

During my time as a graduate student, I have been incredibly lucky to have independently taught eight separate classes over a period of ten terms. These experiences began with my first term in AU11 as a TA in COMM 463, Industry Research Methods with 49 students enrolled. This course is a requirement of all Communication majors and is heavily reliant on statistical and research methodology. As TA, I was expected to attend lecture, hold office hours to explain concepts to students, proctor and grade exams, and compile exam statistics for assessments. At week 4, the professor became very ill and could not continue teaching. Our department approached me to take on the course as the instructor on record for the remaining weeks. I chose to make our online course management system available and created guided notes versions of my lectures for students electronically to reach all types of learners. I designed and graded daily quizzes to assess student comprehension, held review sessions, updated provided lecture presentations with new research to make the material relevant.

In three separate terms, I have been assigned COMM 2110, Public Speaking, which is a GEC ordinarily taken by non-Communication majors, lead by a course director. Over these terms, I have taught a total of 79 students from a range of class rank, majors, under both the quarter and semester systems. My responsibilities were customizing publisher-provided lectures, finding appropriate speech examples, preparing and delivering daily lectures, and grading four major speeches. Our course director awards us great freedom in each of our sections, and I update the rubrics, require students to turn in outlines for each speech, designed impromptu speech prompts and creative exercises to get the students brainstorming. Most notably, I have incorporated mindfulness exercises before exams and speeches to help assuage students' anxiety.

During OSU's first summer term, I was assigned to independently teach COMM 2540, Introduction to Communication Technology, to 36 students, mostly Communication majors. This course is a requirement for both Strategic and New Media Communication majors and covers technology from radio waves to the Internet and video game consoles. When I was a TA for this class (WI12, 118 students), I was responsible for attendance, grading essays and exams, holding office hours, and compiling statistics for final grades. As independent instructor (SU12) I created more reflection options to help make material relevant. For example, one new reflection task had students write a letter to someone deceased (e.g., relative, famous individual) and explain a technology available now that was not available in their time. This helped students see the larger evolution of technology and become teachers themselves in a way. I continued with daily quizzes to assess student learning and incorporated fun videos to demonstrate concepts.

My second summer term (SU13) led to an assignment to independently teach COMM 3554, Social Implications of Communication Technology, to 22 students, all majors. As an upper-level course, COMM 3554 relies heavily on theory, methodology, and research articles. I was responsible for choosing course readings, designing exams and assignments, in-class discussions, preparing and delivering daily lectures, and holding office hours to meet with students. I took this opportunity to update some course readings that challenged earlier research, helping students become aware of the scientific conversations had over decades and disciplines. Using TED talks about technology as a jumping point, I created in-class discussions and team exercises to get students' thinking and talking about the true social implications. For example, which should be privileged in the next iteration of the Internet: privacy or access? I assigned reflection tasks previously designed for other courses to help students to engage with technologies and reflect on the positive and negative social implications.

This past Autumn Semester (AU13) I was assigned to independently teach COMM 4554, Social Media, to 32 senior Communication majors. Prior to this, no graduate student had taught

this class. COMM 4554 aims to teach students the theories, various uses, growth, and prospectus of various social media. I chose to revamp the mandatory group project for the course, designing a comprehensive project that included individual papers, a group presentation, three mini-tasks, and an annotated bibliography on various subjects. Students were assigned to a subject (e.g., cyberbullying, health communication) and tasked with researching and explaining the what, why, who, and how of social media related to their topic. Having had great success in previous courses, I continued building reflection task essays into COMM 4554, but specifically related to social media. For example, a 24hr social media fast, only receiving news from social media, or “friending” your enemies (or at least the team up north). With each of these unique and new assignments, I shared detailed rubrics, directions, and examples with students. Comments in my midterm evaluations and SEIs reflect how much students enjoyed these tasks, forcing them to think and dissect social media.

Since AU11, I have trained 20 undergraduate research assistants (RA) for 7 separate research projects, both experimental and qualitative. Students’ backgrounds have varied in experience, from none to some, and I have trained psychology, communication, and basic science majors. Five of my RAs have moved on to graduate school, 2 found employment upon graduation, and 2 have transferred. The remaining continue participating in research regularly. Two are currently designing honors theses using my experimental data as a framework. I am responsible for thoroughly training each RA in human subjects research guidelines, adherence to experimental protocols including consenting and debriefing participants, data entry, stimuli set-up and troubleshooting, content analysis, data culling from public forums, and survey participation in the field. These projects have actually blossomed into conference papers, manuscripts under review, and two students are currently designing senior theses under my supervision.

Mentorship is not just a top down or bottom up relationship, but can be amongst peers as well. I have served as a facilitator during our University’s Center for Advancement of Teaching’s GTA Orientation. As President and founder of the School of Communication Graduate Student Organization (Soc GSO), I take my role as peer advisor and mentor seriously as well. I have held multiple course management workshops and tutorials for new GTAs in our department to help them navigate their courses. During the first Mayterm (May 2013) I coordinated a writing workshop with drop-in hours and faculty lead trainings to help graduate students practice writing in a safe space with peers available for edits and evaluations. I co-coordinate the Communication Technology Research group with another senior student, facilitating practice research talks, journal clubs, design brainstorming, and syllabus preparation. I have also worked one-on-one with new graduate students on human subjects review board applications, materials, and our department’s survey system. Our department’s HR team has tapped me to help devise emergency planning materials for GTAs for preparedness.

I thoroughly enjoy the freedom our department gives us in customizing course content, approach, syllabi, and assessments when we are assigned to independently teach. With each teaching assignment, I make sure I speak with faculty and GTAs that have previously taught the course, to determine what worked for students and what did not. I try to keep in mind my own pedagogical goals and style when customizing, and always want to make sure I present an authentic self. I aim to be a quality mentor to my undergraduate research assistants, a knowledgeable peer to my fellow graduate students, and a growing instructor in any subject I am tasked.