Teaching Fellow Handbook

Harvard University
Faculty of Arts and Sciences

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

2007 - 2008

Contents

Edited by Sara L. Schwebel and Adam Beaver. Layout and design by Edward Lee. Published by the Department of History and the Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning.

Academic Calendar 2007-2008

Fall Term	Bok Center Fall Teaching Conference (sessions for new *and* experienced teachers)	September 11 - 12
	Tutorial Retreat	September 14
	First day of classes	September 17
	Study cards due	September 21 (Freshmen: 24)
	Columbus Day (University holiday)	October 8
	Veteran's Day (University holiday)	November 12
	Suggested time for videotaping section (Bok Center)	Early October
	Suggested time for conducting "early evaluations"	Mid October
	Thanksgiving Recess	November 22 - 25
	Senior Thesis Writers Conference	December 4 - December 8
	Winter Recess	December 19 - January 1
	Reading Period	January 2 - January 13
	Tutorial Reports due	January 25
	Martin Luther King Day (University holiday)	January 29
	Final Exams	January 14 - January 23
	Suggested time to review CUE evaluations	Early February
Spring Term	Bok Center Winter Teaching Conference (sessions for new *and* experienced teachers)	January 29 (tentative)
	First Day of Classes	January 30
	Study cards due	February 6
	Presidents' Day (University holiday)	February 118
	Suggested time for videotaping section (Bok Center)	Early March
	Suggested time for conducting "early evaluations"	Mid March
	History senior theses due	March 20
	Spring Recess	March 22 - March 30
	Senior thesis reading reports due	April 7 (tentative)
	Reading Period	May 3 - 14
	Final Exams	May 15 - 23
	Tutorial Reports due	May 30
	Memorial Day	May 26
	Suggested time to review CUE evaluations	Early June
	Commencement	June 5

Introduction

You have in your hands (or are viewing online) the third edition of the History Department's very own handbook for Teaching Fellows. The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences has for some time published an annual handbook, full of useful advice for Teaching Fellows whether neophyte or veteran. But inevitably its advice must be general and generic. This departmental publication is designed to offer advice and information focused on the particular needs of graduate students teaching in history courses, from tutorials to departmental and core curriculum offerings. The contributions are for the most part written by experienced graduate student teachers themselves. They offer a rich array of practical advice, insight won from experience, and inspirational and cautionary tales. I believe that our faculty as well as grad student Teaching Fellows will find this a useful reference to learn about our tutorial program, as well as a source of guidance in teaching our undergraduate students.

I want to thank all those who contributed essays and ideas to this project, and thank especially Sara Schwebel, a former PhD candidate in the History of American Civilization program, for her hard and good work in designing this handbook, as well as soliciting and editing the contributions. Thanks also to the Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning, which helped fund the development and printing of this book, and to Edward Lee for the layout and design.

As this is a work in progress, which will be revised over the years, I invite all readers and users to send suggestions for future editions to Adam Beaver and to volunteer to pen their own thoughts on the topics we address, or any we have failed to discuss.

James Kloppenberg,
History Department Chair

A New Resource for History Teaching Fellows and Tutors…

The History Department it proud to introduce a new website, "Teaching History @ Harvard," full of practical resources to help you make the most of your experience as a TF or Tutor. The site collects all the information you need—from where to book classrooms to how to assemble a dynamite Teaching Portfolio—into a single, user-friendly interface.

Check out the site at **http://isites.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=k12844**
or browse over through the "Teaching" page of the "graduate" section of the Department's website.

Contacts for History Department TFs and Tutors

Tutorial Office, main number	617-495-2157	
Director of Undergraduate Studies, *Sven Beckert*	617-495-0697	beckert@fas.harvard.edu
Assistant DUS, *Adam Beaver*	617-495-9147	abeaver@fas.harvard.edu
Coordinator of Undergraduate Studies & TF Coordinator, *Caron Yee*	617-496-1626	cyee@fas.harvard.edu
Staff Assistant, *Laura Johnson*	617-495-2157	lmjohns@fas.harvard.edu
Director of Graduate Studies, *Hue-Tam Ho Tai*	617-495-5456	hhtai@fas.harvard.edu
Coordinator of Graduate Studies, *Gail Rock*	617-496-6916	grock@fas.harvard.edu
Financial Administrator, *Cory Paulsen*	617-496-4058	paulsen@fas.harvard.edu
Lead Teaching Fellow, *Kate Grandjean*		grandj@fas.harvard.edu
Bok Center Assoc. Director, *Terry Aladjem* (History/Social Studies/Government)	617-495-4869	aladjem@fas.harvard.edu
Bok Center Assoc. Director, *Virginia Maurer* (International TFs)	617-495-4869	vmaurer@fas.harvard.edu

Compensation and Hiring

Caron Yee, Coordinator of Undergraduate Studies

Application and Assignment

Applications for teaching positions in History lectures, cores, tutorials, and research seminars are accepted in late March through early April for the following academic year. The application form and instructions, as well as the list of courses with teaching positions, can be found online through the My.History portal. The due date and application details are ordinarily announced via the "history-grad" mailing list and through affiliate graduate program administrators. Late applications will not be accepted.

fas.harvard.edu/~history/my/

A faculty committee makes teaching fellow assignments based on each course instructor's staffing preference, and the TF coordinator sends official offer letters. Ordinarily, guaranteed sections are staffed before the end of the spring term. However, there are some sections that are dependent on undergraduate enrollment, and cannot be finalized until study cards have been submitted during the term the course is offered

Teaching Eligibility

Graduate students are required to have passed their general exams and to maintain satisfactory progress in order to be eligible to teach. In many cases, other funding can limit teaching eligibility; it is the responsibility of the graduate student to adhere to the rules and regulations of the award s/he receives.

Also note that Teaching Fellows cannot exceed more than 4/5 per term or 6/5 annually. In addition, no graduate student may hold a teaching fellowship for more than four academic years, unless the graduate student has not exceeded his/her career limit of 16/5. Occasionally, exceptions are made to the above teaching limits. In order to request an exception, Teaching Fellows must write a letter of exception to Dean Russell Berg and cc Caron Yee. The letter must include 1) the reason(s) for exceeding the limit; 2) confirmation that the TF is making satisfactory academic process; 3) confirmation that additional teaching will not impede the TF's progress toward the degree and; 4) the TF's expected graduation date.

Such letters should be addressed to:
Dean Russell Berg
GSAS Financial Aid
Holyoke Center 350
cc: Caron Yee, cyee@fas

Priority List for Assignment of Teaching Staff

The following general guidelines are used in assigning teaching staff, although there are occasional exceptions:

1. GSAS History G3s and G4s.
2. GSAS G3s and G4s of affiliate departments or degree programs when appropriate.
3. GSAS students who have not yet exceeded their career teaching limit of 16/5.
4. GSAS students who have exceeded their career teaching limit of 16/5 and recent GSAS History PhD recipients.
5. Graduate student applicants from other Harvard faculties.
6. Applicants without Harvard affiliation.

Teaching Positions Available

Sections in Lecture, Core, and Tutorial Courses

The History department uses the following guidelines in appointing sections. Exceptions are made only by approval of the Department Chair.

- Each history lecture section averages 18 undergraduates. Head TFs are hired in courses where enrollment ordinarily exceeds 100 undergraduates.
- Each history Core section averages 18 undergraduates. Head TFs are hired in courses where enrollment ordinarily exceeds 100 undergraduates.
- History 97 has one section for every 4-6 undergraduates.
- Research Seminars support one section when enrolling 1-8 undergraduates and two when enrolling 9-15 undergraduates.

Head TF

The Head TF is an experienced Teaching Fellow appointed to carry out administrative duties in lectures and cores. Head TFs are compensated at 1/5 when undergraduate enrollment reaches 100. Head TFs are also expected to teach one section for which they are compensated at 1/5.

Administrative Tutor

History 97 has an Administrative Tutor. The History 97 Administrative Tutor is paid at 3/10 for performing administrative duties and an additional 3/10 for teaching one tutorial section. This position begins the summer preceding the course; it requires residence in Cambridge, MA during the summer months.

Senior Thesis Advisor (History 99 Tutor)

Each senior enrolled in History 99 has a thesis advisor, who is either a faculty member or a graduate student. Graduate students interested in supervising a senior thesis should indicate their interest online in December/January of the prior year. Note that not all who indicate an interest will be able to supervise a thesis. Thesis writers approach faculty and graduate students in their area of interest individually to determine whether there is a potential match. Matches are made based on a mutual agreement between the thesis writer and graduate student or faculty member to work together, and can be arranged any time from January through August. Graduate students must seek the approval of the History Tutorial Office in order for the match to be official (and to make arrangements for compensation). History 99 tutor appointments are year-long, and graduate students can supervise a maximum of 2 theses.

History 99 Teaching Fellow

The History 99 Teaching Fellow is appointed by the Coordinator of Undergraduate Studies. In conjunction with the Assistant Director of Undergraduate Studies, the History 99 Teaching Fellow organizes the Senior Thesis Writers' conference and runs a section of a semimonthly seminar for thesis writers. The History 99 Teaching Fellow position is a year-long commitment and is compensated at 1/5 each term. The Teaching Fellow is also paid 1/15 for each individual thesis s/he advises.

