

## ENGL 350. Teaching Colloquium

Harvard University

Seminar One: "What Kind of Teacher do You Want to Be?"; The First Day of Class

### Warm-up Exercise:

- write down the name of one of your favorite teachers, then make a list of five adjectives to describe their teaching person and/or their approach in the classroom

### Seminar Plan:

- introductions
- going over the syllabus
- thinking about kinds of teachers
- sharing hopes and fears
- practice teaching demonstration: Pedagogy Fellow

### Introductions:

- name, general research area and advisors; course in which you're a TF this semester
- go over warm-up exercise

### Going over Teaching Colloquium Syllabus:

- introduction to Pedagogy Fellow and their role
- course meetings and times; schedule
- purpose: to focus on teaching and some aspects of professional development that overlap with teaching (teaching statements, for example)
- meant to be relatively loose in structure to cater to the needs of TFs, minimal preparation required (except to support your teaching)
- assignments as we go, along with teaching demos
  - for teaching demos, sign up in Google Docs; depending on the size of the cohort, present twice over the course of the semester, once earlier in the term, once later
  - about 20 minutes of a lesson plan (can be a specific activity or more open-ended), and the other participants will all play undergraduates
  - the demonstration will be followed by ~10 minutes of meta discussion

### Kinds of Teachers:

- what kinds of teachers are there?
- what makes a bad teacher?
- what makes a good teacher?

### Hopes and Fears:

- write down hopes and fears; share with the seminar and discuss
- where in our syllabus can we address some of these issues? is anything missing that we should add?

BREAK

### The First Day of Class:

- what are some icebreakers/introductory strategies for approaching the first day of a class and eliciting interaction among the students?
- possible ideas to discuss:
  - names: write them down as they go around the table; say their names back to them
  - make sure everyone talks at least once about the material in some way
  - how to help students engage with each other instead of you: look at other students, not only the student talking; look away or elsewhere to encourage students to interact with one another
  - while going over the syllabus, don't read every bit of it; you can address each element as you come to it during the term
  - make sure to invite questions
  - set expectations and learning objectives that they will be able to achieve by the end of the course

### Teaching Demo:

- first practice demonstration, modeled by the Pedagogy Fellow
  - you might deliver an example of an exercise from the *Pocket Instructor*, or else something that was effective from a class you've taught/are currently teaching
- discuss the demo broadly, what worked, what didn't, what could be improved, what strategies are transferable to other exercises/teaching contexts

### For Next Time:

- create a section syllabus (schedule not required, but include learning objectives and notes about class conduct), and bring the syllabus for the whole course you're TFin
- demos: confirm with the first presenter that they're ready for their teaching demo

ENGL 350. Teaching Colloquium  
Harvard University  
Seminar Two: "Reading a Syllabus"

Warm-up Exercise:

- active learning exercise (think-pair-share): what are some functions for a syllabus?

Seminar Plan:

- syllabus general principles
- look at the syllabuses for your classes
- look at the section syllabuses you've put together

Roadmap/Logistics:

- continue scheduling teaching demos for the remainder of the semester

Reflection on Last Seminar Meeting:

- kinds of teachers, reiterate the *variety* of teachers
- discussion of hopes and fears
- tips for the first day of class
- PF teaching demo
- any other questions or issues that the TFs brought up

Space for Any Issues or Questions that have Arisen during the Past Week

Discuss General Principles of the Syllabus:

- share from warm-up exercise: what are some functions for a syllabus?
- what information must be in a syllabus
  - contact info
  - meeting info
  - major assignments
  - schedule of readings
  - expectations
  - requires policies
- what can be helpful in a syllabus?
  - course narrative
  - rubrics for general grading
- what to be wary about in a syllabus
  - potential for long length that detracts from the information
  - need for some flexibility over the course of the semester

Look at Class Syllabuses:

- what's successful about them?
- what's less helpful or what obfuscates the necessary information?
- what would you steal from them?

