



Instructional Assessment in Higher Education

A HANDBOOK FOR FACULTY, TEACHING ASSISTANTS AND TEACHING FELLOWS

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Executive Summary

THIS REPORT HIGHLIGHTS observations and suggestions for how to assess teaching from the perspectives of participants in the Graduate Student Sheridan Seminar on Instructional Assessment at Brown University. The Assessment Seminar met weekly during the 1994-95 academic year under the sponsorship of Brown's Harriet W. Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning. The undersigned participants worked upon the principle that the purpose of education is to help students develop knowledge, skills and abilities to use for the welfare of the global community.

The consensus of the seminar was that a comprehensive program of instructional assessment should play an integral role in the educational mission of the University. We discovered, however, that in order to develop such a program, the University, departments, and faculty members must articulate clear goals for teaching and learning. Goals for teaching and learning encompass both broad aims and specific objectives for achieving those aims. To that end, the seminar wrote a model of such goals and, in turn, designed a program of instructional assessment to evaluate the achievement of such goals. Our recommendations, summarized on the next page, encourage the Brown University community to begin to develop such goals and complimentary methods of assessment. To supplement the report and recommendations, attached are appendices highlighting source materials for this study, a sample outline for a Teaching Portfolio, and a model Course Syllabus as the major assessment tools.

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Recommendations

THE GRADUATE STUDENT SHERIDAN SEMINAR on Instructional Assessment offers the following recommendations for the establishment and maintenance of realistic and ethical standards for assessing the degree to which administrators, faculty and students achieve the stated mission of the University during any calendar year. These recommendations were founded on the belief that the goal of higher education is to assist students in understanding their own most effective methods of learning so that they can implement their knowledge, and responsibly serve the needs of the global community. The recognized achievement of that goal will improve the experience of teaching for all faculty and graduate teaching assistants. While we believe the University would be improved by adopting all of these recommendations, we also believe that initiatives towards achieving any of these areas would serve, and thus improve the quality of teaching at Brown.

Educational Mission Statement

The University should develop an Educational Mission Statement which clearly outlines the educational philosophy and aims of the institution and the objectives by which those aims will be realized. The Mission Statement will represent a consensus among the trustees, faculty and administration. It will be properly publicized so that students, staff, alumni, parents, and donors are fully apprised of those aims and objectives. (See pages 9-10.)

Departmental Goals

Academic departments should define their Departmental Goals and establish an on-going process to assess the achievement of specific goals which are crucial to each department's disciplinary objectives. There should be unity and coherence between departmental goals and the courses that serve as the means to those ends. Departments should recognize that integral to that process will be the expectation that all fac-

ulty, graduate and undergraduate teaching assistants will participate actively in assessment through a variety of methods, including internal programs which improve the quality of teaching within the discipline. Departmental Teaching Portfolios should be created to embody their disciplinary aims and objectives and to provide the basis for assessing the degree to which those objectives are achieved both in individual classes and on the behalf of each department. (See page 11.)

Individual Course Goals

Departmental Faculty should be expected to define Individual Course Goals which are consistent with and support the departmental and university aims and objectives. Assessment should be based on the extent to which these goals are administered and achieved. (See pages 12-13, Appendix C and The Sheridan Center handbook *Constructing a Syllabus*.)

Faculty Teaching Portfolios

Faculty should be encouraged to develop Faculty Teaching Portfolios to make their professional teaching aims and objectives explicit, and these should serve as the basis for the assessment of their performance by colleagues, students and administrators. Various forms of feedback may be used to gauge their successful implementation. Faculty should also encourage graduate students in their departments to develop Teaching Portfolios, which highlight their teaching experiences, interests and talents. (See pages 13-14, Appendix B and The Sheridan Center handbook *The Teaching Portfolio*.)