Training and Evaluation

Third-year History graduate students must attend the sessions on "Professional Conduct" and "Discussion Leading" offered by the Bok Center during the Fall Teaching Conference, as well as the History Teaching Retreat. They are also required to have their sections videotaped, and to meet with the History Lead Teaching Fellow, Kate Grandjean (grandj@fas), for confidential viewing and feedback during their first term of teaching. For more details on training opportunities, please see the page on "Training and Support," above.

The Committee on Undergraduate Education (CUE) conducts regular course evaluations. History lecture and Core TFs may obtain their full set of course evaluations from their Course Head at the end of term or online. History 97 Tutors are also regularly evaluated, and can find their evaluations filed at the History Tutorial Office, 101 Robinson Hall.

www.fas.harvard.edu/~cueguide/

Compensation

The base salary for the 2007-08 academic year is $45,600. Full-time teaching is considered to be 4/5 annually since 1/5 time is reserved for the students' own research and writing. Teaching Fellows may not teach more than 6/5 in a given year.

Teaching Fellows are paid on the 15th from September through January for fall appointments and from February through June for spring appointments. When changes to the appointment are made after the payroll deadline (for example, the addition of a senior thesis or the elimination of a section), changes will not appear until the following month. Appointments for provisional fifths will not be finalized until after study cards are due. Hence, these appointments will not be made in time for the first cycle of paychecks; an off-cycle check will be sent to the Teaching Fellow's designated mailing address.

Questions about paychecks in lecture or tutorial courses should be directed to Caron Yee (cyee@fas). Teaching Fellows in Core courses should direct their questions to Nora Imirzian (5-2563, imirzian@fas).

After receiving a teaching assignment, all new Teaching Fellows should complete the following paperwork: I-9 and W-4 (M-4, if applicable). Teaching Fellows appointed to History lecture and tutorial courses should file paperwork with Caron Yee, while those assigned to History Core courses should file paperwork with Nora Imirzian at the Core Office.

www.pin.harvard.edu
www.harvie.harvard.edu

- Teaching Fellows who do not already have a PIN number, should sign up at www.pin1.harvard.edu. The PIN number gives access to PeopleSoft via HARVIE. [http://www.harvie.harvard.edu]
- Teaching Fellows need to bring proofs of identification: a passport OR a driver's license and a Social Security card when filling out the I-9 (work authorization form) with Caron Yee or Nora Imirzian.
- The W-4 and M-4 (tax) forms can be filed online through PeopleSoft.
- Direct deposit (automatic deposit of paychecks into bank account) can be set up online via PeopleSoft.

Compensation at a Glance (2007-08)

Position	Fifths	Payment	Notes
Teaching Fellow, 1 lecture or Core section	1/5	$4,560/term	
Head TF in lecture or Core	1/5	$4,560/term	If enrollment exceeds 100
History 97 Tutor (1st section)	3/10	$6,840/term	
History 97 Tutor (additional sections)	1/5	$4,560/term	
Research Seminar Tutor (1st section)	3/10	$6,840/term	
Research Seminar Tutor (2nd section)	1/10	$2,540/term	
History 99 Teaching Fellow	1/15	$1,520/term	Yearlong appointment
History 97 Administrative Tutor	3/10	$6,840/term	Appointment begins preceding summer and continues through the spring term
History 99 Teaching Fellow	1/5	$4,560/term	Yearlong appointment

Introduction to Section Teaching

By Professor Joyce Chaplin

The first thing I should say is: thank you! The Department and Tutorial Office are extremely grateful to those graduate students who act as section leaders for survey courses taught in the department and in the Core. These are challenging teaching assignments. The following essays, by veteran section leaders, give excellent advice about nearly every dimension of teaching in such classes. They identify the main difficulties—teaching material relating to a big problem or long chronological period and making connections between lectures and discussions—and offer solutions. You are probably going to read these essays early in the semester, but remember that it will be useful to look at them again, later, when something in your section is proving troublesome; you will probably spot a bit of advice you may have missed the first time.

The second thing I should say is: think ahead. You will not be teaching for us forever. What you do here is an apprenticeship. Odds are, you will have a teaching career elsewhere, with a different set of classes (smaller, bigger; more or less specialized) and a different kind of student (more or less diligent; with different life experiences or political leanings). So, as you listen to lectures, read the material for sections, make your lesson plans, and find your feet, think about what you are learning. Which lecture styles do you admire? What readings work? Which weekly topics would, in and of themselves, be worth investigation in a smaller class or seminar that you yourself could teach? How would you design a syllabus or website? What kind of paper topics would you like to assign—or grade! While you teach for us, you render us a valuable service, but it can also be valuable to you as a stock of skills and ideas for the rest of your teaching career.

The First Day of Section – Starting Out on the Right Foot

By Laura Lisy-Wagner (History)

A lot of received wisdom is passed around about the first day of section: It is better to start out strict and then loosen up. Be firm about course policies from day one. Emphasize the necessity of attendance. Play creative name games and be sure to learn all students' names by week two. My personal favorite, which I heard many times and which I particularly enjoyed hearing as a woman, was to be sure to wear a jacket and tie.

There are elements of each statement that are important to keep in mind. It is true that it is more difficult to put your foot down about deadlines late in the semester if you give extensions for the first paper, and it is harder to give C's in the second half of the course when you gave A's in the first half. In many classes, especially Core courses, students may not know that sections are mandatory, so it is not a bad idea to say that attendance in section is necessary. Students do feel much better about the grades you give them when they believe you actually know who they are and call them by name. And yes, even the jacket and tie advice is not terrible. Especially if you look younger than you are, it is helpful on the first day to dress a level above that which you usually will. No one will mistake you for another student in the room, and you will feel like you are in charge. After several semesters of teaching here in different kinds of classes, though, my best piece of advice would be to stay true to yourself and to craft a teaching personality that is an extension of who you are.

This does not mean, of course, that your teaching personality is no different than who you are at home or out and about. Certainly there are differences. It is important, though, to put thought into how your strengths as a person and scholar will help you in the classroom. Are you a good listener? Then guide your discussion based on the answers of the students, rather than a list of points you must cover. If you prefer structure, prepare a detailed outline of the section's content, and use your questions to guide the students through it. Do not try to do something in the classroom that does not fit with you as a person—students will see right through it. If, for example, you are typically a more casual person, it will be difficult to lay down the law on the first day with sincerity. Consider other ways you can help students understand firm policies; for example, "because this is a large course and there are multiple sections and TFs, I have to play by the rules of the team. Therefore, I can't give you any extensions on papers because that's what the staff decided." If you have a horrible memory for names, do not set yourself up by playing name games (a better strategy: go to the course iSite and print out the ID photos of all the students in your section. Or, have students make name cards that they put in front of their books). If you have never worn a skirt or jacket in your life, you will not feel comfortable if you do it for the first day of class. Instead, make sure you look neat and clean.

Structuring the First Section

As you begin planning for your first section, it is helpful to visit your classroom to see how the physical space might affect your teaching. Do you have a blackboard for writing up students' ideas? Are there individual desks, easily rearranged for small group work? Or is there one long table, good for staged debates? Consider ways you might work with the space effectively during your first class meeting.

Typically, the first section falls into three parts. Even if you work well with less structure, it is not a bad idea to write out a schedule for the first day, including time limits for each activity. Section will go by very quickly, and you will have a lot to cover.

First, you will introduce yourself and your students will introduce themselves. They are actually very interested in you and what you do, so tell them a little about your interests and dissertation topic. Be sure to go over the information for your office hours and how they can contact you through the semester. Also remind students of the professor's office hours and contact information and take time to explain when they might meet with or contact you and when they should get in touch with the professor. Course iSites—which gives you access to the email addresses, phone numbers, residential houses, and class standing of the students in your course—have made first-day index cards less necessary, but you may want the students either to say or to write for you information that is not included in the online profile, such as previous history classes taken or their reasons for choosing this course. Decide how you want to handle introductions, and then have the students introduce themselves to you and to each other.

Second, most professors will ask you to go over the syllabus, especially the course assignments. The students will invariably have many questions about it, and the Course Heads would rather these discussions took place in section than in lecture. Check with the Course Head about any administrative details she or he will want you to go over on the first day. Make sure that everyone located the course materials. Were they able to purchase the assigned books, or did the Coop run out of copies? Was everyone able to secure a coursepack? (If contents changed from previous years, make sure students know that a used coursepack will not be sufficient). Especially during the fall semester, ask if everyone knows how to check out a book or film placed on reserve. Make sure everyone has located the course website and knows how to use it.

Finally, you will get to the most important part of section, the course content for the day. Undoubtedly, there will be less time left for this than you would have liked, but you will still have about 20 – 30 minutes. It is important to use this time effectively so that students get a real sense of what to expect from your class. Treat this time like it is a mini-section, clarifying the lecture if necessary, posing questions for discussion, guiding the discussion to hit the elements you felt were most important, and summarizing these points at the end. Before the end of class, set up next week's reading for the students, making sure they know where to find it, what to expect from it, and if possible, what questions to think about when reading it. Finally, after class, you might send students an e-mail congratulating them on a good first section and inviting them again to stop by your office hours if they have any questions.

