and papers should be made by the instructor and TA. Possibilities include using TA offices.
- Photocopying for small course-related jobs may be done using the department copier in the grad mailroom – room 159, or in the Staff break room – room 174, see Linda Higgins in Rm. 193 for the copy card. Large jobs (tests, handouts, final exams, etc.) should be ordered in advance from IMPRINTS – see Becky in the Front Office for order forms.

ELEMENTS OF TEACHING PARTICULAR TO MUSIC

- The range of students' musical background in a class varies from a complete lack of musical vocabulary, to a working one, to very experienced musicians. This will present difficulties in keeping the group progressing equally with the course material while continuing to stimulate and challenge the group as a whole. Be aware of including all students regardless of the perceived level, and take special care not to embarrass those lacking in previous knowledge of the subject.
- Concert reviews are often a significant part of many courses, and generally are not a familiar means of academic work for most non-music students. Standards and suggested forms for critiques should be discussed early in the term and developed throughout.
- Journals, reviews and other regular written work often need extra emphasis and encouragement for students to improve their writing skills. Of course, this kind of work requires extra grading time and consequently is sometimes neglected.
- An important component of most music courses is the teaching of critical music listening. This is a difficult skill both for the students to acquire and for the instructor to teach, and strategies for achieving it are a recurring topic of discussion in TA meetings. Success in this project can often be attained by some trial and error, through which you can develop strategies that you are comfortable with.

- It is often helpful to collect some personal information from your students at the first section meeting: name, major, year in school, previous musical background, course expectations, etc. This can be done on a sign-up sheet or on individual cards or slips of paper that you past out
- There are many concerts and other activities in the Department that may relate to students' courses of study or simply to their general interests. Part of your role is to promote their awareness of such events, and to encourage their attendance (remember that today's students are your audiences of the future).

SOME CLASSROOM TIPS

- Articulate the most basic concepts and explain points clearly, then expand or develop as vocabulary and comprehension permits.
- Encourage questions, but stay on course track. Use office hours for tangential discussions.
- Be prepared with a wide variety of analogies and approaches for explanations. Everyone has a different frame of reference from their life experiences.
- Develop concepts with a musically descriptive vocabulary.
- Accept non-technical terms rather than mis-used technical ones.
- When using performance to demonstrate musical concepts don't force reluctant or shy individuals to perform solo. Group participation is easier for some.
- For demonstrating some concepts students may need to perform tasks as simple as changing pitch direction, or maintaining a pulse to move toward the basic comprehension of other elementary musical concepts. Some students with or without good academic skills may have difficulty physically demonstrating these tasks. Solutions may need to be found outside of the classroom setting.
- Make very clear your procedures for evaluation and grading. Evaluating students' ability to grasp musical concepts may be different than in other areas of academia. Try to offer specific guidelines and expectations.
- Many TAs are experienced one-to-one teachers, however, find the classroom challenging and requiring a different technique. At CTD, there are helpful resources available for check-out which specifically address teaching styles. Being a TA offers the opportunity to see many teaching styles and to pick up tips from other graduate students and faculty.
- Flexibility and Patience are necessary attributes of a successful TA. Whenever possible, TAs are encouraged to make the educational process a fun one, both for themselves and their students. The Senior TA and TA faculty adviser are always available to discuss your problems and help with possible solutions.

DEALING WITH ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

In recent years, as our classes have become ever larger, the Music Department has had occasional incidents involving students cheating on exams or being otherwise dishonest in their work for a course. The University Guide for dealing with academic dishonesty, which outlines the principles and procedures set up by the faculty (i.e., the Academic Senate), is on the web at <http://ugr8.ucsd.edu/judicial/ad-guide.html>; you should consult it if the need ever arises. Here, however, are a couple of excerpts that are useful for us all to remember.

Academic misconduct includes but is not limited to:

- Cheating, such as using "crib notes" or copying answers from another student during the exam, modifying a graded exam and returning it for a new grade, or submitting the same paper or assignment for two or more different courses unless authorized by the Instructors concerned.
- Plagiarism, such as using the writings or ideas of another person, either in whole or in part, without proper attribution to the author of the source.
- Collusion, such as engaging in unauthorized collaboration on homework assignments or take home exams, completing for another student any part or the whole of an assignment or exam, or procuring, providing or accepting materials that contain questions or answers to an exam or assignment to be given at a subsequent time.

