

College Teaching of History

History 785
Sarah Curtis

Spring 2013
M 5:10-7:55

The goal of this program is to provide basic training and hands-on experience for M.A. students who plan to go on to either community college teaching or Ph.D. programs. Teaching Trainees will have the opportunity both to watch and learn from an established instructor and to develop their own teaching personality and style. There will be two components to the experience – six pedagogical workshops which all Teaching Trainees will attend together, and a practicum in which students will assist in an undergraduate class.

To qualify for the program, you must have successfully completed History 700, have successfully completed 12 additional History units, and be carrying a 3.35 overall GPA.

Student Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to demonstrate their development of what the American Historical Association calls the fifth “element of mastery”—a grasp of historical pedagogy in the broadest possible terms.

Grading Standards

Trainees will receive three units of credit for successful participation. If the teaching is done in an upper-division class, these three units of 785 may stand in for that upper-division class toward graduation requirements. If the teaching is done in a lower-division course, the internship credits will be counted as extra units, outside of the major and minor concentration.

The course will be graded credit/no credit. Receiving credit will be dependent on successful completion of the following elements:

- Attendance and enthusiastic participation in all six pedagogical workshops
- Attendance at course meetings and completion of assigned readings
- Satisfactory completion and delivery of two lectures
- Satisfactory completion and delivery of two non-lecture events, as according to agreement between teaching assistant and instructor
- Satisfactory completion of grading assignments
- Satisfactory completion of the teaching portfolio

Office hours and contact information

Science 267, (415) 338-2250, scurtis@sfsu.edu
M 2:15-4:00, W 11:00-12:00, and by appointment

The Practicum

As a Teaching Trainee, it is mandatory that you attend all the class meetings of your course and complete all of the reading assigned to the students. Your additional duties will be negotiated between you and your mentoring instructor, according to the following guidelines.

The general guidelines are that the Trainee will attend the class, prepare two lectures, and complete two additional assignments (“non-lecture events”). At least one of your lectures will be delivered to the class, but some instructors prefer that the first lecture be prepared and delivered to the instructor alone. In both cases, you will receive feedback from the first lecture to help you improve and prepare for the second.

Again, because of the variety of teaching styles among the instructors, the character of the “non-lecture events” will vary. These duties may include, but are not limited to, leading in-class discussions, creating an in-class group activity, writing a quiz, leading a review session, leading a study skills session, holding special office hours before a paper, or mentoring writing. You will be asked to do two events of this type, alongside your two lectures.

You will also have limited grading responsibilities. If you feel that you are being asked to grade too much, please contact me immediately so that I can help mediate the situation.

Please talk with your mentoring instructor to work out the specific responsibilities appropriate to the course. If there is something you especially want to do, be sure to mention it to your instructor. It is recommended that instructors and Teaching Trainees generate an understanding in writing of what is expected of the Trainee.

The Pedagogical Workshops

It is mandatory for participants to attend all six pedagogical workshops. The workshops will discuss basic elements in teaching a college-level course and will provide a support system for participants during their first teaching experience. We will have six Monday meetings, all in Science 269 from 5:10 to (approx.) 7:00. The first meetings will be at the beginning of the semester, before your teaching responsibilities escalate, and then we will have one last meeting toward the end of the semester, to prepare for the final assignments.

January 28

Introduction, program information, learning styles, leading a discussion

Discussion:

- What are our expectations and responsibilities for this program?
- What are the different ways that students learn and how can we help them?
- What are the pros and cons of an in-class discussion versus a lecture?
- What makes for a successful discussion?
- What inhibits discussion?
- How do you prepare for a discussion?

February 11
Planning a lecture

Discussion:

- What are the pros and cons of a lecture versus a discussion or activity?
- What makes for a successful lecture?
- How do you prepare for a lecture?
- What tools are useful in planning a lecture?
- How can technology be used effectively?
- How is lecturing a physical as well as intellectual event?
- How can we prepare physically and/or psychologically for a lecture?

Brainstorming: Questions for next week's panel

February 25
Panel Discussion: Lecturing and pedagogical technique

Panel discussion with history department faculty:

- Questions generated by participants in last week's session

March 4
Designing and grading exams

Discussion:

- What roles do exams play in assessing students?
- How do we grade different types of exam questions?
- How do we give helpful feedback on exams?
- What skills are assessed by different types of assignments?
- How do we balance mastery of skills and mastery of material?
- What kinds of assignments would we like to have in our classes?