Final Thoughts

As you face your first day of section, think about all of the pearls of received wisdom and, after considering your own strengths, take from them what you consider important. Let me add several more pieces of advice to the well-worn mantras. Relax. Smile. Remember that this is what you want to do. Pause after you ask a question. Listen to the students. Take it one week at a time. You will be good at this. You *are* good at this! You are the teacher now. This will be a great semester.

Ten Ideas To Start Section Discussion

Excerpted from Peter Frederick, "The Dreaded Discussion: Ten Ways to Start," in *Teaching and the Case Method*. Eds. Louis B. Barnes, C. Roland Christensen and Abby J. Hansen. (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1994 edition), 90-95.

1. **Test goals and values:** "Why are we reading this?" Students pair off and decide together what they think is the primary value of the text and how it fits with the course goals. Alternatively, ask students to compare/contrast this text with another recent one. Ask them to identify something specific like themes or sources or theoretical frameworks.

2. **Gather concrete images:** Go around the table and ask students to describe one concrete scene/image/argument/example from the text. No analysis is necessary. Record the collective images on the board to create a visual record. Follow up questions might be "What connects these examples?" or "What themes emerge here?" or "How does the historian build his/her argument here?" In this way, everyone contributes early on in the section.

3. **Generate questions:** Ask students ahead of time to prepare one or two scholarly questions about the text, perhaps phrased in terms of an exam question. Have the student "own" his/her question and lead a discussion of it. Or as they walk in to the class, ask them to anonymously write down a question about the text. Ask a shy student to select one to ask the class.

4. **Go to the text:** Ask students to select ahead of time a passage, or do this yourself to begin class discussion. Instructions might be "Find a passage you think best explains the thesis of this text." Break students up into small groups to compare their passages and have them report to the class. Be sure to pause long enough so that everyone can find the place in their books.

5. **Break into smaller groups:** This is a good way to draw out quieter students. Have each group answer a different question and report back to the class. Or ask every group the same question – generally an opinion, argument or values-type question – and compare their responses. Be sure to give explicit instructions including how much time they have to prepare their answers. You can mix up group size and composition by pairing off with someone new, counting off by fives, etc. Have the groups report back orally or at the blackboard.

6. **Generate truth statements:** This exercise develops critical skills. Ask each group or individual to decide upon one or two statements known to be "true." This works especially well when approaching a new topic about which students have many assumptions, like slavery in the U.S. or Germany in World War II. Ask other students to raise questions or refute the truth statements. The purpose of the exercise is to generate a list of questions to explore in the upcoming unit.

7. **Force debate:** Force students to select one of two sides in an argument and then defend their choice in the form of a debate. Divide the class ahead of time or tell them they must prepare to represent either side of a contentious question. Make sure that students physically move within the room to face each other. Ask them to prepare to refer specifically to texts you have been reading.

8. **Roleplay:** Any situation involving multiple group

conflicts is a good one for role playing. For example, set up a town meeting in colonial Massachusetts where different types of colonists debate how to interact with local Native Americans. Or have a "televised" debate on U.S. participation in the Vietnam War. Because students can be nervous about role playing, allow them to have some choice by deciding whether or not to volunteer as an individual alone, or to be part of a group. TFs should monitor carefully the unspoken signals of discomfort or excessively hurtful language. Be sure to leave time to debrief at the end so that students/observers can discuss what it was like to play/observe a certain role and what they learned about that point of view.

9. **Set non-structured scenes:** Bring in a visual image, play a piece of music or a speech, or write a quotation on the board. Make it clear that you will not enter discussion for some period of time. Students must then begin and direct discussion on their own. Take descriptive notes while the students discuss and then read those notes back to them at the end of class.

10. **Begin with an open-ended question:** Once the expectation of a variety of ways to approach discussion has been established, you might stroll into class, hold up your book and ask, "How'd you like it?"

Teaching in Large Introductory Courses

By Adam Beaver (History)

Given the structure of the Department's undergraduate curriculum, it is quite possible (Europeanists, read "almost certain") that you will be tapped at some point to teach in one of the Department's large introductory surveys—like the 10a-10b or 20a-20b sequences—and/or one of the Core's many lecture courses. While optimists are correct in seeing this as a great chance to prove to prospective employers your ability to teach across a broad swath of chronology and/or geography, even the most ardent go-getter will admit that the prospect is also daunting. You'll feel like the proverbial naked emperor for at least part of the term, as your students probe you about events two centuries earlier than your earliest General Exam field, and—trust me—you'll be frustrated at least once or twice with the large quantity of material you're expected to cover in a week's section or the superficial understandings students develop from time to time because of it. I've been there, too, and in what follows I've tried to distill a few of the useful strategies that I've learned from my experiences.

Who are the students, and what do they know?

The first thing to keep in mind when teaching in introductory courses is that these classes are populated heavily—in some cases, nearly exclusively—by first-years. You may be tempted to dismiss this as an innocuous fact. Before you do, pause and think. You are in at least your third year of graduate school. You have had at least six more years of training than your students, the last two or more of which have been intensively geared toward making you a professional historian. You are an expert in source criticism. The majority of your students, on the other hand, won't even have heard the terms "primary source" and "secondary source," let alone know nuanced definitions of those terms. "Historiography"? Drop that word without first explaining it and watch your students' eyes roll back in their heads.

This is not to suggest that your students aren't brilliant, or that they won't be well-versed in these matters by the end of the semester. In fact, one of the secrets of intro classes is that first-years are by and large as wide-eyed and hard-working as any students you are ever likely to encounter. But you should be aware that your section is probably students' very first experience of professional history. Many will know history only as they experienced it in high school, where their success was frequently measured by how well they had memorized the digested interpretations of an "objective" textbook author. To get them to perform at a Harvard level, you will need to take time out of your discussions to explain—with examples—*how real historians think*. Questions to raise include: What are these old documents in the sourcebook good for? What is source criticism? How do historians arrive at their conclusions by reading a balanced mixture of primary and secondary sources? What is historiography, and how and why do historians disagree?

You should not be surprised if, as the first paper assignment approaches, several students come to your office hours and say, "I've never written a *history* paper before. How do I do it?" Such questions are central to the notion of an introductory course, and should be indulged. Take the time to show students how to read primary sources and how to construct historical arguments from their own reading. Spend time in section sketching out relevant historical debates and practice source criticism on your weekly readings.

You should also be aware that most first-years are still uncertain about the basic structure of Harvard courses. It's possible that they won't know what to make of section discussions. Are they required? Do they need to do the weekly reading in advance? Will there be quizzes? Don't be afraid to spend time in your first section explaining exactly what you'll be doing during the weekly discussion hour. If the professors have assigned primary sources, explain how you will analyze them. Five minutes spent in your first section will pay off in better discussions all semester long.

Why do students enroll in this course?

Knowing why your students have enrolled in your intro course is every bit as important as knowing what prior knowledge they bring to the table. More so than in any other type of course, students in the Department's large surveys hold strong preconceptions about the class, and those expectations, if left unaddressed, will profoundly influence what you are able to achieve in section.

There are essentially three reasons why students enroll in intro surveys. The first and most common is to satisfy a requirement—whether the Department's or the Core's. This group, to be frank, is usually highly skeptical of the purpose and format of intro survey courses. Statistically, up to three-quarters of our concentrators will go on to focus on twentieth-century America and recent international relations, and they therefore conclude that the medieval land tenure or ancient philosophy encountered in History 10a or 20a is arcane and irrelevant to their education. Nearly every year the *Crimson* prints a scathing indictment of required introductory lecture courses, especially when they deal with the "Eurocentric" issues of Western Civ. The claim: students don't learn anything in irrelevant classes that merely skim the surface of the *longe durée* and offer little direct contact with professors.

Fortunately, the situation is far from dire when dealing with these students in your own section. They simply need a little convincing. Try three things to combat student apathy:

Find efficient ways to maximize the personal attention you give each student. Do everything you can to find excuses for individual contact with your students. Demand that every student sign up to meet with you for ten minutes in your office hours to prepare or debrief their first paper assignment. Ask pairs of students to prepare weekly presentations on the reading, and then require that they meet with you after class to discuss their work. Email quiet students early and often to ask them if there is anything you can do to help them open up in class discussions. These are all relatively quick and efficient ways to reach out to students and make the class feel smaller, which goes straight to the heart of student criticism about class size and the quality of teaching.

State clearly a set of reasonable goals for section discussions. Students who initially find the course reading material unattractive will have even more difficulty slogging through it if they also don't know what they're supposed to be remembering. Every week, a few days before section, email your students a set of provocative points or questions to guide their reading: "Make sure you can compare Columbus' description of New World natives with Montaigne's. Who do you think was a better anthropologist?" Not only will this guarantee that students have read the good bits for section, it might actually interest them in the material—if you can find responsible ways to trigger their modern sensibilities.