Participation of Undergraduate And Graduate Students

The participation of undergraduate and graduate students in the process of instructional assessment in the University should be viewed as an integral part of the educational mission of the University. It should be the responsibility of the administration and academic departments to encourage and prepare their students for this task. They should be provided with adequate information on University, departmental and individual course objectives in order to responsibly assess teaching performance and course achievements. The University needs to develop methods such as useful evaluation forms and exit interviews which will ensure that all students participate in the evaluation of teaching. The

administration and departments should be assessed on the degree to which students are properly prepared for this component of their education. (See Appendix A.)

Academic Advising Process

Faculty should be properly trained to use the academic advising process to help students identify and develop their own educational aims and objectives through thoughtful understanding of the relationship between the knowledge and skills acquired in higher education and the conduct of daily life. Departments and administration should recognize, assess and support faculty in this critical element of the educational mission of the University.

Annual Self-Reviews

The administration, departments, trustees and alumni will need to engage in annual self-reviews and revise these new forms of instructional assessment as they are implemented.

Educational Charter Documents

WE PROVIDE THESE DOCUMENTS because we found in the course of our discussions that it is impossible to devise methods of assessing teaching unless there is a sense of shared goals for education which serve the common goal of teaching excellence.

Educational Mission Statement

The Educational Mission Statement for a university should include a clear statement of the educational goals of the institution as agreed upon by trustees, faculty, and administration. The specific aims of the University should embody those goals. Furthermore, the objectives of the University should state the means by which those aims will be achieved and measured. The following is a sample Educational Mission Statement:

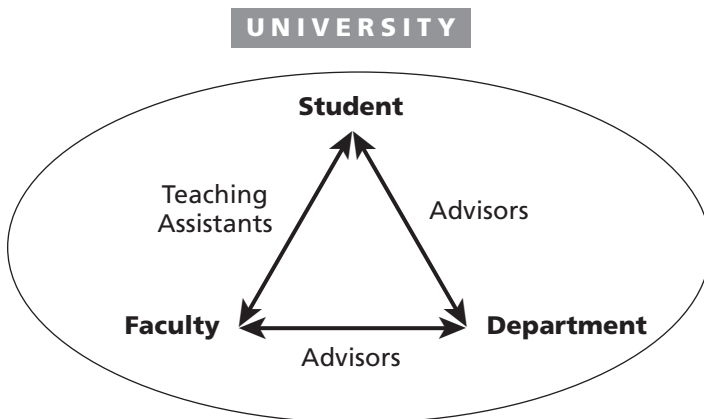
The educational mission of this University is to provide a liberal education for the current and future generations of undergraduate and graduate students so they will be prepared to participate in and make a contribution to the global community. The purpose of a liberal education is to enable students to develop critical thinking and learn effective writing and communication skills. The liberal learning environment should encourage and train students to use knowledge critically, to analyze problems with that knowledge, and to implement solutions in a manner that reflects scholarly integrity. The University recognizes that the acquisition of knowledge is inextricably connected to its application in all aspects of the human enterprise, and therefore, a liberal education should provide students with the means to realize that connection.

The faculty of this University endeavors, through teaching and advising, to enable each student to develop a life-long habit of learning, to be able to tolerate intellectual ambivalence, to see learning as a collaborative exercise, to think constructively about social and technical problems, and to articulate solutions through oral and written forms of

self-expression. The faculty of this University serve as models for the value of a liberal education through their integration of research and teaching for the benefit of the global community. The University is committed to making students active participants in scholarly work rather than passive recipients of information, and thus must endeavor to give them responsibility for their educational plans through active and ongoing faculty advising by developing means of study which maximize individual learning strengths in order to realize potential abilities and skills, and by instilling an awareness of intellectual and cultural difference while seeking commonalities among people and ideas.

