LS 495: Preparation for College-Level Teaching in the Life Sciences

Class Time: Tuesdays from 4-5:50 pm
Location: Haines Hall A44
CCLE course website: https://ccle.ucla.edu/course/view/19S-LIFESCI495-1

Welcome to Our Course

This 495 TA training course is designed for graduate students who are teaching assistants (TAs) in the Life Sciences Core Education Department (LS Core). This course is to be taken concurrently with the term in which you are teaching for the first time in the LS Core. The pedagogical knowledge, instructional methodologies, and peer observation strategies covered in this course are suitable for teaching in large enrollment undergraduate courses with secondary sections overseen by TAs (i.e., discussion sections, laboratory sections, computational laboratory sections). With an emphasis on creating inclusive learning environments for our students, topics in this course will include active learning, peer instruction and other collaborative or group activities, reflective teaching models, assessment and course design approaches that promote transparency and equity in the classroom. This course also provides resources to support your lifelong learning and ongoing professional development as a teacher, a scientist, and a science communicator. By the end of this course, you will have observed and collected a portfolio of instructional materials and approaches to apply in your own courses now as a TA and in your future career. You should also leave with knowledge about the literature supporting the merits of student-centered teaching practices as a means to promote the academic success and persistence of all UCLA undergraduate students.

Pre- or Co-requisites for Our Course

(1) LS Core TAs only: Please review the TA Information and Expectations booklet provided by the LS Core staff. It contains resources and other information about the fundamentals of and logistics concerning your TA experience in the LS Core. If you did not receive a copy of these materials, please contact our LS Core SAO, Lily Yanez (lyanez@lifesci.ucla.edu).

(2) All TAs: By the end of the term, please complete any three OID TA Training Workshops. The schedule for the workshops can be found here. If you attended the OID TA Conference (Sept. 24-25, 2018) and completed three workshops then, please email us the title, date, and time for each workshop so we can verify your attendance with OID.

Given the limited availability of the OID TA training workshops, we'd like to offer you some alternative options for completing this course requirement:
• **Disabilities and Inclusive Design Training** offered through UCLA's Office of Information Technology, Disabilities, and Computer Program. For more information about each workshop and to register click [here](#). All events are available via Zoom if you can't attend them in person.

• **CIRTL Network Online Training Courses & Workshops** on the [CIRTL@UCLA website](#). Register for the CIRTL network [here](#).

If you identify other opportunities for training related to your teaching (in person or online), please email us so we can verify the event and also alert the entire class of the opportunity.

(3) All TAs: Enroll in [course 375, Teaching Apprentice Practicum](#), to earn credit for your TA-ship and have it documented on your UCLA transcript. Please enroll in the 375 course corresponding to the instructor for the course in which you have been assigned a TA. If you TA multiple quarters, you need to enroll in this course every term.

### About Our Instructors

We have a teaching team collaborating in the design and facilitation of this course. We will take turns leading instruction each week. Here is the team!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Affiliation</th>
<th>Office</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Erin Sanders O'Leary, Ph.D.</td>
<td>Director, Center for Education Innovation &amp; Learning in the Sciences (CEILS); Adjunct Associate Professor, Dept. of Microbiology, Immunology, &amp; Molecular Genetics (MIMG); Academic Administrator, Life Sciences Core Education Dept.</td>
<td>Hershey Hall 228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel Kennison, M.S.W., Ph.D.</td>
<td>Associate Director for Professional Development and Student Engagement, CEILS; Program Coordinator, Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning (CIRTL); Academic Administrator, Life Sciences Core Education Dept.</td>
<td>Hershey Hall 226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jess Gregg, M.A., Ed.M.</td>
<td>Associate Director for Educational Development, CEILS</td>
<td>Hershey Hall 222B</td>
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### Communicating with the Instructional Team

**Office Hours:** Please contact the relevant instructor via email to schedule an appointment. We will coordinate with you to schedule a time that works for us both.

**Communication via Online Discussion Forum on CCLE:** If you have questions about the course, assignments, due dates, or other concerns (including notifying instructors of anticipated absences), please do the following:
1. Check the syllabus and previous posts on CCLE for possible answers to your question(s).
2. Post your question *publicly* on CCLE if it is not a private issue so others can benefit from the answer provided by the instructional team.
3. If the first two options aren’t helpful in addressing your particular question or concern, please send the relevant instructor a private email message.

**Our Inclusive Learning Environment**

UCLA values diversity and inclusion. We expect all members of this class to contribute to a respectful, welcoming, and inclusive environment for every other member of our class. If there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your inclusion, engagement, accurate assessment or achievement, please notify us as soon as possible. Students with a disability are also welcome to contact the Center for Accessible Education (CAE) at (310) 825-1501 or in person at Murphy Hall A255 to discuss a range of options to removing barriers in the course, including accommodations.