Emphasize the great latitude which students in these courses have to make the syllabus their own. Remind your students that the worst papers and exam essays are those that try to touch on a little bit of everything without addressing anything deeply. Show them, with examples, how they can personalize and narrow the questions raised so that they conform to their personal interests. They may be enrolled in a comprehensive survey course, but that doesn't mean that budding economic historians can't choose to answer a general question on the causes of the American Civil War with a specific study of the economic impacts of slavery. Again, the goal is to make a large course feel small, and to make students see that under the wash of material that the *Crimson* calls shallow, there are also deep wells from which they can draw profound insight.

The second and third sorts of students who enroll in intro courses are those who are only *contemplating* the history concentration and those who simply choose to learn about history as an elective. The important point to remember in relation to these two groups is that these courses serve as most students' first, and many students' *only*, point of contact with our department and with the historical profession. The introductory courses are intended to help students discover what is unique about historians' approaches to evidence and argument and to help students decide whether college-level history is the right discipline for them. As a TF, think of yourself as a guide to history as a *living process*, not as a repository of dead facts.

A repository of dead facts is exactly what many intro survey courses threaten to become. To avoid this, *emphasize the fundamentals of historical methodology* in section. The raw content of a course like History 10 is not an adequate basis on which to judge what historians do—most historians do everything but write frenetic, sweeping histories of entire civilizations over centuries or millennia. Consider it your job to make each week as much a micro-lesson on how one might begin to write a monograph on the week's topic as it is a review of the specific material. The prospective historians among your students will appreciate the fact that your section offers an accurate preview of the Department's fundamentals-oriented tutorial track, and the non-specialists from other fields will be happy to add the historical approach to their arsenal of problem-solving skills.

Who's in charge here?

Your most obvious responsibility in a large intro course is to teach the students enrolled in your section, but it is of nearly equal importance to be a good team player as a member of the course's teaching staff, which usually consists of one or more faculty members, a Head TF, and additional Teaching Fellows. Your primary interaction with the course staff will take place at a regularly-scheduled weekly lunch meeting attended by both faculty and Teaching Fellows. These meetings, typically an hour in length, should be viewed as much more than a free lunch. They are an invaluable forum for you and fellow TFs to plan how you will teach your sections, prepare your students for assignments, and grade their work fairly and uniformly. They are also your best chance to voice any recommendations about the running of the course. This is particularly important in team-taught courses. As they rotate in and out of the classroom, the faculty will probably remain largely unaware of whether students are adjusting to the sudden change in style and content. If you hear of a valid student complaint, it is probably up to you to raise it. For instance: could Professor B distribute lecture outlines like Professor A did?

Three helpful ways to interface with the Course Head(s):

Ask for help in planning lessons outside your specialization. As mentioned above, you'll almost certainly find that for several weeks of these survey courses you won't know as much about the readings as you would like. Don't be shy about asking the faculty member in charge why he or she has chosen to include a specific text. What other sources were available? What should students (and you!) know about the author of the passage by the time your section is over? If students ask for context, or for clarification of a vague reference in the text, what should you tell them? This is one of the most valuable contributions professors can make to your development as a teacher.

Give feedback on professors' lectures. In broad introductory courses students may have difficulty connecting their narrower section discussions to the sweeping themes and interpretations often addressed by the lecturers. Homer's place in Archaic Greek culture, which may seem perfectly obvious to the lecturer, may not be so clear to students who see nothing more of Homer than a piece of poetry. As a TF, you are on the front lines, and you will do the course a great service if you inform the faculty whenever students lose their way between the spoken word delivered at lecture and the written word encountered in the course reader.

Provide a constant stream of information about student progress. In a large course, you have to train yourself—against your good nature—to treat your students differently than you would in a tiny upperclass tutorial in which the possibility of a student going terribly astray is minimal: you must enforce any and all deadlines. In a large intro course with a gaggle of students to watch, you cannot make exceptions for individual students. If you do, you run the risk of losing track of a student and having to explain to the Freshman Dean why your nonchalance allowed a student to fail out. If you have concerns about a particular student's performances or if a student raises extenuating circumstances and asks for an extension or special exam arrangements, communicate this, promptly and completely, to the Head TF or Course Head. The faculty and Head TF may be monitoring special students. And they will be much more concerned about maintaining equal standards across the course than you. Passing on information to them takes you off the hook when a favorite student confronts you with pleas or excuses. You can simply say, "it's out of my hands."

Last, but not least: Keep the big picture in focus

A final word of advice: the best thing you can do for students enrolled in the Department's introductory courses is to help them identify the themes undergirding the syllabus. As a TF, you want to keep these themes consistently visible throughout the semester. This is an important skill for TFs in all courses, but it is absolutely essential in a survey in which the centuries race by and the lecturers change. Try to stimulate habits of thought in your students such that they continually draw intelligent comparisons to previous material. Is the course guided by a professor's concern for the changing shape of public institutions? The development of political thought? Interactions with other civilizations? Cultural change? Helping to create master narratives—suitably nuanced, of course—is something that you can do from the first day of class, and it will make you and your students feel much more at home in your mutual odyssey.

Teaching Outside Your Field of Expertise

By Carrie Endries (History)

Sometimes graduate students get the crazy notion that they should make themselves as marketable as possible for that elusive academic job by preparing to teach any and all forms of history – yes my work is in twentieth-century Madagascar, but I have taught the U.S. Women's Suffrage movement … and I can use Native American material objects as primary sources! Other graduate students think it's a nice intellectual challenge to learn—and teach—something in an area of the world that is less than familiar. Still others have no choice but to teach outside their area of expertise as their research interest generates little excitement among Harvard undergraduates.

Almost all of us who serve as History 97 or History 98 Tutors end up teaching outside of our fields of expertise because very few of us have covered the history of Harvard or the fall of Constantinople in our General Exams. Luckily, in those classes, Tutors are given a set of readings and told to stay several steps ahead of their students. It is understood that you won't be able to answer every question that students pose on fourteenth-century battle procedure.

But what do you do when you're teaching in a tutorial, departmental, or Core class that covers several world areas and students expect you to fill the historical gaps left by their readings? What if you – gasp – study one non-Western area and are then expected to be able to teach all non-Western history? What if you have a student in a World Empires class who insists on writing his research paper on nineteenth-century New Zealand? The anxiety builds. Here are some suggestions to help you find your way:

1. **Teach with confidence.** Although this may be the first time you've taught a book on, say, Kenya, chances are you have read the material much more closely than your students. Because you have lengthy training in reading books with the tools of an historian – with an eye to examining sources or questioning analytical rigor, for example – you are already several steps ahead of your students.

2. **Learn some minimal historiography.** Ask the Course Head why she assigned a particular reading. Why was this book chosen to teach students about slavery in the Americas? The Course Head constructed the syllabus with a goal in mind – the better you understand that goal, the more you'll be able to translate how a particular reading fits into the course, as well as into the greater historiography on the country or subject at hand. For a book, check out reviews in a major journal, or look for a historiographical essay published in an area studies publication like the *Journal of African History*.

3. **Talk to your colleagues.** Luckily, the Department's graduate students cover all sorts of world areas. There is bound to be someone who can direct you to a good basic book or who can provide a quick fact like when Batavia became Jakarta. This is especially useful when you'd like to pronounce something correctly but find your Vietnamese isn't exactly up to snuff these days.

4. **Use the encyclopedia.** The History Department library has an excellent set of ***Encyclopedia Britannica***, which can give you a basic interpretation of an entire country's history in several pages. These books are especially good for quick political histories highlighting key dates – such as the year of Mexico's independence – that would be a little embarrassing not to know when you're teaching about Spain's attitudes towards its colonies. If you have more time, the *Cambridge Histories* of various world areas or time periods can also be quite useful. If you are focusing on one world area all semester, search out a reliable textbook to refer to while you teach in the course.

5. **Use the internet.** Helping you find unknown but incredibly useful resources is one of the wonders that Google can offer. Google is especially valuable when you think of something that would make a great visual addition to class (like a map), but the timing of your moment of brilliance leaves you only 30 minutes to locate the source and make it happen. You can find maps and other visual aids on a number of sites like www.eduplace.com/ss/maps and www.saburchill.com/history/chapters.

www.eduplace.com/ss/maps
www.saburchill.com/history/chapters

6. **Don't be afraid to say "I don't know."** And then make it a goal to find out. Harvard undergraduates come up with challenging questions every day, and there is no way for a TF to prepare for every question that might arise. Instead, be up front about the limits of your knowledge and try to direct them to a resource where they might find the answer. Shop the question out to other students in the class if any of them have special knowledge in a certain field. Or look the answer up yourself after class and let students know what you find by email or in the next class meeting.

Being a Head Teaching Fellow in the History Department

By Rebecca Goetz (History)

I don't wish to be curmudgeonly about being a Head TF, but in my experience the position ranges from being mildly annoying to downright ulcer inducing. I've done it twice now, and I think if someone asks me to do it again I'll hide under my bed. I learned the hard way that Murphy's Law does indeed apply to history course management—what can go wrong will go wrong in large quantities with a ridiculous degree of frequency.