The faculty and administration of this University recognize that in order to fulfill its stated mission, there must be a clear relationship between the stated mission of the University and the aims and objectives of the academic departments and individual courses offered within those departments. To ensure the mutual obligation and accountability of that relationship, there will be a progressive collaborative process of review and consultation within the University community, including alumni, trustees, peers, colleagues, graduate and undergraduate students. Pertinent aims and objectives should include assessment of administrative performance by faculty, staff and trustees. Subsequently, departmental performance should be assessed by students, peers, administrators and alumni; faculty performance should be assessed by departments and students; and students should be assessed by faculty.

The relationship of mutual obligation and accountability is expressed in the diagram below:



Departmental Goals and Their Assessment

A departmental mission statement will provide more specific details on how a specific department intends to fulfill the broader University Educational Mission. It will provide the basis for the undergraduate major and the foundation for graduate study where applicable. Below is a sample statement.

The aim of Department “X” is to encourage the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes in students that will prepare them for active participation in society, the workforce, and the scholarly community. As a distinct academic perspective with close relations in neighboring fields, the aim of the discipline is to instill in students a clear sense of the place, as well as the purpose and limits of the disciplinary imagination. The aim is to challenge students, encourage intellectual curiosity and foster their need to understand and apply disciplinary conventions. Departments and individual faculty members need to develop a common framework for devising explicit aims and objectives so that there is a syntactical and pedagogical articulation between the two.

On completing a concentration in X discipline, students will be able to:

1. State the major principles and tenets of the disciplinary traditions and conventions.
2. Analyze social problems from a number of theoretical and methodological perspectives.
3. Demonstrate their capacity to conduct individual research and demonstrate original thinking.
4. Articulate the place of the discipline in the academic landscape, especially in its relationship to other disciplines.
5. Make explicit connections between theory and its practical applications.
6. Articulate the intellectual history of the discipline, assess its current strengths and weaknesses, and contribute towards its future.

ASSESSMENT

To assess the achievement of these goals, we recommend the use of Departmental Teaching Portfolio. Such a portfolio might include:

1. Explicit statement of departmental mission statement, aims and objectives.
2. Yearly reports by department chairs on the extent to which these have been achieved.
3. Explicit statement of departmental policies regarding teaching loads, number of times faculty teach a course, advising duties, size of classes, “buying off” courses with research grants, etc.
4. Syllabi and faculty reports on each course offered by the department and updated each semester.
5. Examples of written work from students in the senior and graduate seminars.
6. Enrollment trends (by course, major/non-major).

This is a public document, and as such should be presented and maintained in a professional manner for scrutiny by faculty, students, potential faculty and students, administrators, parents, alumni, donors, etc.

For a more complete description of The Teaching Portfolio concept, please refer to the Sheridan Center handbook The Teaching Portfolio which is available at the Center and at The Sheridan Center website.

Individual Course Goals and Their Assessment

The majority of teaching at the University level takes place in specific classes taught by individuals or teams of Faculty members. For this reason, any program for assessment of teaching and learning needs to consider the context of a specific class. Below is a sample statement of individual course aims and objectives, including assessment thereof.

COURSE GOALS

To make teaching effective, faculty must articulate clear aims for their classes and develop effective means to assess whether students have

achieved these objectives. These aims will reflect the particular ways that the course fits into broader department goals as well as the specific demands of the subject matter. Expectations of the students – papers, labs, class discussions or presentations, recall of facts – should directly relate to the aims of the course and the department, and by extension, the broader mission of the University.

Faculty need to clearly articulate these aims to students if students are expected to achieve them. To do so, faculty need to develop syllabi for their classes which list the aims of their classes and explain how assignments will help students achieve these aims. By putting forth in writing reinforcement for specific goals and objectives, as well as their connections to the common goals of the class, faculty members will help foster independent thinking among students. Students should then be aware of their own goals for individual classes and how they can achieve them. (See Appendix C for a model of such a syllabus; also The Sheridan Center handbook *Constructing a Syllabus* available at either the Center or The Sheridan Center website.)