Strategies for confronting possible cheaters during the exam:

- If a student is using notes or has notes visible immediately and discreetly confiscate the notes or ask the student to put them away. These materials may be important in proving the charges if a student denies cheating.
- If students are talking, announce that no talking is permitted during exams or quietly ask the students to stop talking. Ask such students to change seats or move apart. Care should be taken to avoid disrupting the concentration of the rest of the class.
- If a student is looking at others' work, announce that all work is individual, or quietly tell the student that eyes must be kept on one's own paper.
- Do not stop a student from completing the exam, even if you believe that the student is cheating. Instead, interrupt the misconduct as described above, and identify those involved by setting their exams aside and recording their names.

SUPERVISION AND EVALUATION

The TA should receive at the beginning of each quarter a thorough introduction to the course topic/content by the assigned instructor, and should consult with him/her regularly throughout the course. The faculty TA Advisor is available throughout the year for confidential consultation and advice about all matters of teaching assistanceship, including teaching challenges, issues regarding individual students, and matters involving teaching faculty. A Senior TA will be available as well, to act as a resource person and mentor for all TAs, assist the Faculty TA Advisor, and help coordinate TA training and self-evaluation. TA workshops are held each quarter, to address issues which may arise during the academic year and to provide a forum for discussion of topics of general interest. At the end of the quarter, both students and faculty submit written reviews of the TA's performance.

In recent years, funds for three \$50 "TA Excellence Award" stipends have been granted by CTD to recognize superior performance, service and commitment to teaching. The Music Department has been able to match this amount for a total \$100 each. In addition, there may be an honorable mention award for an outstanding first-year TA. The recipients are recommended by the faculty on the basis of student and TA performance evaluations and selected by the department Chair.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS TO SERVE AS A TA

For continued service, a TA must meet university eligibility criteria. For academic year employment at 25-50% time, a student must be registered full-time (12 units or more). A student enrolled in less than 12 units, with departmental approval, is eligible for a maximum of 25% time employment. Any employment outside of the student's academic (home) department must have prior approval from the home department. Any exception to the minimum qualifications listed may be granted at the discretion of the University. However, international students are limited to a maximum of 50% employment at all times.

- A graduate student must be in good academic standing, i.e. ;
 - Meet departmental standards including a satisfactory annual spring academic progress evaluation;
 - Maintain a GPA of 3.0 in upper-division and graduate course work
 - Must not have more than a total of eight units of F and/or U grades overall.
- A graduate student must be within the departmental time limits. Each department has established Pre-Candidacy and Support Time Limits. A doctoral student must advance to candidacy by the Pre-candidacy Time Limit (PCTL) and also be within the Support Time Limit (SUTL) to remain eligible for campus employment or to receive other University funds. In addition, no one may be employed as a teaching assistant for more than 18 quarters. MA students are eligible for 6 quarters of music department employment.
- An international graduate student whose undergraduate degree is not from an English-speaking college or university, or who has serious pronunciation problems, may not serve as a TA until s/he has been certified to have the requisite English language skills. (This English language policy does not apply to a student who serves as a TA in a course which is conducted in his/her native language.) Evaluation and certification will be arranged by the Music department and CTD. For further information, contact the CTD International Teaching Assistant Language Program, (858) 534-3981.

UCSD DEPARTMENT CONTACTS

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Center for Teaching Development Center 307 534-3958 ctd@ucsd.edu

Oasis Tutorial Center Classroom Bldg #1 534-3760 <http://oasis.ucsd.edu>

Note: This document has benefited from the accumulated thoughts of the following Senior TAs in the Music Department, who have offered their experience and ideas to help TAs organize and integrate TA work with their own academic work:

Linda Swedensky 1990
Kitty Pappas 1994
Mark Applebaum 1995
Scott Walton 1996

Erik Ulman 1997
Pat O'Keefe 1998
Erik Ulman 1999
Linda Kernohan 2000

Kristy Cheadle 2001
Luciane Cardassi 2002, 2003
Ann-Marie Dicce 2005-2008
Brian Griffeath-Loeb 2009