Your main responsibility is to see to the efficient running of the course. This means coordinating with your professor, managing your Teaching Fellows, and seeing to the day-to-day mundane administrative tasks that keep the course functioning smoothly. Chances are your efforts will go largely unnoticed.

The job has its rewards, though. A course with few noticeable administrative snafus earns students' praises—even if they don't know who is responsible. You also have the opportunity to improve your hard-won teaching wisdom. If you are managing Teaching Fellows who have never taught before, you might want to offer help in formulating lesson plans, grading that troublesome first batch of papers, or in dealing with difficult students. If you're willing to help out early on, it can nip some problems in the bud (see below on what can go wrong). And, if you end up with a position at a university where you teach large lecture courses assisted by TFs of your own, this experience will certainly help you manage your own large course.

With some simple planning, knowledge of where to go to accomplish certain tasks, and information about whom to ask for help, you might make earning the extra fifth that comes with Head TF-ing a less stressful experience.

Below you will find a step-by-step process for serving as a Head TF. For quick, searchable information, also check out the "Harvardese Glossary," available online at the Bok Center website.

bokcenter.harvard.edu

Before Your Course

Things to do the summer before your course (for a fall class) or the fall before your course (for a spring class):

1. **Meet with your professor** and set ground rules, because the nature of the Head TF job is fairly nebulous. For some Head TFs, the job will require that you do everything short of writing the professor's lectures. Others will find their duties much less onerous. Before the semester begins and all hell breaks loose, make sure each party knows his/her responsibilities, and that these are mutually agreed upon. If you are teaching a course with more than one faculty member, make sure you know which professor (the one whom the registrar has designated "Course Head") to go to with paperwork that must be signed.

2. **Remember, you can say NO to your professor.** You need not fetch coffee, do personal photocopying, make nametags, or write lectures if you don't want to. Your job is to manage the course, not become a personal slave.

3. **Have the Course Head finalize the syllabus.** To order books and course packs, you must have a finalized reading list. This *cannot* be left to the last minute. The Harvard COOP sets a deadline for course book ordering; make sure your Course Head knows what that date is. Remind him/her frequently if necessary.

4. **Ask Caron Yee (for departmental courses) or the Core Office** for the projected enrollment of your course. Without preregistration, this process is a bit like witchcraft, but it will give you a baseline number to use in decision-making (how many books should be ordered? How many classrooms need to be reserved?). The Department and Core cap sections sizes at 18; tutorials are generally capped at 6.

5. **Classrooms!** The Classrooms office sends Course Heads a form to reserve a lecture classroom and a/v equipment. Either get this form and fill it out yourself

or ensure that the Course Head has, in fact, submitted it to the Classrooms office. (I generally keep photocopies of this and other key pieces of paperwork in case of later controversies.) It is the Head TF's responsibility to arrange for section or tutorial classrooms. Although you won't know the exact number of rooms you need until after study card day, you should email Classrooms (classrms@fas.harvard.edu) a list detailing the number, size, and approximate times you think you will need rooms based on the course's projected enrollment. Tack on an extra section or two, just in case. It helps if you tell Classrooms that you have already made an effort to secure rooms by other means. Contact Janet Hatch to reserve the Lower Library and the Blue Room (Robinson 117), and Arthur Hock in the Warren Center to reserve the Basement Seminar Room.

classrms@fas.harvard.edu

6. **Staffing!** It is NOT your responsibility to recruit the TF staff. Caron Yee coordinates hiring decisions in consultation with the Course Head, the Director of Undergraduate Studies, Director of Graduate Studies, and the Department Chair. Because you will become the primary contact person for TFs teaching in your course, you should be aware of these hiring decisions, and should ask the course instructor to keep you posted. As soon as a TF is hired for your course, alert him or her to important dates (the Tutorial Retreat, the first staff meeting, etc.).

7. **Book ordering!** Books are ordered through the COOP, which can now be done online. Be sure to inflate your expected numbers by about a third, since the COOP will deflate your numbers by about a third when ordering from the publisher. The overall result of such manipulation is that generally speaking, enough books will arrive for your students. If you order at least six weeks prior to the beginning of classes, you might even get them on time! Again, keep copies of any paperwork you exchange with the COOP.

8. **Desk Copies!** Before classes begin, give each faculty member and TF a complete set of course readings. To obtain these, order desk copies of each book from its publisher. Publishers' websites generally contain directions for ordering desk copies. If you're having trouble, the University of Virginia has a useful website that will provide contact information for all but the most elusive publishers. But be warned: publishers don't always send the number of books you need. If you find yourself without enough books for the staff, talk to your Course Head. Professors usually have access to departmental funds that can be used to purchase extra desk copies.

9. **Course reserves** should be set up through Lamont, which has an online form you can fill out for books available in the library and through E-Reserves. If books or other materials you are using are not in the library, ask Lamont to order the materials. If you have a coursepack, you'll need to hand-deliver it to Lamont. Sometimes the library, um, loses stuff. Check frequently and in person about the state of your reserve readings.

uvabookstoreonline.com/DESKCOPYONLINE.pdf

10. **Course websites** are automatically set up through the Instructional Computing Group. They are useful for distributing the syllabus, paper assignments, section assignments, and for keeping students informed about course events and changes. Some courses set up web-based discussion groups, usually organized by sections. Basic web-management of this sort is part of the skill-set and responsibility of the Head TF. In some cases, however, professors have far greater ambition for course websites, requesting that slide shows, lecture notes, extensive links to related sites, and other extras be made available. If you don't know how to do this, sign up for one of ICG's workshops and learn how. But if your professor requests a fully customized website, be aware: this takes a lot of time and effort. If you do fully customize a website with a lot of extra content, you should know that 1) it will take over your life, and 2) it isn't in your job description as Head TF. You should get paid extra for that work, usually through a grant your professor obtains from ICG. Remember, if your professor is asking for web-related miracles and not compensating you accordingly, you can (and probably should!) say "no."

The Semester is about to begin, panic sets in!

1. **The syllabus should be done.** Double check that you are properly observing all University holidays. If you

find that you have lectures or sections on holidays that are recognized but not observed by the University (i.e., Yom Kippur), arrange to accommodate students. Lectures can be videotaped and sections can be rescheduled. You should double check that your syllabus has a reading list, course schedule, exam dates and paper due dates, and that it lists course policy with regards to section absence, late papers, and plagiarism. The syllabus should also list your name, email, and office hours.

2. **Set a time for lunch meetings** with the professor(s) and the staff. These should happen weekly and give everyone an opportunity to touch base. You can also use this time to go over lesson plans and other teaching issues. The Department and the Core curriculum office has money to pay for lunches; talk to your Course Head or to Cory Paulsen.

3. **Meet with your Teaching Fellows** prior to the start of classes. Make sure everyone understands the structure of the class, course assignments, and course policies (like the consequences of missing section or submitting a paper late). If your course instructors have established a curve or specific grading criteria, now is the time to discuss them. If they want to have largely uniform sections in which students cover roughly the same content and are exposed to the same skills at a similar level of difficulty, you should say so now and set up mechanisms by which each Teaching Fellow knows what to teach when.

4. **You should hear from Classrooms** about your lecture room and your section classrooms. If you find you don't have enough rooms, Laura Johnson in the Tutorial Office keeps a list of rooms controlled not by Classrooms but by individual departments around the University, which can be helpful.

5. **Check the COOP for your books.** If they aren't in, check with the management on the status of your order. You might have to put some pressure on them. Do NOT let the COOP send you away with assurances. Stay until you have talked with a manager and have received a WRITTEN statement about when your books will be available and what steps are being taken to obtain them. Likewise, make sure Lamont has processed your reserves list.

6. **Student disabilities.** The Accessible Education Office will refer to you students who have documented learning disabilities and what steps you need to take to accommodate them for papers and exams. Students who require extra consideration on exams or other assignments should see you in the first few weeks of class to provide the appropriate documentation. Your syllabus should state this and you should remind students of it via email. There's nothing worse than finding out right before the midterm that a student is entitled to some consideration but never told you, and now you have to scramble to take care of the necessary arrangements!

7. **Anything else you need?** If your professor requires a/v equipment like slide carousels, overhead projectors, and microphones, make sure you've made arrangements to access those (usually Classrooms will help you set this up if you request early). If you have questions, contact Audiovisual Services at 5-9460. Need maps? You can check wall maps out of the map library in Pusey.

Sectioning: Your next big task!

Sectioning requires a lot of work. The new online sectioning system has a few virtues: students can sign up at will, and the program will not double-section anyone. It also has problems. It doesn't, for example, take into consideration a student's gender, year, or concentration. Some courses find it desirable to section with these factors in mind. Depending on your goals, you can section online or by hand, or by some combination of the two (that is, section online and then manually move students around when necessary).

You should set some ground rules about sectioning:

1. **You, the Head TF, should be the only one sectioning.** Your Course Head and fellow TFs mean well, but they should understand that they CANNOT promise students that they can switch sections. If you retain all control over the process, there won't be any confusion.