COURSE ASSESSMENT

To assess the extent to which student learning and faculty teaching is effective, a variety of methods are available. Within the confines of a course, faculty members will learn from assignments the extent to which students are meeting the various objectives of the class. In turn, well-designed self-evaluations by students can serve to give them time to reflect on their achievement of course goals and their own personal goals. Finally, written and oral evaluations of the faculty member by students can give faculty the opportunity to see how students perceive the effectiveness of their teaching. Such evaluation forms should also remind the students of the class objectives and, with that in mind, ask them to articulate whether those objectives were met.

Faculty Teaching Portfolios

The fulfillment departmental missions within the University objectives at large assumes that every individual can meet personal and community expectations. In this regard, faculty members need instructive ways to assess the effectiveness of their teaching overall. One method that we think is highly effective is to maintain and update *Teaching Portfolios*. By pulling together a variety of materials which illustrate their teaching in

the classroom and other environments, faculty members have the chance to reflect on what they have accomplished in their teaching and what they would like to achieve in the future. Departments may also decide that Individual Teaching Portfolios may be a useful way for the Department to evaluate the faculty members' effectiveness in teaching. Certainly, a Teaching Portfolio can complement the written materials documenting the research of a faculty member who is being considered for tenure or promotion. (See Appendix B for further details on Teaching Portfolios.)

A Faculty member's *Teaching Portfolio* can include:

1. Statement of teaching philosophy
2. Syllabi for each course taught, including explicit aims and objectives
3. Examples of student work (varying standards)
4. Summary of student evaluations for each course (with sample attached)
5. Self Assessment Reports
6. Written feedback from other sources (e.g. peers, alumni, teaching assistants)
7. Statement of contributions to curriculum development
8. Evidence of having provided teaching assistants (if any) with written feedback
9. Awards, certificates, formal qualifications (if any), professional affiliations, public and university service
10. Teaching publications (if any)

Graduate student Teaching Portfolios may follow the same guidelines and ought to be developed under the guidance of faculty in their departments.

For a more complete description of The Teaching Portfolio concept, please refer to the Sheridan Center handbook The Teaching Portfolio which is available at the Center or The Sheridan Center website.

Appendix A

Scholarship on Instructional Assessment

Michael J. V. Woolcock
February 1995

Sir Thomas More: *You should be a teacher; you'd make a fine teacher.*

Richard Rich: *But even if I was a good teacher, who would know?*

More: *You, your students, God. Not a bad audience that.*

from *A Man For All Seasons*, by Robert Bolt

When the organizational structure of an institution of higher education is indistinguishable from that of a major corporation, the spirit dies.

from *Killing the Spirit*, by Page Smith

AS GOOD ACADEMICS, we would generally agree with King, Keohane and Verba (1994: 15)¹ that in matters of research “... no one cares what we think – the scholarly community only cares what we can demonstrate.” When the issue is teaching effectiveness, however, those same standards of rigor suddenly become a lot more slippery and divisive; irrespective of the level of importance one ascribes to God’s perception of our classroom efforts, teaching too often is regarded as a ‘behind closed doors’ activity which requires little accountability to self and students, let alone colleagues or the public. Yet teaching, especially of undergraduates, is the major source of revenue for colleges and universities, while for graduate students it is an important medium for ensuring a thorough grounding in the fundamentals of one’s discipline, thereby preparing the next generation of scholars to contribute to its advancement. Moreover, in times of tightening fiscal constraints, state legislators, administrators, parents, donors and alumni

1. Gary King, Robert Keohane and Sidney Verba. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific*

alike are calling on faculty to demonstrate the effectiveness of their teaching; schools, departments and faculty that turn a blind eye to these developments risk further erosion of their public credibility or, worse, having draconian and grossly inappropriate standardized measures imposed on them. Demonstrating our teaching effectiveness is morally, pedagogically and economically important; the task is to come up with guidelines and, where possible, concrete procedures that are thorough, comprehensive and themselves grounded in the established literature while remaining flexible, inclusive and sensitive to disciplinary and professorial idiosyncrasies.

