

Practical Pedagogy for Biology, Fall 2025

Dr. Christine Davis, Instructional Professor

1 credit, Tuesdays, 10:40 AM - 12:35 PM, Carr 222

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Course description and learning goals

This course is designed to prepare you for and support your work as a teaching assistant, and will help build a foundation for teaching throughout your career. Through discussions, workshops, personal reflection, and peer and faculty feedback, you will:

1. Create a peer and faculty support system for teaching;
2. Create a respectful and supportive atmosphere within your own classrooms;
3. Explore techniques to create an inclusive classroom;
4. Develop practical teaching skills and learn how to organize your teaching to reach specific learning goals.

Learning outcomes

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Follow the law and university procedures while teaching;
2. Discuss techniques to show concern for students and foster an inclusive classroom;
3. Organize your lesson plans;
4. Find resources and support for teaching.

How your success in the course will be determined

You will demonstrate proficiency in teaching by successful completion of these assignments:

Assignment	Percentage of grade
Attendance	20
FERPA training	20
Presentation of sample lecture	20
Completion of self-evaluation of teaching video	20
Instructor feedback on your teaching (rubric values)	20

Assignment descriptions

FERPA training – complying with this federal law is absolutely required when teaching college students, but the nuts and bolts of the law are tricky. The University provides online training for this law, which you are required to complete successfully in this class. The training should take no more than a couple of hours of your time, and may save you a lot of trouble later on in your career.

Sample lecture - You'll have the opportunity to prepare, improve, and then present a 5-minute teaching lecture at the end of the course.

Evaluations of your teaching – First, you will record yourself in the classroom with your students. You will critically evaluate your own teaching using a rubric, then write a page describing your observations and suggestions for improvement. Later, I will observe you live in the classroom and give some feedback to improve your teaching. I will specifically address points identified in your self-evaluation, looking for improvements.

Academic Policies

This course complies with all UF academic policies. For information on those policies and for resources for students, please see [this link](#). (The direct link is <https://syllabus.ufl.edu/syllabus-policy/uf-syllabus-policy-links/>.)

Tentative course schedule

Meeting	Topic	Assignment given (due the following class meeting)
8/26	Getting off to a good start Discussion: Creating a positive classroom environment; your biggest worry	Complete FERPA training module
9/2	Discussion: FERPA; time management	Reading assignment: Disrespect and Disruption in the College Classroom How to make your teaching more inclusive
9/16	Discussion: Inclusivity	Reading assignment: Basic information about the DRC
9/23	Guest address – Disability Resource Center (DRC)	Video and self-assessment of your teaching
9/30	Guest address – Center for Teaching Excellence	Reading assignment: How to ask the right question
10/7	Discussion: Questioning techniques that encourage critical thinking; backward design	Reading assignment: TBA
10/14	Discussion: Making assessments fair and informative	Reading assignment: TBA
10/21	Discussion TBA	
10/28	Discussion: good pedagogical practices	Instructor feedback on your teaching
11/4	Discussion: Creating an engaging lecture	Prepare draft - 5 minute sample lecture
11/11	NO CLASS – Veterans Day	
11/18	Discussion: Teaching careers	
11/13	5 minutes lecture presentations	Finalize your lecture presentation
12/2	End of class outing	