2. **After sectioning has been announced**, tell students that in order to switch sections, they must find someone to switch with (in some cases, this means a student of the same gender or of the same concentration). This

will eliminate all but the most desperate and deserving of section switchers.

3. **Be aware!** Students will attempt to manipulate you and your TFs in pursuit of a different section or some other special accommodation. Do not let yourself be sucked into sob stories!

4. **Spend no more than an hour per day sectioning.** To do more is to lose your mind.

5. **Sections should be stable after the third week of classes.** Resist moving anyone after that time (strenuously!).

Maintaining Momentum

(around the middle of the semester)

1. **Conduct some sort of midterm evaluation.** You can use one of the Bok Center's midterm evals, or make up your own. It doesn't matter how you do it, but it will give you an idea of how well the course is going.

2. **Remind first-time TFs** that the History Department requires them to be videotaped and evaluated at the Bok Center. This can be a useful experience for everyone, and all evaluations are confidential.

3. **When preparing for the midterm**, you should remind the professor to make two or three different exams written, or to have some extra questions in hand and be ready to do such. Students will be sick, miss the exam for athletic competitions, etc., etc., so be prepared for multiple make-up exams. Exam booklets are available in the basement of the Science Center; you need a Harvard Officer ID to pick them up. Get enough so that each student can use two booklets. Sometimes the Science Center runs out of exam booklets; in that case, haunt the grad student offices in the basement of Robinson. Most occupants of those offices have their own private stash of leftover exam booklets from previous semesters.

4. **After the midterm exam**, your professor will get a form that you should fill out with SAT/UNSAT for each student. Ask TFs to give you a list of students with Cs or below. As Head TF, you should go over each case and decide, in conjunction with the student's TF, whether you need to contact resident deans in the houses or freshman deans. Don't view reporting students who aren't performing as punitive. Harvard has a plethora of services for students facing academic and/or personal problems. When you alert resident deans or freshman deans to potential problems, these administrators can see to it that students get the help and attention they need.

5. **This is also a good time to check on grading consistency.** Make sure midterm grades are roughly equivalent across sections. If you have a grading policy limiting the numbers of As, now is the time to check to make sure you're on track and if not, to make the necessary adjustments. One way to avoid outliers is to have a model paper grading exercise. Give all your TFs a set of the same papers to grade, one that's A-range, B-range, C-range, etc. Grading these papers and discussing them together makes your grading more standard across sections and makes it easier for TFs to communicate course expectations to students. If you contact the Harvard Writing Project, they will often send a staff member and writing expert to help you run this meeting.

6. **Contact the CUE office** if you want the course evaluated at the end of the semester. This is almost always a good idea.

Towards the end of the semester:

1. Your professor should receive a form about the final exam; make sure it is filled out and returned to the Registrar. If more than 100 students are enrolled in the class, you can also submit the final exam to the Registrar and the staff will photocopy it for you. Note that some students will probably need an alternate exam and exam date due to a religious exemption or because (in the fall) they must leave Harvard early for a spring study abroad program. Other students will miss the exam because they are sick or because they inadvertently fail to appear (they sleep through an alarm, show up on the wrong day, etc.). Harvard has strict policies for those who miss the final exam without prior permission. These students must apply to the Ad Board in order to take a makeup.

Regardless, you will need several different final exams to accommodate early and late test-takers.

2. Make arrangements to have students complete CUE evaluations online. Remind them frequently to do it. CUE scores are no good to anyone if you don't signal to students that you take them seriously.

After the Final:

1. **Schedule a final grading meeting** to review grades and talk over problems. Your professor(s) definitely should be present for this. It is useful to prepare a spread sheet into which grades for course assignments have been inputted. You will fill out the final grade sheet. It's helpful to enlist one of your TFs to help you proofread it.

2. Although the course is done, you will have lingering incompletes. Stay on top of these to make sure every student's grade gets turned in.

3. **Write an "exit memo"** for your successor detailing the specific problems and joys of your course. You should also burn a CD with copies of the syllabus, assignments, and other course material for the next Head TF of the course.

When things go wrong:

Course Packs

I've had bad experiences with course packs and generally think they are tools of the devil. They are easy to deal with only if you are a Head TF in a Core class, in which case all you need to do is send the photocopied documents to the Core, who handles the rest. For History Department courses, you must photocopy readings yourself. From there, you have three choices: obtain copyright permission yourself, use the Coop to obtain copyrights and produce the packets, or use some other copy shop in the Square to obtain copyrights and produce the packets. The first of these options is the least appetizing; in fact, I would refuse to do it without additional compensation. Clearing copyright yourself is time-consuming, stressful, and often unsuccessful. Gnomon Copy in the Square gets my vote. Gnomon will clear copyright for you and produce the packets. They are also efficient. As an alternative to course pack creation, check the E-Resources available online at Harvard. Many articles once included in course packs can now be found through Harvard's electronic resources. Speak with Barbara Burg at Lamont (bburg@fas) or refer to the library's site (see below). If you are the Head TF of a course that will have a course pack, start EARLY and check on its progress OFTEN.

hcl.harvard.edu/research/guides/deeplinking

Student Complaints

Students will come to you, as Head TF, with variations on two themes.

1) "My TF gave me an unfair grade. Will you regrade it?" I require that students requesting a regrade give me a clean copy of the assignment in question and bring the graded copy with them. Never, ever overrule your TFs unless they have failed a paper that is clearly brilliant and of publishable quality (this will not happen). Students who realize that you will not change the grade will usually go away after awhile. Some will be more persistent. It is unlikely that your professor will want to get involved. I generally recommend that you threaten to LOWER the grade of a particularly persistent and/or rude student. Sometimes, a student's grading complaint is symptomatic of a grading problem (a TF is grading too harshly or isn't giving constructive comments on written work), and that should not be ignored. Arrange a special grading session with the Course Head and TFs to address and resolve these problems.
2) "My TF doesn't know what s/he is talking about/is a dimwit/bad teacher." (I myself was the object of one such complaint: the student told the Head TF that I, as an Americanist, was not qualified to teach Western Civ. Ahem.) You should deal with these complaints forcefully but thoughtfully. As a Head TF, it is your responsibility to stand behind your staff when talking to students. At the same time, sometimes a TF will have some difficulty in the classroom, and student complaints can sometimes alert you to this. In such a case, intervene by pointing the TF to resources at the Bok Center or by helping him/her formulate success-

ful lesson plans. Also, discuss the situation with the course instructor, who can (and should!) help in such cases. It goes without saying that you should never use a student complaint to single out and humiliate a TF.

Dishonesty in Student Work

Your syllabus should have an emphatic statement indicating the consequences of plagiarism (failing the paper, failing the course, being excluded from the course, etc.). TFs should be on the lookout for plagiarism. You can generally spot internet papers because of their frequent misspellings of the same word or frequent changes of tone. By typing one sentence, in quotes, into Google, you can usually trace their origins. If you or one of your TFs spots a plagiarized paper, assemble all the evidence and submit it to your professor, who will then submit it to the Ad Board for adjudication. Do not be afraid to confront and punish plagiarizers. The only reason students do it is because they think they can get away with it—don't let them get away with it!

Difficult TFs

Head TFs find themselves in a potentially awkward position: that is, they sometimes have to be the bosses (in the sense that the smooth running of the course is your responsibility) of TFs with whom they are normally drinking buddies. The most likely problem you'll encounter is a TF who isn't adhering to course policies. Teaching Fellows must uphold the policies of the course, even if they don't agree with them. Some TFs don't like stringent late paper penalties, for example, but that doesn't mean that TFs shouldn't enforce the rules for their students. Don't be bashful about telling a TF who isn't adhering to the policies and procedures of the course to knock it off. The students must be treated fairly across sections; you don't want to deal with students' complaints like: "My friend in Larry's section turned in his paper late and nothing happened. I'm in Mark's section and he refused to take my paper late and now I have a zero. It isn't fair!"

Difficult Course Heads

Head TFs also find themselves in the unenviable position of having to nag course heads to take care of their responsibilities for the course, whether it is something as small as signing off on official paperwork to something more important, such as helping you make sure all the TFs are fairly implementing course policy. Professors have a lot of things on their minds, and unfortunately the day-to-day frays aren't always their top priorities. Do not be afraid to assert yourself. Your professors owe you timely responses to email, and they owe you their support and confidence in administering the class. If you feel like you're not getting this support from your Course Head, make an appointment to see him/her ASAP. Be pleasant and polite, but be firm. Make sure your expectations are clear, and make sure the consequences of not backing you up are clear (usually the threat of a course in chaos gets results!).

This isn't a complete list of all the things you'll wind up doing and all the problems you'll have to confront and solve. But I hope it helps you plan and troubleshoot!

Primary Source Based Section Discussions

By Katherine A. Grandjean (History)

Having tolerated several ho-hum sections as an undergraduate, I started my teaching career determined to find the "key" to leading great discussions. Of course, there is no magic "key." But in my first few section meetings I learned a big lesson: students don't want to *talk about* history as much as they want to *do* history. Great discussions happened when I convinced my students that they were *doing* history, rather than just regurgitating it. That's why primary source based discussions can be so much fun. Primary sources allow students to be the historians—to find out what intrigues them, to do the detective work, and to solve historical puzzles.