Other resources supporting UCLA graduate students include the Graduate Student Resource Center (http://gsrc.ucla.edu/), the Bruin Resource Center (http://www.brc.ucla.edu/), the Career Center (http://www.career.ucla.edu/), and CareerHub, a professional development resource to which you can subscribe and get notifications of campus events (http://grad.ucla.edu/careerhub/). We encourage you to explore the variety of services these campus centers provide and also let us know of other resources we could share with your graduate student peers at UCLA.

Campus resources designed to support your teaching development include:

- **Annual Campuswide TA Conference** (http://oid.ucla.edu/content/ta-conference), organized by UCLA’s Office of Instructional Development (OID) and designed to provide pedagogical training and resource information for both new and continuing TAs.
- **The Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching, and Learning** (cirtl.net). UCLA is a member of CIRTL and supports a local learning community of graduate students and postdocs interested in learning more about effective teaching strategies and the research that supports them. More information about our local CIRTL@UCLA programming can be found on UCLA’s Center for Education Innovation & Learning in the Sciences (CEILS) website (https://ceils.ucla.edu/cirtl-at-ucla/).
- **UC Berkeley Teaching Guide** (http://gsi.berkeley.edu/teachingguide/tghome.html), which is designed to support graduate student TAs at various stages during their teaching appointments. Note that some of the context for resources is specific to UC Berkeley.
- **Stanford Teaching Commons** provides practical resources for how to be an effective TA (https://teachingcommons.stanford.edu/ta-support/being-ta). Some of the context for these resources is specific to Stanford but the principles apply to UCLA classrooms.

We urge you to explore these resources, and also let us know of other teaching development materials you learn about that we could share with our class.
What You will Learn in this Course

Foundational Knowledge: You will acquire foundational knowledge about learning theory, course design, and evidenced-based teaching techniques in order to foster an inclusive learning environment.

Upon completion of this course, you will be able to:

- **Discuss** various theories on how learning works and what makes teaching effective.
  - **Describe** the four principles of learning.
  - **Distinguish** between growth and fixed mindset.
- **Examine** the evidence from discipline-based education research (DBER) that support use of specific teaching practices and learning strategies.
- **Describe** the process of backwards design and its role in aligning learning outcomes with assessments and class activities.
- **Recognize** inequities in the classroom and barriers to inclusivity such as competition, stereotype threat, and implicit bias.
- **Describe** the instrumental role of teaching assistants (TAs) at UCLA in facilitating student learning and building inclusive classrooms.
- **Discuss** the benefits and features of learning communities.
- **Differentiate** between constructive and destructive feedback.

Application: You will apply new knowledge of evidence-based teaching techniques through deliberate practice informed by multiple feedback opportunities.

Upon completion of this course, you will be able to:

- **Develop** and **distribute** learning community guidelines for your class that promote the inclusion of diverse perspectives in the classroom.
- **Proactively address** common challenges that arise during TAships, such as grading policies, instructor interactions, and academic integrity, in a mindful and inclusive manner.
- **Implement** teaching skills that address classroom inequities through active learning and group activities such as wait-time, think-pair-share, stretch it, and other collaborative techniques.
- **Provide** a teaching strategy that puts the four principles of learning and attention to growth mindset into action for your course.
- **Differentiate** between formative and summative assessment strategies and how they support student learning by providing opportunities for interaction, practice, and feedback.
- **Evaluate** the alignment of specific classroom activities and exam questions with course learning outcomes.
- **Describe** differences between warm, cool and hard feedback and **apply** them when conducting observations of peers.
- **Practice** providing feedback using the observation worksheet.
**Integration:** You will integrate your learning from this course to improve other aspects of your graduate education and support your overall professional development as a scientist.

Upon completion of this course, you will be able to:

- **Identify** a variety of pedagogical techniques that can be employed to achieve learning outcomes.
- **Recognize** that you are learning transferable skills such as scientific reasoning, making evidence-based teaching decisions, deliberate and reflective practice, and communicating effectively.
- **Describe** the value of learning communities in a variety of settings, including a classroom, among graduate students, and in research.

**Human Dimension:** You will develop new insights and awareness about your own perspectives and experiences and how these impact your interactions within the UCLA community and society.

Upon completion of this course, you will be able to:

- **Recognize** some of your own implicit biases in order to minimize negative impacts on students and peers.
- **Identify** characteristics of your personality that influence how you interact in a group setting, thus strengthening your ability to facilitate group work with diverse individuals.
- **Employ** reflective practice when justifying own choices for teaching.
- **Articulate** how TAs are able to foster inclusive student experiences in the classroom to support all students.