Look at Prepared Section Syllabuses:

- workshop approaches, methods of conveying information, and what's important to communicate to students in a section

BREAK

Framing Learning Objectives:

- examine worksheet
- discuss objects and mastery levels
- draft learning objectives together for sections

Teaching Demo

For Next Time:

- activities from the *Pocket Instructor*: pick 3 to look over and think about how you would implement them in your sections

ENGL 350. Teaching Colloquium  
Harvard University  
Seminar Three: "What Do I Do in Class?"

Warm-up Exercise:

- write down some basic functions for section time: explain confusing lecture material; close read a passage; apply a method; debate particular positions; go over assignments (before or after); bring in supplementary material

Seminar Plan:

- function of class time
- how to prepare
- share *Pocket Instructor* exercises
- first participant teaching demo

Roadmap/Logistics:

- remind the presenter of next week's teaching demo that they're on deck

Reflection on Last Seminar Meeting:

- syllabus general principles: function; use of formatting; length
- learning objectives: how to use them, thinking about different levels of competence

What is the Function of Class Time?

- how do sections differ from lectures?
- how to think about in-class vs. at home time?

How to Prepare for Class:

- what are your methods of preparation?: lecture; outline; prepared materials; pre-class assignments
- what is the relationship between your notes and the class?
- how have you been preparing?

BREAK

Share *Pocket Instructor* Exercises:

- discuss one or two each
- what is good about this exercise? when might it be useful?
- what other exercises have you encountered?
- how can we think about using different learning styles?

Teaching Demo

For Next Time:

- Using Canvas and grading papers

ENGL 350. Teaching Colloquium  
Harvard University  
Seminar Four: "Giving Feedback"

Warm-up Exercise:

- brainstorm together: what are some functions of grades?

Seminar Plan:

- responding to writing
- grading exercise
- teaching technologies
- teaching demo

Roadmap/Logistics:

- remind the presenter of next week's teaching demo that they're on deck

Reflection on Last Seminar Meeting:

- thinking about the functions of a section and section syllabuses
- what is the role of a section for a course?
- any other questions or issues that the TFs brought up

Space for Any Issues or Questions that have Arisen during the Past Week

Responding to Writing:

- strategies:
  - be efficient! use a timer; don't spend more time grading than time was spent writing; keep line edits minimal
    - one strategy is to quickly skim a paper before you set to commenting/grading it to give you a sense of the larger project
  - be focused! summarize key take-aways; use a rubric (if helpful); don't get lost in the trees, help them to cultivate a forest (big picture rather than minutiae)
  - be fair! look over the whole pile (or a portion of them) quickly at first in order to get a sense of the range of responses; potentially save grading for the end; think in terms of how well and how substantively they've responded to each aspect of the assignment

Grading Exercise:

- distribute a sample essay
- take 5 minutes to edit the first couple of pages
- swap and discuss
- reflect on the experience
  - what did you find? what's most salient to you? how did you approach reading critically for grading?

BREAK

### Teaching Technologies:

- Canvas: it can be very complicated, so keep it simple!
  - examine grading and grading options on Canvas
  - go over batch grade entry; hiding grades
  - show how students can view comments on a paper graded using the Canvas functions
  - examine the “pages” feature of Canvas to show TFs how they work in classes

### Teaching Demo

### For Next Time:

- Who are my students and how do I support them?
- Current senior undergraduate or alum of the department to speak about undergraduate life at Harvard

ENGL 350. Teaching Colloquium

Harvard University

Seminar Five: “Undergraduate Life for Harvard English Concentrators”

Seminar Plan:

- guest speaker on undergraduate life
  - note: in 2023, we asked an alumna of the English Department, Elizabeth Propst, to present for roughly 35-45 minutes on what undergraduate life is like for English concentrators. We were lucky in that Elizabeth was a former student of the PF, Joseph Shack, and was completing a Master’s in the Divinity School. Derek was able to arrange an honorarium for Elizabeth.
  - recommendation: Try to arrange with a local alum or an advanced undergraduate to the seminar to discuss what life is like for undergraduates at Harvard. What do they do in their free time, where do they eat, what a typical day is like. Graduate students often don’t get a sense of the actual goings on of life as an undergrad, so these sessions can be valuable
    - if you’re having trouble arranging an undergraduate/alum speaker, be in touch with the DGS for help setting up a speaker, and then Sol to arrange for a small honorarium
- q & a session with speaker
- reflection on presentation
- going over the previous seminar meeting
- teaching demo