Your first job as section leader is to make sure your students have the tools necessary for reading, analyzing, and—of course—*discussing* these sources. For starters:

1. What is a primary source? A primary source is a piece from the past—for example, a newspaper article, a tea pot, a diary, a broadside, a painting, the Constitution of the United States, an advertisement for toothpaste, a gravestone, a woman's embroidery from revolutionary Connecticut. A primary source does not have to be a written text; it can be an object, an image, or even oral testimony. Primary sources are generated by historical actors (unlike secondary sources, which are the efforts of historians and other intellectuals to use evidence from the past to make historical generalizations). A document is only a *primary* source for the time in which it is created.

2. How do you read a primary source? Primary sources require interpretation. They need to be read critically. Although some students may be accustomed to working with primary sources, many won't be. Early in the semester, choose one primary source and have the class analyze it as a group. Bring a handout—a painting, a diary entry, something everyone can interpret together. Lead them through the process you hope they will follow as budding historians, identifying important information and weighing the source's problems: What kind of document is it? When and why was it created? Who wrote it, and what do we know about the author—any biases? What's interesting? What seems odd or unexpected? What does the source tell us about the culture or time period in which it was created? What historical questions does it help answer? What else might you want to know? Where might you look for that information?

Encourage students to toss even their shakiest impressions into the conversation. You'll set a comfortable and collaborative tone for the semester.

3. Start with a puzzle or a question. Primary source-based discussions work well when the questions are broad and open-ended, so that students can offer *differing* interpretations of the evidence. You might begin by focusing on one source and one puzzle. (For example: What motivated some American colonists to boycott British goods in the 1770s? Can one man's diary entry—or probate record, or pension application—help answer the bigger historical question at hand? What evidence does it offer on that question?) If the question is open-ended, students will feel comfortable debating its answer.

Once your students are used to debating, you can even ask them to generate the major questions raised by their assigned readings. (This is good practice for finding paper topics, too.)

4. Go deep. Teach close reading. Choose a short passage, or—better yet—focus on a quote highlighted by one of your students, and do an extremely close analysis. What underlying meanings or assumptions aren't immediately obvious? Why has the author chosen certain words? Are there any words you don't understand?

5. Go broad. Good discussions require students to think broadly and synthetically about what they've read. Get them into the habit of putting their hypotheses into context. Does the impression given by an individual source match that given by a broad range of sources? Why do some sources contradict each other? Do the sources agree with historians' accounts of what happened? If the assigned sources offer contradictory evidence, have a handout that highlights that problem. For instance, why do some authors offer radically different accounts of the fall of Constantinople?

6. Surprise them. There are many different kinds of primary sources and many different ways to approach them. Show your students how evidence within a source (or sources) can be "unlocked"—by counting, decoding, mapping. Blow up a map and chart the origins of runaway slaves in Virginia, or count the number of times a diarist mentions a certain acquaintance. The message: new approaches often reveal unexpected evidence.

7. Be excited! Let your students know that you are excited by their theories and interpretations. Show them you're impressed, and they'll push themselves to be more creative and ask fresh questions. Good luck!

Introduction to Tutorial Teaching

By Professor Joyce Chaplin

The Department currently hires graduate student Tutors for two kinds of courses—History 97 and Research Seminars—as well as to advise senior theses. As members of the Department's Board of Tutors, graduate students hired for these positions play a crucial role in ensuring the quality of our advanced undergraduate instruction.

If teaching sections for a lecture course puts you somewhere in the middle of a hierarchy (professor, then TF, then student), tutorial teaching, let alone advising a thesis, makes you more of an intellectual partner with a student. True, you know much more than an undergraduate does and your greater knowledge puts you in a position to evaluate their work. But, as a Tutor or Thesis Advisor, you will find yourself giving information and advice about doing history in a way that imagines—must imagine—the student recipient of that information and advice as a potential peer. In this way, the Tutorial Office can take advantage of your expertise in order to make our undergraduates into actual historians.

This is no small thing. As students progress through tutorials, they acquire skills that enable them to read and write critically about the past. Can they believe what they read? You will teach them how to evaluate readings and form a defensible opinion. Can they make a good argument? You will encourage them to criticize each other in order to craft a convincing analysis. Can they locate the best possible evidence? You will teach them how to find primary sources and to select from them material to support their arguments. If you're advising a thesis writer, your advice can make the difference between an indifferent piece of work and an important essay, one so good that its author might never have imagined it was in her/his power to create such a thing.

Take advantage of this experience. In my advice to section TFs (see above) I encouraged section leaders to think about their "apprenticeship" as an opportunity to acquire teaching skills that could be used anywhere. In History 97, Research Seminars, and with thesis writers, you have an opportunity to consider (and reconsider) your own strategies as a historian. A historian's life as a researcher and life as a professor each take on strength if the two lives are joined. This is as true for graduate students as for anyone else. You don't always need to tell your students what you work on, how you work, what works for you as a researcher and writer—a little of this goes a long way, unless your students are very interested. (Or polite.) But you will need to think about these things in order for your teaching to be at its most effective. And, in the end, your own work will benefit from your having to articulate why certain ways of doing history are better than others.

The Pleasures and Challenges of Teaching Small Classes

By John Gagné (History)

The Department's tutorials and Research Seminars allow us to refashion the Rankean seminar, the high-level *Gesellschaft*, "composed not of subject students but of members." Bereft nowadays of the map cabinets and revolving bookcases, and freed from nineteenth-century ideologies, we nevertheless have the small group of committed historians and the very real sense of forming a fellowship. This sense of fellowship is what makes the tutorial so rewarding for both Tutor and student, and it's worth reminding ourselves that most sections – merely because of their size – don't allow students to enjoy extended discussion with peers and instructors, and so it behooves us all the more to make tutorial not only pleasant, but also intellectually stimulating and challenging for them.

The intimacy of tutorial allows us really to get to know our students and their writing or research projects. While in large sections we move from assignment to assignment hoping that students have taken lessons and critiques to heart, the tutorial provides a venue to discuss criticism and help them hone particular skills. Don't underestimate the value of serious and specific written comments; students often agree that improvements can be made in their work and are eager to discuss strategies. It's really these discussions about strategy, craft, and historical method that form the core of the tutorial, and they usually provide a great opportunity to tear into important historical and historiographical questions (What is the difference between cultural history and social history? How do you structure a clear and persuasive opening paragraph? Why are footnotes so important?).

While the small size of tutorials and Research Seminars is their best feature, it also means that each student bears a sizeable responsibility during discussions. Logistically, it's important to stress to them the importance of informed attendance. The Tutor exists to encourage, to prod, to moderate, but not to lecture – tutorial is at its best when the Tutor joins the fabric of the discussion without managing it too aggressively. And though it can be satisfying for us to lead students towards a eureka moment, it's ultimately more satisfying for them to happen upon it themselves. They will, after all, ask for our help when they run aground on conceptual shoals. The idea here is that it's fine (and sometimes even desirable) when these little shipwrecks happen, since tutorial should encourage topical and conceptual depth, and at times the struggle to reach those depths can be revelatory for everyone, Tutor included. While big sections encourage breadth over depth, tutorials challenge students to think about (often for the first time) how to do history responsibly. I've often found that using my own work as an example – whether positive or negative – can be useful in helping them see ways to confront or circumnavigate their own difficulties. It's a truism, but the Tutor's judicious silence can also help to achieve these little breakthroughs by letting them puzzle things out on their own.

A technique that I have found works particularly well in tutorial is having students deliver oral presentations now and then. While in large sections presentations don't always work well, in tutorial they can set the tone for the discussion and help to focus it. Preparing to present also guarantees that students come to tutorial invested in the material. It also reminds students that tutorial requires a certain level of decorum and seriousness. I've discovered, though, that the most relaxed tutorials are my best. The high energy of big sections doesn't transfer well to this more intimate environment, and rather than accomplishing more, relentlessness breeds intellectual exhaustion. Students are naturally inclined toward making a good impression, but tutorial really isn't about making good impressions. When you lower the stakes and make it clear that they're not always being evaluated, they find a freedom to explore ideas more creatively and more daringly; ultimately, you free them to take some initiative for themselves in setting the parameters of a helpful, engaging, meaningful discussion.

The Tutor-student connection continues even after the tutorial has finished, and students sometimes return to us for recommendation letters and informal advice. We often get to know our students better than professors do, and so we can find ourselves in the position of occasional advisors or mentors. As such, our familiarity with our students' interests, strengths, and potential can be marshaled to help them find Senior Thesis advisors, discover professors whom they ought to know, and even explore summer jobs and internships. In this way, the fellowship developed in tutorial continues profitably during the rest of their time at Harvard.

Teaching the Skills of Historical Analysis: History 97

By Dan Wewers (History)

HELP WANTED: Graduate student to serve as TUTOR for History 97. Must be comfortable in various roles: POKER PLAYER, DRILL SERGEANT, DEN MOTHER, TRANSLATOR, TAXONOMIST, WILDERNESS GUIDE, CIRCUS-MASTER, BRICKLAYER, and even, at times, HISTORIAN. If interested, please contact the Tutorial Office in Robinson Hall for further details.