**Caring:** You will reflect on your potential to have a large positive impact on student success in your role as a TA at UCLA.

Upon completion of this course, you will be able to:

- **Reflect** on systemic biases and its disproportionate effect on student learning.
- **Communicate** the value of using student-centered instructional strategies to address disparities in STEM education.
- **Explain** the growing importance of skilled TAs as crucial educators and facilitators for an increasingly diverse student body at UCLA.

**Learning How to Learn (Metacognition):** You will explore and reflect on which strategies for teaching, learning, and communication are most effective for you and for your students.

Upon completion of this course, you will be able to:
- Prompt students to think about practices that are effective for their learning in and out of the classroom.
- Apply current research on learning and cognition to your own practice.
- Develop reflective practices that allow you to assess and become more aware of the strengths and weaknesses of your own teaching.
- Reflect on feedback given to you about your teaching.
- Recognize the broad application of giving feedback in your teaching and career.
- Explore opportunities by which to expand your training in teaching development and practice inclusive teaching strategies.

## Weekly Schedule

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<th>WEEK 1: ESTABLISHING OUR LEARNING COMMUNITY &amp; TEACHING IDENTITY</th>
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### WEEK 2: HOW STUDENTS LEARN

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<th>Date</th>
<th>April 9, 2019</th>
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| **Pre-Class Assignments** | **Readings:**  
Canning *et al.* (2019) *STEM faculty who believe ability is fixed have larger racial achievement gaps and inspire less student motivation in their classes*. *Sci. Adv.* 5: eaau4734. |  
| **In-class Topics & Activities** | Core Principles of Learning (first three - we do 4th principle in week 5)  
- Prior Knowledge  
- Organization of Knowledge  
- Motivation (Fixed vs. Growth Mindset)  
How Motivation Drives Student Engagement & Success in STEM  
Developing a Teaching Philosophy - Brainstorming Your Ideas on Teaching |  
| **Post-Class Assignments** | **CCLE Assignment**  
Submit the first draft of your teaching philosophy.  
**Classroom Observation Project #1:**  
Recording of TA discussion sections during weeks 2-4  
**Lesson Planning Project:**  
Submit your CONTEXT for your lesson plan. |

**Reading Quiz:**
(posted on CCLE; responses due before week 4 class meeting)

| In-class Topics & Activities | A Toolkit for Active Learning  
Inquiry-based Activities for Labs  
Practice Perfect! |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Post-Class Assignments       | **CCLE Discussion Forum (Teaching Reflection)**  
Pick 1-2 active learning strategies that you want to try. Briefly explain your choice (i.e. consider what you want students to be able to do in a class and how this technique will help demonstrate what they have learned)  
**Ongoing Classroom Observation Project #1:**  
Recording of TA discussion sections during weeks 2-4  
**Lesson Planning Project:**  
Submit your ACTIVITIES (draft 1) for your lesson plan (focus on active learning strategies). |

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**WEEK 4: EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENTING GROUP WORK TO FOSTER COLLABORATION**

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<th>Date</th>
<th>April 23, 2019</th>
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| **Pre-Class Assignments** | **Readings:**  
**Pre-Class Reading Reflection:**  
Post your responses to questions in CCLE discussion forum.  
**Optional Readings:**  
*Student Group Work in Educational Settings* by Carl Wieman *et al.* (2010)  
| **In-class Topics & Activities** | Structuring & Facilitating Effective Group Work  
Role of Learning Assistants in Collaborative Instruction |
**Post-Class Assignments**

CCLE Discussion Forum (Teaching Reflection)
Review the *Evidence-Based Teaching Guide to Group Work* and consider
(1) What steps would you take to increase structured group work and
collaborative instruction in your sections whether you are teaching now or
next term? (2) Which of these strategies would you like to learn more about
and why?

**Ongoing Classroom Observation Project #1:**
Recording of TA discussion sections during weeks 2-4

**Lesson Planning Project:**
Submit your ACTIVITIES (draft 2) for your lesson plan (add collaborative
learning strategies).