Guest Speaker:

- introduce speaker and frame the conversation
- allow time for questions from TFs

BREAK

Reflection on Last Seminar Meeting:

- grading and responding to writing
- best practices to make grading essays easier on ourselves
- using Canvas and other technologies

Space for Any Issues or Questions that have Arisen during the Past Week

Teaching Demo

For Next Time:

- considering different forms of feedback
- dealing with the various sorts of problems that arise in classes

ENGL 350. Teaching Colloquium  
Harvard University  
Seminar Six: "Getting Feedback and Solving Problems"

Warm-up Exercise:

- brainstorm together: what are the various kinds of feedback you experience in a classroom context? what are the most helpful forms of feedback?

Seminar Plan:

- getting feedback from students and considering kinds of feedback
- feedback exercise
- dealing with problems, with a focus on academic integrity, plagiarism, and artificial intelligence
- teaching demo

Roadmap/Logistics:

- remind the presenter of next week's teaching demo that they're on deck

Reflection on Last Seminar Meeting:

- undergraduate life as an English concentrator at Harvard

Space for Any Issues or Questions that have Arisen during the Past Week

Getting Feedback from Students:

- what kinds of informal feedback do we receive in the classroom?
- what is the best way to get formal feedback during the term?
- how do we deal with feedback and assess it?
  - bias in feedback
  - criticism (what's worth answering/addressing?)
  - consensus criticism you want to reject
  - inappropriate feedback
  - don't take it personally

Feedback Exercise:

- note: there was a useful exercise on evaluating feedback from the Bok Center that I would recommend running as an exercise in the seminar, which involved assessing feedback from a course and extracting useful information from that feedback
  - be in touch with your Bok mentor about this exercise if you haven't gone over it yet!

BREAK

Dealing with Problems:

- what kinds of things go wrong in class?
- what kinds of redress are available to you?
  - one-on-one conversations

- full class discussions
- follow-up emails
- meetings with the course head
- formal offices at Harvard
- special focus: academic integrity, plagiarism and artificial intelligence
  - how do we bring up suspicions of academic dishonesty with course heads and students?
  - what are appropriate ways to address this?

## Teaching Demo

### For Next Time:

- Evaluating writing with a guest from the Expository Writing Program
- next week's teaching demo

ENGL 350. Teaching Colloquium

Harvard University

Seminar Seven: “Skills Focus: Responding to Undergraduate Writing with Guest Lecturer”

Seminar Plan:

- guest speaker from the Expository Writing program
  - note: for the past two years, we’ve had a guest from Expos come to speak to the teaching colloquium to give tips for how to respond to writing in a more in-depth manner than the seminar earlier in the semester
    - last year (2023), John Sampson, a preceptor in Expos, came for a guest lecture; be in touch with the DGS for advice on who to contact
      - (Andy, since you’ll also be coordinating Hum10, perhaps you can ask the Expos contact about this)
- reflection on presentation
- going over the previous seminar meeting
- teaching demo

Guest Speaker:

- introduce speaker
- allow time for questions from TFs

Post-Speaker Debrief:

- what did you find most valuable?
- what was less helpful about the discussion?

BREAK

Reflection on Last Seminar Meeting:

- best practices for soliciting written feedback
- what are ways that we can gather feedback in our classrooms less formally?
- how can we best deal with problems or other issues as they arise?
  - any lingering thoughts about how to deal with academic dishonesty

Space for Any Issues or Questions that have Arisen during the Past Week

Teaching Demo

For Next Time:

- thinking about tutorial syllabus construction
- look over sample syllabuses (current tutorial syllabuses are available on the department website) to prepare for discussion

ENGL 350. Teaching Colloquium  
Harvard University  
Seminar Eight: "Imagining a Tutorial Syllabus"

Note: This seminar has potential for a guest speaker from the department. One of the faculty members who makes decisions regarding which tutorials will run might be useful to speak to what makes a successful tutorial syllabus (perhaps Alan Niles?)

