

Practical Pedagogy for Biology, Fall 2023

1 credit, Wednesdays, 7:20 – 9:10 pm, Carr 222

Course Instructor: Dr. Christine Davis, Instructional Professor and Associate Chair of Biology

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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
Teaching reflections	20%
Canvas module completion (3 @ 6% each)	20%
Presentation/completion of sample lecture	20%
Completion of self-evaluation of teaching video	10%
Instructor feedback on your teaching (rubric)	10%
Instructor evaluation of your teaching (rubric)	20%

Assignment descriptions

Teaching reflections – Periodically, you'll participate in a Canvas discussion in response to a prompt. The prompt will ask you about your teaching experience that week and how what you've learned in this class applies to your experience. You'll be able to view others' comments and will be able to respond to them, if you like. At the beginning of class the following week, we will choose a comment or thread from your Canvas discussion to continue in class. Reflections submitted after class begins will be considered late, and one point will be deducted.

Canvas modules - These have been copied, with permission, from *TA Passport to Great Teaching*:

1) 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.

2) Time management - suggested strategies for juggling all of your responsibilities well.

3) Good teaching practices - an overview of best practices for lectures, discussion, and activities.

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. Finally, the self-evaluation and my feedback will in part form the basis of the final evaluation: I will sit in the classroom with you and critically evaluate your teaching using a rubric prepared for this purpose.

Guest addresses – During this course, we will welcome staff members from the Disability Resource Center, the International Center, and the Center for Teaching Excellence to discuss on campus student and teaching resources.

Tentative course schedule

Meeting	Topic	Assignment given (due the following class meeting)
8/23	Getting off to a good start Discussion: Creating a positive classroom environment; your biggest worry	Complete FERPA training module Reading assignments: How to make your teaching more inclusive
8/30	No class	Reading assignment: Disrespect and Disruption in the College Classroom Basic information about the DRC
9/6	Guest address – Disability Resource Center (DRC)	Complete Time Management module in Canvas
9/13	Guest address – International Center	Assigned reading: How to ask the right question Teaching reflection 1
9/20	Discussion: Questioning techniques that encourage critical thinking; backward design	Video and self-assessment of your teaching

9/27	Discussion: Your self-assessments	Assigned reading: <i>Choose 3-4 of the topics from A Practical Guide to Assessment</i>
10/4	Discussion: Making assessments fair and informative	Teaching reflection 2 View overview video and 2-3 additional videos in the Good Teaching Practices module
10/11	Discussion: good pedagogical practices	Instructor feedback on your teaching
10/18	Discussion: Creating an engaging lecture	Teaching reflection 3 Prepare draft - 5 minute sample lecture
10/25	Discussion: TBA	
11/1	No class - BSC2010/BSC2011 exam proctoring	Teaching reflection 4
11/8	Discussion: TBA	Finalize your lecture presentation
11/15	Sample 5-minute lecture presentations	Instructor evaluation of your teaching
11/22	Thanksgiving - no class	
11/29	End of course outing!	