Maintaining this necessary tension is needed to prevent excessive bureaucracy and mindless ‘Taylorization’ on the one hand, and loss of professional autonomy on the other. For example, calls for increased measures of teaching effectiveness have led in some circles to the adoption of inadequate procedures used to monitor employee “productivity” in industry. Programs such as Total Quality Management (TQM) and Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) have been flirted with, and have their limited place, but for the most part they have rightly drawn the ire of faculty members who resent having their professional status as educators called into question by outsiders employing measurement devices of dubious merit. Colleges and universities are not factories or businesses; professors properly regard themselves as professionals responsible for their craft (an “applied art,” in the words of one commentator), one that involves a unique exchange between people and the engagement of minds with sophisticated ideas.

At the other extreme the granting of “teaching awards” have proved a popular but expedient way to break the impasse between the need for demonstrating teaching effectiveness and its inherent political and methodological ambiguities. However, these do little to change the institutional context in which teaching occurs, namely the organizational culture which turns a blind eye to the perfunctory and the incompetent while giving token acknowledgment to those brave souls whose efforts often jeopardize their claims to being regarded as ‘serious researchers.’ Similarly, there are many committed and well-intentioned instructors whose labors go unrecognized when only a handful – selected on largely unspecified criteria – are rewarded. The classics scholar William Arrow-smith expresses this plight succinctly when he argues that “at present the

universities are as uncongenial to good teaching as the Mojave Desert to a clutch of Druid priests. If you want to restore a Druid priesthood you cannot do it by offering prizes for Druid-of-the-year. If you want Druids, you have to grow forests. There is no other way of setting about it.”

How can we begin to (re?)grow forests? A college or university’s goal for improving teaching effectiveness should be to establish an *environment* in which good teaching is encouraged, recognized and rewarded, not just by individuals but by departments, where the ‘teaching culture’ is shaped most powerfully (see Massy, Wilger and Colbeck, 1994). This is, to be sure, a difficult objective, and many tough decisions will have to be made on the part of senior administrators and department heads, i.e. those who have the greatest and final say in hiring, tenure and promotion decisions. These tough decisions will be eased somewhat, however, if faculty members and departments can themselves be pro-active in providing tangible evidence regarding their teaching effectiveness, both during the course of the semester and as part of a broader, on-going individual and departmental project. This implies that as the unit of analysis changes from the teacher to the department to the college, so too does the criteria and purpose of assessment (see Ramsden, 1992). Demonstrating teaching effectiveness across these dimensions will be instructive to administrators and parents, and (not insignificantly), influential with potential donors.

Rather than just endorsing the idea of good teaching in principle, faculty, students and administrators alike will be in a stronger position to monitor and improve the quality of teaching on campus if tangible, equitable, valid and reliable indicators of effective teaching can be procured. Incorporating all parties in this process is vital to its success; student evaluations, for example, need to be used as one of several dimensions that together comprise a global assessment of a faculty member’s teaching effectiveness.

I suggest that faculty need to receive two different types of feedback: first, that which can be used on a regular basis to improve the quality of performance, and second, that which can be incorporated into a *Teaching Portfolio*² to be used for hiring, tenure and promotion decisions. There

2. See appendix B below.

will be areas of overlap between these, of course, but there are also important boundaries that need to be maintained to minimize the ‘politicization’ of the evaluation process: feedback from department heads, for example, would be important in the former but ignored in the latter (see Table 1). *Demonstrating to faculty that (i) frequent classroom assessment of students’ progress towards explicitly articulated course objectives and (ii) measures of their overall teaching effectiveness are strategically inter-related processes is central to developing a culture in which good teaching can be (and is) recognized and rewarded.* Elements of a faculty member’s Teaching Portfolio which emerges from this should be combined with that of other faculty members as part of an ongoing *departmental* Teaching Portfolio which monitors the extent to which explicitly stated departmental aims and objectives are being achieved.