Warm-up Exercise:

- brainstorm together: what are the goals of the 98r syllabus? what is it intended to teach students? how are assignments structured?

Seminar Plan:

- examining the 98r syllabus
- considering elements of a junior tutorial
- exercise: brainstorm tutorial ideas
- how to build a tutorial syllabus

Roadmap/Logistics:

- remind the presenter of next week's teaching demo that they're on deck

Reflection on Last Seminar Meeting:

- guest Expos lecture; what to take away from the discussion of grading student writing

Space for Any Issues or Questions that have Arisen during the Past Week

Look at the 98r Syllabus:

- what are the elements of a tutorial class?
  - what is the topic/concept?
  - how are the primary, secondary, and theoretical readings structured?
  - how are the assignments structured over the course of the semester?
  - what do all 98r syllabuses include, what is up to the individual instructor?
- looking at the student interest survey
  - show TFs the survey and show them how to read it and digest the information

Syllabus Exercise:

- take five minutes to brainstorm broad thematic ideas for a tutorial syllabus; come up with 3-5 "lightning" ideas and things that you might read

Building a Tutorial Syllabus:

- beyond scheduling, the assignments are built into the tutorial, so how do you construct a class around those milestones?
- how do you develop a theme or concept?
- learning objectives
- figuring out your key readings
- considering how to organize the materials

BREAK

Teaching Demo

For Next Time:

- draft and bring to class a test syllabus for a 98r dream course (schedule of readings built around assignments, short course description)
- next week's teaching demo

ENGL 350. Teaching Colloquium  
Harvard University  
Seminar Nine: "The Teaching Profession"

Note: This seminar has the potential for a guest speaker from the Bok Center (or the PF can run a version of the teaching statement seminar delivered by the Bok Center). In the past, the PF and the DGS has shown their teaching statements, but there was a useful seminar on writing teaching statements delivered by the Bok Center, which includes early drafts that are useful for demonstrating and evaluating the less desirable rhetorical moves that tend to plague drafts of these.

Seminar Plan:

- guest speaker from the Bok Center/PF seminar modeled on Bok teaching statement seminar
  - this covers teaching portfolios as well as teaching statements
- examine 98r syllabuses and discuss them

Bok Center Interactive Presentation on Teaching Statements

BREAK

Reflection on Presentation:

- what did you find useful? how might you approach writing a teaching statement?

Teaching Statement Exercise:

- draft a paragraph
  - pick a specific exercise, describe it in condensed detail
    - what does this show about you as a teacher?

98r Syllabuses:

- look at everyone's sample syllabus and discuss what we like about them
- critical feedback on how the committee might respond to each syllabus

Teaching Demo

For Next Time:

- summative discussion of how the Teaching Colloquium went this semester

ENGL 350. Teaching Colloquium  
Harvard University  
Seminar Ten: “Looking Back; Looking Forward”

Warm-up Exercise:

- describe your best class meeting of the semester
  - why was it the “best”?
  - what worked well?
  - what was most rewarding about it?

Seminar Plan:

- last seminar reflection: teaching statements, teaching portfolios, and 98r syllabuses
- semester reflection: looking back and looking forward

Reflection on Last Seminar Meeting:

- Bok seminar on crafting teaching statements
- what does it mean to put together a teaching portfolio
  - how to save and collate information throughout your teaching career for use in your materials
- discussion of 98r syllabuses; be on the lookout for emails from the department about syllabus workshops and applications

BREAK

Reflecting on the Semester:

- looking back
  - what went well?
  - what were you worried about that wasn't a problem?
  - what didn't you think about that now you know?
- looking forward
  - what do you want to improve as a teaching?
  - how can you go about improving it?