Teaching in the Department of Sociology at FSU

The Department of Sociology assigns teaching duties to graduate students who hold a Master’s Degree in Sociology (either from Florida State or elsewhere). Graduate student teaching benefits the undergraduate program by providing more and a greater variety of class options that would otherwise be possible. In addition, teaching provides an excellent opportunity for graduate students to gain experience in this important professional role. Classes available to graduate student instructors generally include Introduction to Sociology, Social Problems, and Family Problems, along with other core or upper-level courses as needed, including regular face-to-face and online classes.

This manual is intended to help prepare you for your classroom responsibilities. It is not intended to cover every issue that may arise while teaching; rather it provides information on the basic policies and procedures of the University and resources for teaching. Your major professor, Department Chair, TA Supervisor, Director of Graduate Studies, and the Teaching Sociology course provide other valuable information and resources. Additionally, syllabi from recent semesters are available on the Department website at www.coss.fsu.edu/sociology/ and FSU offers a handbook of effective teaching strategies at http://distance.fsu.edu/instructors/instruction-fsu-guide-teaching-learning-practices.

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Teaching Policies at FSU

Academic Calendar
The academic year consists of two semesters, each lasting approximately 15 weeks. Some instructors teach during the summer, which is divided into several semester scheduling options. The Registrar’s website contains an extended calendar at http://registrar.fsu.edu/extended.htm as well as Registration Guides for each semester, including the Academic Calendar, Registration Windows, and the Exam Schedule at http://registrar.fsu.edu/dir_class/apdefault.htm.

Academic Honor Policy
Active involvement of all instructors is essential to effectively preventing academic dishonesty. The policy and forms for resolving any allegations are located at http://fda.fsu.edu/Academics/Academic-Honor-Policy.

Collective Bargaining
Graduate students employed by the University are covered by the UFF-FSU Graduate Employees United Chapter’s Collective Bargaining Agreement, which can be found at http://www.uff-fsu-gau.org/.

Copyright/Fair Use
Instructors need to be aware of the protections provided by copyright law and closely follow the guidelines that are provided with regard to the "fair use" doctrine. These protections cover published and unpublished, print and electronic media. Guidelines for copyright compliance may be found at http://igs.fsu.edu/Copyright-Information/Guidelines.

Disabilities
The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that reasonable accommodations be provided for individuals with documented physical and/or learning disabilities. Students who are registered with the Student Disability Resource Center (SDRC) are accommodated through the combined efforts of individual faculty members and the SDRC. Instructor resources, including a Guide to Reasonable Accommodations, are available at http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/faculty.html.

Equal Opportunity, Non-discrimination, Non-retaliation
Florida State is an affirmative action and equal opportunity employer supporting a culturally diverse educational and work environment. The University is committed to a policy of equal opportunity, non-discrimination, and non-retaliation for any member of the University community on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, veterans’ or marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or any other protected group status, and this policy applies to faculty, staff, students, visitors, applicants, and contractors. Full policy statement and complaint procedures may be found at http://policies.vpfa.fsu.edu/personnel/3i.html#3.

Evaluation of Teaching
Instructors are required to administer course evaluations during the last two weeks of classes. This applies to regular face-to-face and online classes. The University uses the SPCI (Student Perception of Courses and Instructors) form for student evaluations (or eSPCI for electronic administration), and instructors in face-to-face classes have the option of administering these
face-to-face or online. Results of student evaluations as well as information on how to improve teaching through feedback are available at http://distance.fsu.edu/instructors/course-evaluations. The Department Chair and/or TA Supervisor routinely review course evaluations for all graduate student instructors.

FERPA
The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law that protects the privacy of students' educational records. Information on FERPA, including guidelines on how to properly communicate with students and how to maintain students’ rights when sharing information with others may be found at http://registrar.fsu.edu/ferpa/apdefault.htm.

Final Exams
Final examinations in all undergraduate courses are discretionary within any given department, and all students enrolled in a course are required to take the exam at the time scheduled by the University. No exams whatsoever (even those that are non-cumulative) may be given during the last week of class, but must be given in the specified time block during exam week. Details on undergraduate course examinations and requirements for exceptions are available at http://registrar.fsu.edu/bulletin/undergrad/info/acad_regs.htm. The Final Exam Memo from the Office of Faculty Development and Enhancement may be found at http://fda.fsu.edu/Academics.

Grades
The University employs a plus/minus grading system, and instructors must explain, in writing, an evaluation (grading) statement that will be used to determine grades in each course. Final grades should be reported to the Registrar’s Office by the deadline set each semester and in accordance with procedures that will be communicated by each academic department. The General Bulletin contains more detailed information on grading practices and grade appeals, located at http://registrar.fsu.edu/bulletin/undergrad/info/acad_regs.htm.