Following Rosenau (1987) and Ramsden (1992), I offer the following matrix as a common grounding for assessing teaching effectiveness across disciplines. Individual departments would of course determine the details of what specific issues were covered in each cell, but as a guide to thinking about monitoring teaching effectiveness I think it is quite helpful. I think our group can make a significant contribution if we focus our attention on spelling out how each of these aspects can be most effectively and appropriately realized. This will be difficult task, but as Page Smith correctly puts it, “no professional vulnerability, no real teaching.”

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- See also the *Journal of Research in Higher Education* and related professional and popular publications.

** Highly recommended general reading

Sources of Feedback for Demonstrating Teaching and Learning Effectiveness

Teaching Elements	Students ³	Peers	Self	Department Chairs ⁴	Teaching Assistants	Teaching Center
Content	Alumni reports	Peer review of syllabi	Self report ⁵	Interview	Written assessment	
Method (process)	Survey	Peer review of syllabi	Self report	Interview Portfolio assessment	Written assessment	Observation
Delivery (communication)	Survey	Peer Observation	Self report		Written assessment	Observation Videotape
Attitude (enthusiasm, commitment)	Survey	Peer review	Self report	Interview	Written assessment	
Management (organization)	Survey	Portfolio assessment	Self report	Portfolio assessment	Written assessment	Portfolio assessment
Learning (attainment of objectives)	Grades, Interviews, Surveys		Grades, weekly/ self reports	Examples of student work	Written assessment	

Adapted from *Rosenau (1987)*

3. Student surveys are tailored to each discipline's and each course's needs, though ideally it should draw on a common framework and "bank" of questions across the university. Feedback from student publications such as *The Critical Review* should not be used for tenure and promotion decisions.

4. Formal feedback from Department Chair is not to be used in tenure and promotion decisions.

5. Self reports are compiled on the basis of regular feedback procedures implemented during the course of the semester (see Angelo and Cross, 1993).

Appendix B

The Teaching Portfolio*

Hannelore Rodriguez-Farrar, History of Art and Architecture

DEFINITION

The Teaching Portfolio is a description of your major teaching strengths and achievements. It contains documents which collectively suggest the scope and quality of your teaching performance. It is to teaching what lists of publications, grants and honors are to research and scholarship.

USES

Teaching Portfolios are used in three basic ways: self-assessment, personnel decisions, and teaching awards/recognitions. As a method of self assessment, the portfolio can be created for a specific course one teaches regularly in order to improve the delivery of the syllabus, transform course content and develop new teaching methods or strategies. In many personnel offices, the portfolio has become a mandated aspect for contract renewal. Specific items are requested of all faculty in order to streamline the administration of all the paperwork. Finally, for teaching awards within departments, disciplines and institutions, teaching portfolios provide committees with a basis for evaluation.

Ultimately, your Teaching Portfolio will improve your teaching performance because it allows you to critically evaluate your personal teaching activities. It also allows you to organize your teaching priorities. In forcing you to consider *how* you teach rather than *what* you teach, portfolios provide a place to reconsider teaching strategies. Finally, teaching portfolios allows you to plan for your future teaching activities.

**For a more complete description of The Teaching Portfolio concept, please refer to the Sheridan Center handbook The Teaching Portfolio which is available from the Center or The Sheridan Center website.*

PREPARATION OF A TEACHING PORTFOLIO

Portfolios should be created collaboratively with students, colleagues, peers, department chairs and administrators. The following questions will help you begin the process of creating your Teaching Portfolio. These are the most commonly mandated items when personnel offices require Teaching Portfolios of instructors.

