

Course in College Teaching Summer 2026

Wednesdays, 4-5:15pm

Van Pelt 134

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**** SCROLL DOWN FOR SCHEDULE & READINGS ****

Goals: This program aims to prepare participants to go on the job market and teach their first college course.

Expectations: I'm aware that this course is not for credit and so have tried to keep my focus on what will be most useful to you. Each week I expect that you will:

1. Submit /bring the assigned work with you to class (if you can).
2. Participate actively in discussion and group activities.

I will in turn give you feedback on what you generate and try my best to facilitate constructive conversations.

For current Penn graduate students, completion of the course results in three workshop credits towards the [CETLI Teaching Certificate](#).

Readings and Assignments

We will be reading several items from the *Chronicle of Higher Education*. You can get full access to this content via the Penn Library proxy server (search the catalogue by journal title). Let me know if you have any trouble.

Week 1 (June 17) Introductions

Activities:

1. Set expectations for what you want out of the class and set ground rules for our work.
2. Develop a set of standards for thinking about teaching: what is good teaching? What standards apply to all disciplines/all schools? What is unique to your discipline?

3. Begin drafting a teaching philosophy – list your three main teaching goals and activities/ideas of how you would accomplish them.

Week 2 (June 24): Teaching (Large) "Lecture" Courses & Making Good Use of Class Time

Reading:

Linda Nilson, "[Lecturing For Student Learning](#)" *Teaching At Its Best* 4th ed. (2016)*

Kimberly Tanner, "[Structure Matters: Twenty-One Teaching Strategies to Promote Student Engagement and Cultivate Classroom Equity](#)," *CBE Life Sci Educ* 12, 3 (2013): 322-331.

* Available as an e-book from our library. There is a 2023 edition, which costs about \$40 which could be a nice addition to your library. Note that there is also a companion volume for online teaching.

Due:

1. Using your bullet points from last week, [upload](#) a brief outline of your teaching philosophy.

Activities:

1. Discuss goals in your respective provisional teaching philosophies.
2. Discuss teaching strategies you envision using in your "large" classes.

Week 3 (July 1): Facilitating Discussions (Which May Be Difficult)

Reading:

Linda Nilson, "[Leading Effective Discussions](#)" *Teaching At Its Best* (2016)

Roxanne Euben, "[Teaching in Polarized Times](#)" *Penn Almanac* (January 26, 2021)

Kirsten Darby Smith, "[Difficult Conversations in Class: How Not to Panic](#)," in K. Armstrong et al., eds., *Teaching Gradually: Practical Pedagogy and Classroom Strategies for Graduate Students by Graduate Students* (2021), pp. 127-32.

Week 4 (July 8): Assignments/Assessments & Feedback

Due: [Upload](#) a one-page description of a significant assignment for a class.

Reading:

Ameena Ghaffar-Kucher, "[Why Grade? Thinking Differently About How To Help Students Learn](#)," *Penn Almanac* (April 25, 2023)

Cathy N. Davidson & Christina Katopodis, "Feedback That Really Works," in *The New College Classroom* (2022), pp. 195-221.

[for STEM folks] Katie Clements and Cynthia J. Brame, "[Science exams don't have to be demoralizing: A practical guide](#)"

Read ahead to kickstart your thinking about making a syllabus:

Kevin Gannon, "[How to Create a Syllabus](#)" *Chronicle of Higher Education* (see guidance at top of this page for accessing the CHE via the proxy server; if that fails, here's an ugly but usable [PDF](#).)

Week 5 (July 15): Teaching So That All Students Can Succeed

Reading:

Kelly Hogan & Viji Sathy, "[Want to Reach All Your Students? Here's How to Make Your Teaching More Inclusive](#)" *Chronicle of Higher Education*

(Here is a [PDF](#) if the link doesn't work.)

Anthony Abraham Jack, "I Was a Low-Income College Student. Classes Weren't the Hard Part" *NYT Magazine* (Sept. 10, 2019)

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/09/10/magazine/college-inequality.html>

(Here is a [PDF](#) if the link doesn't work.)

Annette Lareau, "[Teaching First-Generation College Students](#)," *Penn Almanac* (Oct. 23, 2018)

Supplemental Resource for Potential Future Reading:

Lisa M. Nunn, [33 Simple Strategies for Faculty: A Week-by-Week Resources for Teaching First-Year and First-Generation Students](#) (Rutgers UP, 2019)

Activities:

Week 6 (July 22): Thinking About Mentoring & Teaching Graduate Classes

Reading:

George Pappas, "[Mentor the Researcher, Not the Research: An Essay on PhD Mentoring](#)," *Penn Almanac* (February 28, 2017)

Ivan Dmochowski, "[Mentoring Graduate Students: Holistic Perspectives on Individual Guidance](#)" *Penn Almanac* (September 30, 2025)

Two books of potential interest:

Jen Heemstra, [From Lab Work To Leadership](#) (2025) - Wash. U. chemist; available as an e-book from our library

Maria LaMonaca Wisdom, [How To Mentor Anyone in Academia](#) (2025) - Duke administrator and English PhD; available as an e-book from our library

Week 7 (July 29): Thinking About Syllabi (and using an LMS)

Reading:

Kevin Gannon, "[How to Create a Syllabus](#)" *Chronicle of Higher Education* (see guidance at top of this page for accessing the CHE via the proxy server; if that fails, here's an ugly but usable [PDF](#).)

Activity:

We will examine some sample syllabi in class.

Week 8 (August 5): Redrafting your teaching philosophy and thinking about the job market

Due: [Upload](#) your revised and elaborated teaching statement.

Reading: Archived [Vanderbilt guide to teaching statements](#)

Resource: [CETLI Job Market Support Flyer](#)

Activities:

1. Use discussion of teaching philosophy to consider how to talk about teaching in your job letter and in an interview.