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### WEEK 5: FEEDBACK & REFLECTIVE TEACHING

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<th>Date</th>
<th>April 30, 2019</th>
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<td>Pre-Class Assignments</td>
<td>No reading assignment this week.</td>
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| In-class Topics & Activities | Core Principles of Learning (last one)
  ➔ Practice & Feedback
  Becoming a Reflective Teacher: What We Say Is Not Always What We Do
  Giving Constructive Feedback Using an Observation Instrument
  Role for the Mid-Quarter Questionnaire in Obtaining Formative Feedback |
| Post-Class Assignments | Complete the CCLE mid-quarter evaluation form for our class. 
  Complete Classroom Observation Project #1:
  Edit/upload 5-7 min video clip to your Google drive folder.
  Upload context description for your video to same folder. 
  Begin Classroom Observation Project #2:
  Work with your partner to schedule your second video recording for
  classroom observation project during weeks 6-8. |

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### WEEK 6: PRACTICING PEER FEEDBACK

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<th>Date</th>
<th>May 7, 2019</th>
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| Pre-Class Assignments | No reading assignment this week. 
  (Reminder: Bring earbuds/headphones and adapter) |
### In-class Topics & Activities

Practice Giving Constructive Feedback to Your Peers
- Write a brief reflection on the observation process and the feedback received.

### Post-Class Assignments

**CCLE Assignments**
Write a brief reflection on the observation/feedback process.

**Classroom Observation Project #2:**
Apply your feedback from first observation to your Teaching Implementation Plan for the second observation (what will you change? what will you try differently? why?)

**Lesson Planning Project:**
Incorporate ideas from the group discussion during the first peer observation and feedback session into your revised lesson plan (due week 9).

**Mid-quarter Student Feedback Activity**
Conduct mid-quarter evaluation in your discussion or lab section; collect & reflect on student feedback. If you are not teaching, draft a mid-quarter survey and submit to CCLE.

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### WEEK 7 (ONLINE): BACKWARD DESIGN & STRATEGIES FOR EFFECTIVE ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING via Zoom

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<th>Date</th>
<th>May 14, 2019</th>
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| **Pre-Class Assignments** | **Readings:**


  **Pre-Class Reading Reflection:**

  Post your responses to questions in CCLE discussion forum.

  **Optional Readings:**


| **In-class Topics & Activities** | Modeling How to Respond to Student Feedback

  Summative and Formative Assessment of Student Learning

  Inclusive Grading Recommendations

  Using Backward Course Design to Align Scientific Teaching Pillars

  Bloom’s Taxonomy - A Tool for Writing Questions & Checking Alignment |
### Post-Class Assignments

**Classroom Observation Project #2:**
Recording of TA discussion sections during weeks 6-8  
**Lesson Planning Project:**
Submit your OUTCOMES and ASSESSMENTS for your lesson plan.

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### WEEK 8: USING INCLUSIVE TEACHING PRACTICES TO OVERCOME BARRIERS TO LEARNING

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<th>Date</th>
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**Reminder to take Implicit Association Test (IAT):** Visit *Project Implicit* website and complete 2-3 tests prior to class (choose tests based on your interest)  
https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/selectatest.html |
| In-class Topics & Activities | Why Diversity & Inclusion Matters in Teaching?  
Differentiating Equity from Equality  
Barriers to Learning (Implicit Bias, Microaggressions, Identity Threat)  
Inclusive Teaching Strategies |
| Post-Class Assignments | **Classroom Observation Project #2:** Edit/upload 5-7 min video clip to your Google drive folder. Update and then upload context description for your video to same folder.  
**Lesson Planning Project:** Submit your INCLUSIVE TEACHING strategies for your lesson plan. |

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### WEEK 9: PRACTICING PEER FEEDBACK

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<th>Date</th>
<th>May 28, 2019</th>
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| Pre-Class Assignments | No reading assignment this week.  
(Reminder: Bring earbuds/headphones and adapter) |
| In-class Topics & Activities | Practice Giving Constructive Feedback to Your Peers |
Write a brief reflection on the observation process and the feedback received. How does it compare to the first time? What did you gain from this iterative experience?

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<th>Post-Class Assignments</th>
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| **Complete Classroom Observation Project #2:** Upload to CCLE a written reflection on the second peer observation/feedback process.  
**Complete Lesson Planning Project:** Upload your revised and complete Lesson Plan to CCLE. |

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**WEEK 10: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR TAs: WHERE TO GO FROM HERE?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>June 4, 2019</th>
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<td>Pre-Class Assignments</td>
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<th>In-class Topics &amp; Activities</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>POST-CLASS SURVEY</strong></td>
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| Structure and Critical Elements of a Teaching Philosophy  
STEM Careers: Revisiting your Professional Identity  
Introduction to CIRTL Learning Community  
  - **Register for the CIRTL@UCLA via CNC website**  
Reflecting on the Quarter |