- *Reflective Statement* What is your philosophy of teaching? How do you teach? Why do you teach the way you teach? How are these ideas consistent with the way you have constructed your courses?
- *Gather Evaluations* What kinds of evaluations (self, student, peer, departmental, etc.) do you have? Explain their context. How would you summarize them? Include some examples.
- *Course Material* Gather the syllabi, sample exams, and other related materials. What were the goals and objectives of your courses? How did you participate in accomplishing the goals and objects of those course? To what extent do your course goals and objects intersect with departmental or university goals? Have you constructed courses for the future – what are their goals and objectives?
- *Efforts to Improve Your Teaching* Did you participate in any teaching seminars to improve your teaching skills? Have you ever had peer reviews? Have you published any articles related to teaching in your discipline? Assemble a list of faculty evaluations and references.
- *Miscellaneous* Do you have any teaching awards or honors? Did you direct any undergraduate/graduate theses? Do you have a video tape of your teaching? Do you do any kind of advising?

Some possible items to consider incorporating into your portfolio could be:

Personal Material

- statement of teaching responsibilities, including specific courses, and a brief description of the way each course was taught
- personal teaching philosophy, strategies and objectives

- personal teaching goals for next 5 years
- representative course syllabi (include why courses constructed this way)
- description of steps taken to evaluate and improve one's teaching
- curricular revisions – new course projects, materials course assignments, etc.
- self evaluation – include an explanation of any contradictory or unclear documents or materials in the Teaching Portfolio
- publications on teaching – any editing, contributions etc.
- information on direction/supervision of honors, grad theses and research group activities

Materials From Others

- statements from colleagues who have observed your teaching
- statements from colleagues who have witnessed out-of-class activities such as instructional and curricular development and instructional research
- student and course evaluations which show improvements in effectiveness
- department statements on your teaching
- performance reviews as a faculty advisor
- honors, awards, and other recognition
- invitations from other schools to demonstrate effective teaching
- participation in teaching development within your discipline
- documentation of teaching development at The Sheridan Center or other teaching centers
- teaching research
- videotape of your teaching

Products of Good Teaching

- student scores on standardized tests
- student essays, creative work, lab books, publications, course-related work
- summary of the effect your courses on student career choices or help given by you to secure student employment
- record of students who succeed to advanced courses in discipline
- statements from alumni
- examples of graded student essays showing excellent, average and poor work along with your comments as to why they were so graded

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Appendix C

A Sample Course Syllabus*

Michael J.V. Woolcock (Sociology)

Utopia University
Department of X
Place
Date

Handout #1
Course Outline

Course Title

Instructor:

Office:

Office Hours:

Phone:

E-Mail:

Teaching Assistant:

Office:

Office Hours:

Phone:

E-Mail:

COURSE DESCRIPTION

As per the course announcement bulletin. This is an important first statement about what the course will cover; ensuring that the wording is accurate and precise helps to attract students who are genuinely interested in your class (and, conversely, dissuade those who are not).

PREAMBLE

Rationale; where the course “fits” in the department curriculum and/or disciplinary context; mutual expectations; your philosophy of teaching and learning; course idiosyncrasies; pre-requisites; etc.

AIMS

Broad statements of what you hope students will achieve as a result of

**This sample syllabus is available at the Center or The Sheridan Center website. It is also available electronically from the Center by e-mail.*

taking your class. It is through achieving course objectives (below) that students realize these aims.

e.g. This course has three specific aims: (1) to introduce students to the range of research methods available to X discipline; (2) to instill the habit of thinking first about asking good questions and then deciding upon the methodology that is likely to be the most feasible and fruitful; and (3) to encourage the development of analytical skills that enable you to evaluate the quality of your own and other scholars' research.

OBJECTIVES

These objectives are the center-piece of your course outline, since everything else (assessment, readings, content, modes of instruction) is essentially shaped by them. Even though they occupy a mere five or six lines on your final document you should expect to spend several hours deliberating over what these should be.