Liberal Studies Program
Undergraduate students are required to complete a specified number of hours in courses designated as meeting requirements for liberal studies. Sociology offers several courses that meet this requirement. All such courses must include the Liberal Studies Statement on the syllabus. Details about the Liberal Studies Program, including a listing of approved liberal studies courses, may be found at http://registrar.fsu.edu/bulletin/undergrad/info/undergrad_degree.htm.

Multicultural Requirement
Undergraduate students who enter the University with fewer than sixty semester hours are required to complete at least one course designated as cross-cultural studies and one course designated as diversity in Western experience. The sociology department offers several such courses. Instructors of such courses must include materials assessing students’ proficiency according to the multicultural understanding grading rubric found here http://www.coss.fsu.edu/sociology/content/department. A listing of approved multicultural courses may be found at http://registrar.fsu.edu/bulletin/undergrad/info/undergrad_degree.htm.
Sexual Harassment
Sexual harassment can occur between faculty, faculty and staff, faculty and students, and between students. Each employee of the university is required to attend a sexual harassment training session and should review the Sexual Harassment Policy located at http://compliance.hr.fsu.edu/index.cfm?page=sexual_harassment.

State Mandated Academic Learning Compacts (SMALCs)
The State Board of Governors has directed each university to develop Academic Learning Compacts for every baccalaureate degree program. A State University System Academic Learning Compact (SMALC) identifies for each academic bachelor's program what students will learn by the end of a program and how knowledge is measured above and beyond course grades. A SMALC must pinpoint the core learning expectations in the areas of communication, critical thinking skills, and content/discipline knowledge and skills. Additionally, it must identify the corresponding assessments used to determine how well the student has assimilated the articulated expectations. The Learning Compact for sociology is available at http://learningforlife.capd.fsu.edu/smalcs/learningCompact.cfm?smalcId=62141. A listing of SMALC courses and instructions for assessing student outcomes are available at http://www.coss.fsu.edu/sociology/content/department.

Syllabus
University policy requires that a course syllabus be distributed at the beginning of the semester that includes written course objectives and an evaluation (grading) statement. All syllabi also must contain the University Attendance Policy, Academic Honor Policy, and Americans with Disabilities Act. The Faculty Senate further advises including the Free Tutoring from FSU statement and Syllabus Change Policy statement. Recommended language for these statements is available at http://facsenate.fsu.edu/Curriculum/Syllabus-Language. Once the course has begun, no changes should be made to the syllabus that will substantially affect the implementation of the instructor’s evaluation (grading) statement.

Student Attendance
The instructor decides what effect unexcused absences will have on grades and will explain class attendance and grading policies in writing at the beginning of each semester. Instructors must accommodate absences due to documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities and must do so in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration should also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness. University-wide policy requires all students to attend the first class meeting of all classes for which they are registered. Instructors must take attendance at the first class meeting and follow proper procedures for dropping any students who are not in attendance. For further information, consult the FSU General Bulletin at http://registrar.fsu.edu/bulletin/undergrad/info/acad_regs.htm.

Textbook Adoption
Instructors must place orders for required textbooks with the FSU Bookstore in accordance with policy outlined by the Office of the Provost. The Course Textbook Adoption Policy and Timeline, Textbook Adoption Application Guide, and other resources are available at http://provost.fsu.edu/.
FSU Teaching Resources

Blackboard User Support
http://java.apps.fsu.edu/roller/bb9learn/

Blackboard Virtual Training Videos and Other Resources
http://distance.fsu.edu/instructors/step-3-course-production

Blackboard Video Tutorials and Instructor Resources
https://campus.fsu.edu/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp?tab_tab_group_id=31_1

Center for Assessment and Testing
http://cat.fsu.edu/

General Bulletin
http://registrar.fsu.edu/bulletin/undergrad/info/apdefault.htm

Graduate Bulletin
http://registrar.fsu.edu/bulletin/grad/

Graduate Student Handbook
http://gradschool.fsu.edu/New-Current-Students/Graduate-Student-Handbook

Instruction at FSU: A Guide to Teaching & Learning Practices
http://distance.fsu.edu/instructors/instruction-fsu-guide-teaching-learning-practices

Office of Distance Learning
http://distance.fsu.edu

Office of Faculty Development and Advancement
http://fda.fsu.edu

Office of the University Registrar
http://registrar.fsu.edu/

Preparing for Your First Semester
http://distance.fsu.edu/instructors/preparing-your-first-semester

Preparing Future Faculty
http://gradschool.fsu.edu/Professional-Development/Preparing-Future-Faculty-PFF

Program for Instructional Excellence (PIE)
http://pie.fsu.edu/

PIE Basics of Teaching @ FSU/Advanced PIE Certificate
PIE TA Handbook
http://pie.fsu.edu/TA-Handbook

PIE Workshops
http://pie.fsu.edu/Workshops

The Florida State University Libraries
http://www.lib.fsu.edu/

The Graduate School
http://gradschool.fsu.edu/