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<th>Post-Class Assignments</th>
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<td><strong>CCLE Assignment</strong></td>
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| Submit a final draft of your teaching philosophy (due June 11, 2019).  
**LS495 COURSE EVALUATIONS** |
How Your Learning Will Be Assessed

Grading Structure:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class activity</th>
<th>% of total points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participation in weekly class meetings</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<td>Completion of course assignments:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weekly Pre-Class and Post-Class Assignments</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peer Observation &amp; Feedback or Lesson Planning Projects (2)</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching Philosophy (draft 1)</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching Philosophy (final)</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Completion of Pre- and Co-Requisites</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<td>Completion of Pre-Survey and Post-Survey</td>
<td>5%</td>
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Total % points possible: 100%

Required for passing: ≥ 70%

LS 495 is a 2-credit course. All grades in this course are assigned as satisfactory (S) or unsatisfactory (U). As long as you earn at least 70% of the total possible points (including completion of all pre- and co-requisites), then you will receive a passing grade.

Participation in weekly class meetings, communication with instructors, and completion of course assignments is required as follows:

- Participation in all class meetings during the quarter (one absence is permitted as long as you let the instructors know in advance; some form of make-up work may be required; please inquire with your instructors)
- Completion of all pre-class and post-class assignments
- Completion of peer teaching observation and feedback or lesson planning projects
- Completion of Teaching Philosophy (due June 11, 2019)
- Completion of the pre- and co-requisites for this course.
- Completion of pre-survey (given week 0/1) and post-survey (given week 10).

The course readings, activities, and assignments have been carefully curated and selected to support you as a TA in the LS Core. We expect you to fully engage in class activities as well as complete all assignments including readings, pre-class and post-class assignments, and online (CCLE) discussion posts. We also expect you to apply critical thinking and provide constructive feedback in discussions with your peers. You can expect us to provide you resources, support in your teaching development as a TA, and constructive feedback on your teaching experiences.

We appreciate that sometimes extenuating circumstances arise that may impact your ability to participate in our course. Such cases are subject to our approval, and you will be required to provide verifiable documentation to establish the basis of your absence. Please communicate with us immediately if you miss a class meeting, are unable to complete an assignment on time, or experience any other challenges that impact your full participation in course activities. Please
also let us know of any anticipated absences this quarter, also subject to our approval (i.e. religious observance), prior to Friday of week 1 (April 5, 2019). We hold our undergraduate students accountable in similar ways, so we aim to model these expectations in our 495 course.

**Guidelines for Peer Observation**

During this course you will observe a peer and provide feedback on their teaching twice during the quarter. Video recording for those TAs concurrently teaching this quarter should be scheduled such that the first one occurs during weeks 2-4 (in preparation for feedback session during class week 6) and the second one occurs during weeks 6-8 (in preparation for feedback session during class week 9). Those who are not teaching this quarter may help with the video recording. **It is crucial that everyone attend class week 6 (May 7th) and week 9 (May 28th) to participate in the group feedback sessions that will occur during class; this activity is worth a total of 15% of your grade for the two sessions and cannot be made up outside of class.**

For the first video recording, you will record a total of one hour of your teaching. For the second video, you will record up to 30 minutes of your teaching. You may record using your smartphone or using the webcam on your laptop. If the storage capacity of your phone or computer is not adequate for a large video file, we can loan you a video camera for this project; please contact Dr. Kennison for instructions to sign out and borrow the camera.

You will select a 5-7 minute clip from each of these two videos to upload to a shared Google drive folder by the designated due date. To edit your videos, try software such as iMovie, Windows Movie Maker, Quicktime, Open Shot ([https://www.openshot.org/](https://www.openshot.org/)), or Camtasia (not free). Alternatively, you can upload your full video file to YouTube and provide the link to your video file, specifying the start time and stop time of the clip you wish your group to view.

If you have technical problems or concerns, please let one of us know well in advance of your recording sessions. Web resources available to provide instructions for recording videos using a webcam: [https://www.wikihow.com/Record-from-a-Webcam](https://www.wikihow.com/Record-from-a-Webcam).

**Guidelines for Lesson Planning**

For those TAs who do not have a teaching assignment this quarter, you will still participate in the observation and feedback sessions during weeks 6 and 9 (and may also volunteer to video record a peer during their class). Since you will not be video recorded yourselves, you will instead create a lesson plan for a hypothetical class session, incorporating the elements of course design and inclusive teaching that we discuss throughout our class. Detailed guidelines are provided on our CCLE course site (see week 1). **Draft components of your lesson plan will be weekly (as noted in the schedule above).** You will reflect on the overall peer observation process that occurs during class and incorporate ideas from the group discussion into a **revised and complete lesson plan due week 10 (June 4th).**