On completion of this course, students should be able to:

analyze	appreciate	classify	collaborate	compare	compute
contrast	define	demonstrate	direct	derive	designate
discuss	display	evaluate	explain	identify	infer
integrate	interpret	justify	list	name	organize
outline	report	respond	solicit	state	synthesize

- e.g.,
1. **Develop** an interesting and important research question.
 2. **Demonstrate** a basic level of competence in the use of a variety of social research methods.
 3. **Discuss** the process of developing an argument in the social sciences.
 4. **Analyze** and evaluate the quality of research of other scholars in terms of its methodological rigor.
 5. **Outline** a research proposal that documents how a given research question might be addressed.

ASSESSMENT

List various items and their respective weightings. Note that you should be assessing the extent to which students have achieved course objectives.

A second document (Handout #2) should be produced outlining (i) what readings are to be done by when, along with leading discussion questions; (ii) what form assessment will take; (iii) how assessment will

be graded and by whom, (iv) where and when it is to be submitted (I have found producing a detachable course calendar a useful strategy in this regard); (v) your late policy; (vi) grievance procedures; (vii) arrangements for those with learning disabilities; (viii) other.

COURSE OVERVIEW

It is helpful to think in terms of a book or article: include an introduction, body, and conclusion. Give comprehensive titles to each part and lecture (c.f. 'chapters'). Preparing a short three-line summary of each lecture is also useful, both in the planning stages (for instructors) and in helping students prepare for class.

Part I: *X Discipline as Method, Vocation, and a Way of Seeing*

Lecture 1: Introduction: the virtues and vices of X discipline

Lecture 2: Thinking methodologically: the logic of X discipline

Part II: *Etc.*

Lecture 3: *Etc.*

READING AND AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIAL

Include only required texts in course outline (detailed reading list goes in Handout #2). State where these texts can be purchased, and list approximate costs. Identify those texts that are on reserve at the library.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Class size constraints; writing fellows . . .

Try to finish on a lighter note, e.g. "I'm looking forward to an interesting and mutually rewarding semester!"

The Harriet W. Sheridan Center for Teaching and Learning

IN 1987 HARRIET W. SHERIDAN, the late Dean of the College at Brown University, founded the Center as the Center for the Advancement of College Teaching (CACT). Her goal was to establish an interdisciplinary forum dedicated to improving the quality of undergraduate teaching and learning at Brown. The Center is open to faculty, graduate students, undergraduates and administrators, and through its activities intends to foster collegial relations among these various constituencies on campus.

The Sheridan Center provides a forum for teaching issues through the Sheridan Teaching Seminar, a series of plenaries and workshops for faculty and graduate students, which address a variety of topics concerning reflective teaching practice throughout the year. There is an Orientation for all new Teaching Assistants in the fall and graduate students may enroll in the Teaching Certificate Program. The Teaching Certificate becomes an important part of their Teaching Portfolio when they graduate. The Certificate prepares graduate students for their future role as responsible faculty, members of the university community, mentors and advisors. It also affords graduate students an opportunity to experiment with different modes of teaching, and establish their goals as teachers at the outset of their professional careers.

The Sheridan Center also works with faculty in inter- and interdisciplinary seminars to explore teaching issues and improvement. Departmental seminars are an important means for fostering an exchange of ideas about teaching within a discipline and offer a collegial forum for both faculty and graduate TAs. Both faculty and graduate TAs are especially encouraged to use the Center's Individual Teaching Consultation (ITC) service.

The Center publishes a "The Teaching Exchange" newsletter twice a year. Center handbooks include *Constructing a Syllabus*, *The Teaching*

Portfolio Handbook, Teaching as Persuasive Communication, Instructional Assessment in Higher Education (Teaching to Variation in Learning,) and *Teaching at Brown* for the use by the entire Brown teaching community. The Center videotape *Effective Teaching for Dyslexic/All College Students* is distributed nationally.

If you want help with, need inspiration for, or just want to talk about your teaching, come to the Center. The Sheridan Center is presently located on the 3rd floor of the Graduate Center (telephone: 863-1219; Sheridan_Center@Brown.edu). Please ask for a copy of *Services for Faculty, Graduate and Undergraduate Teaching Assistants* for a fuller account of Center resources.