Exercise: Group grading of sample exams

March 11
Grading papers and mentoring writing

Discussion:

- Why are writing assignments such an important part of teaching history?
- How do we grade writing assignments?
- How do we more effectively help students improve their writing skills?
- What types of comments are helpful/not helpful to receive on writing assignments?

Exercise: Group grading of sample essays

April date to be determined

Workshop with SFSU alumni on finding a community college job
(Optional)

May 6

Planning a course and creating a teaching portfolio

Discussion:

What elements do we find important when we read a syllabus?

How do we design a syllabus?

What are the elements of a teaching portfolio and why are they important?

How do we decipher teaching evaluations?

What is a statement of teaching philosophy and how do we get one?

What do I need to do to complete the final assignments for this course?

Exercise: Deciphering job ads

Final Assignment: Teaching Portfolio

due Monday, May 20

In lieu of a final paper or exam, you will be preparing some of the basic elements of a teaching portfolio. This will not only help you synthesize and process your work this semester but will also prepare you for the job search. Your teaching portfolio will have three components: a statement of teaching philosophy, a syllabus for your course, and student evaluations.

A statement of teaching philosophy is a brief reflective essay that details your understanding about how students learn, how instruction can best assist that learning, and steps you take to enact such instruction. It may also include your teaching goals and your learning goals for students. It is generally 1-2 single-spaced pages and many examples can be found online. We will talk in our last meeting about strategies for writing this statement.

The syllabus you will be handing in will not be the regular syllabus for the class in which you taught, but one of your own making. Imagine that you will be teaching the entire course yourself and create a syllabus that reflects how you would teach it. Please write your own course description, include your own course policies, create your own reading list, design your own assignments, and schedule out the semester in the way you would like to teach it. If you would like to change the course title, feel free to do so, but please include the old course title in parentheses, so that I have a frame of reference. Please turn this syllabus in to me by the last day of classes as well.

You will not be turning these in to me, but there will also be a special teaching evaluation, designed for you, included with the course evaluations for the students. You will not receive these until after all the grades are in, but you will be able to see how the students responded to your involvement in the course. You can use these as suggestions for how to improve and/or as an element in your teaching portfolio when you apply for teaching jobs.

Further resources

Websites:

Preparing Future Faculty: <http://www.preparing-faculty.org/>
Writing a Teaching Philosophy Statement: <http://www.celt.iastate.edu/teaching/philosophy.html>
Ms. Mentor's advice column: <http://chronicle.com/section/Advice-Columns/144/>
Chronicle of Higher Education: <http://chronicle.com/section/Home/5>
Perspectives on History (AHA Newsletter): <http://www.historians.org/Perspectives/index.cfm>
Plagiarism: <http://lca.sfsu.edu/page/plagiarism-resources>
SFSU Center for Teaching and Faculty Development, In-Depth Pedagogy:
<http://ctfd.sfsu.edu/in-depth-pedagogy.htm>
California Community Colleges Registry: <https://www.cccregistry.org/jobs/index.aspx>

Books:

Wilbert J. McKeachie, *Teaching Tips: Strategies, Research, and Theory for College and University Teachers* 13th ed. (Wadsworth, 2010)
Phil Race, *The Lecturer's Toolkit: A Practical Guide to Assessment, Learning, and Teaching* 3rd ed. (Routledge, 2007)
Mary C. Clement, *First Time in the College Classroom: A Guide for Teaching Assistants, Instructors, and New Professors at All Colleges and Universities* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2010)
Therese Huston, *Teaching What You Don't Know* (Harvard UP, 2009)
Rebecca D. Cox, *The College Fear Factor: How Students and Professor Misunderstand One Another* (Harvard UP, 2009)
Katherine Gottschalk and Keith Hjortshoj, *The Elements of Teaching Writing: A Resource for Instructors in All Disciplines* (Bedford/St. Martin's, 2004)
Nancy Sommers, *Responding to Student Writers* (Bedford/St. Martin's, 2013)