I don't remember seeing a job description before I accepted my first position as a Tutor in History 97. At most, I consulted the course syllabus and found 97 described as "an introduction to the discipline of history." According to the syllabus, students were to "explore the historian's craft by examining different approaches to history" – namely, historical narrative, biography, intellectual history, and microhistory – in a series of four units, each lasting three weeks. With a little help from some experienced Tutors, I managed to figure out the course's rhythmic schedule. In the first week of each unit, professors would lead seminar discussion of a representative text. In week two, Tutors would guide sophomores through customized packets of source material, while in week three, students would write essays (using the packets as evidence) and participate in peer review. At the end of the semester, each student would select one of the four papers to revise. Should my sophomores complete all five papers in a timely fashion, I would stamp their passports and usher them into the departmental community. Easy enough, I thought.

Having had some experience as a Teaching Fellow in the Department and in the Core, I naively assumed that the Tutor's role would be similar to the TF's – except that I'd have more time (two hours per tutorial, compared with one per section) and fewer students (four or five, rather than fifteen or twenty). As a Teaching Fellow, I had led discussion sections, convened office hours, and graded papers before. *How much different could the Tutor's job be?* After two tours of duty as a Tutor in History 97, I've come to appreciate the manifold differences. Nifty TFs do not necessarily make successful Tutors. *Take my advice: to teach the skills of historical analysis effectively, you'll need to wear a number of hats.*

You'll be a poker player. In other words, you'll have to make the best hand out of the cards you're dealt. Every tutorial involves a random mix of students: you might have five future Hoopes Prize winners or five contenders for the "How-did-they-ever-get-into-Harvard-in-the-first-place?" award. In my experience, you'll typically have one or two aces, two or three solid performers, and one or two underachievers. Get to know your students early in the term and earn their trust; you need to diagnose strengths and weaknesses right away in order to spot patterns and offer effective criticism. Always be prepared to change your mind on a student. Whatever you do, tailor your teaching style to suit each student's needs. Even the aces (God bless them!) can learn from their peers; even the underachievers (God bless them!) have something to contribute.

You'll be a drill sergeant and a den mother. Try not to get too comfortable in either role. As a drill sergeant, you're responsible for instilling good habits into your students as they enter the departmental community. Focus on the fundamentals: now is the time for your students to learn how to read a document, craft a footnote, and compose a thesis statement. Repeat exercises if necessary. If they skip class, miss appointments, or submit papers late, don't fail to discipline them. At the same time, avoid turning History 97 into History Boot Camp by injecting humor into the classroom and varying the routine with each unit. Be sympathetic, especially the morning after a tight deadline. In my experience, strong coffee and sugary donuts help take the edge off peer review.

You'll be a translator, taxonomist, and wilderness guide. History 97 often has the feel of foreign language instruction, especially the week of seminar. When your seminar leader (playing the part of native speaker) interjects jargon and idiom, your students (operating in an unfamiliar tongue) will struggle to keep up. It's your challenge to get everyone to speak the same language! Spend time up front clarifying terms (e.g., "agency") in order to avoid massive confusion later. In addition, resist the temptation to collapse all categories and conventions. Your professors, with good intentions, will seek to blur the boundaries between various historical genres, but they may end up confusing all but the brightest students. Think of yourself as a taxonomist – organize rules and conventions into manageable categories, and distinguish clearly (if never conclusively) between genres. When the seminar book fails to provide a useful template for the subsequent paper, take on the role of wilderness guide. Map the landscape for your students – pointing out proper directions and potential pitfalls – so they feel comfortable venturing onto unfamiliar terrain.

You'll be a circus-master in the ring during the two hours of tutorial. Don't be fooled into thinking that two hours, with only four or five students, will offer enough time to cover every important subject. It won't. Your two hours will be gone in an instant. Make sure to structure your time in advance with a lesson plan; focus on 3-5 points that your students should know cold when they leave the room. In addition, make the most of out-of-class time to carry on your instruction. Turn e-mails, handouts, office-hour conferences, and paper comments into complementary teaching exercises.

You'll be a bricklayer, so build on skills acquired in previous units. By focusing on the fundamentals, each unit will sound less threatening than it otherwise might appear. The biography unit, for instance, shares much in common with the narrative unit; students will do well to practice the same skills (e.g., chronological organization). The final two units (microhistory and revision) offer opportunities for culmination. Students will appreciate the chance to put into play skills learned (or missed) in the first three units. When it comes to course planning, stand on the shoulders of giants. Make liberal use of the assignments and lesson plans created by Tutors who came before you. Your Administrative Tutor will distribute these materials at the first staff meeting of the semester.

If you're lucky, you'll even have time to be a historian. While you might not make as much progress on your dissertation as you had hoped, you will come away with a deeper appreciation for the craft of history. By teaching young scholars how to read sources critically, construct arguments forcefully, and present ideas clearly, you'll have a chance to refine your own techniques and model them for a receptive audience. Cross your fingers: the extra time you spend on pedagogy might just improve your own research methods and writing skills.

How to be a Guru: Teaching in the Research Seminars

By Adam Beaver (History)

What is a Research Seminar?

Research Seminars are new additions to the department's course offerings, making their debut in the 2007-8 academic year, and it's best to be prepared for a modest amount of improvisation in this pilot year regarding both the design of these courses and what you, as a Research Seminar Tutor, should or should not be expected to do. At the same time, however, you should also take confidence in the fact that these courses are far from untested. In many ways, they merely update the model painstakingly worked out over more than a decade in History 98, whose place they are taking—meaning that most aspects of their mission and design will be quite familiar to anyone with teaching experience in the old Junior tutorials. Like History 98, the Research Seminars' central purpose is to guide students through the process of historical research in primary sources, a process that will still culminate in the submission of a substantial (ca. 20-25 page) research paper at the end of the term. Specifically, they are meant to (1) expose students to the historical literature surrounding their topics, (2) train them in the use of primary source materials, (3) introduce them to problems of bibliography and historical method, (4) encourage them to think critically about their sources as they gather them, and (5) give them an opportunity to write history themselves.

> NB: Research Seminar Tutors are encouraged to refer to the Handbook for Research Seminar Instructors, available from the Tutorial Office.

What has changed from History 98 is the fact that

Research Seminars are topic-specific; each year, the department's 20+ offerings will likely represent the whole range of interests and expertise of the History faculty, whether defined chronologically, thematically, or methodologically. It is therefore important that the tutors appointed to Research Seminars have a certain amount of expertise—at least of the sort obtained through a General Examination field—in the subject and/or time period which the Seminar treats.

Whom do They Serve?

The primary audience for Research Seminars will be junior and senior history concentrators, though other students with adequate preparation and enthusiasm may be admitted. The Seminars will be capped at fifteen students, who will be required to obtain the instructor's permission to enroll. In most cases, this requirement should serve to guarantee that the students have some prior experience in the subject, most likely in the form of a lecture course and/or a Reading Seminar in the same general field.

In catering to advanced students, Research Seminars should complement our Senior Thesis program—in a way that benefits all of our concentrators. For students who wish to write a Senior Thesis, the Research Seminar—which they must complete by the end of the Junior year—should serve to prepare them for the larger thesis project. For students who choose not to write a thesis, the Research Seminar—which, in this case, may be delayed to the Senior year—is no less important: for these students, the Seminar will represent an alternative capstone experience, something which was lacking in the department's old curriculum.

So What do Tutors Do?

Each Research Seminar is staffed by one tutor (who, depending on enrollment, will be paid 1/5 or 2/5 for the term). Tutors are meant to be partners with their faculty courseheads, working together to provide their students the dual-track instruction in both topical content (ie. historical and historiographical context) and research methods that Research Seminars are meant to offer. In general, the weekly two-hour class meeting (presided over by the coursehead) will be dedicated to the Seminar's topical content, as explored through shared readings. As the Tutor, you should certainly attend and participate in these meetings; however, your main responsibility is the coaching and mentoring of students' individual research projects. This mentoring will take place largely outside of class, in office hours and perhaps some select 'tutorial'-like meetings stipulated on the syllabus. (The fact that most of your teaching will happen outside of the classroom does not mean that you should be presented to the students as if you were an 'unofficial' or 'second-class' instructor.) Here are some more specific ideas about how faculty and Tutors might collaborate:

Planning the Course

For a Research Seminar to be truly successful, two matters need attention prior to the start of the semester.

(1) Locating sources and topics. Students need to be able to launch their projects relatively quickly, in spite of the fact that many of them will have little or no idea regarding viable primary sources available in Harvard Library collections. For this reason, you will want to work together with your coursehead in advance of the semester to develop a program of primary research opportunities related to the topic of the course—a sort of 'virtual archive' cobbled together from electronic and paper resources in Harvard Libraries. Teaching a course on business history? Visit the Baker Library for a personal orientation to its resources. A course on women in America? Visit the Schlesinger and question the librarians about their most interesting holdings. This advance effort will serve two purposes: it will generate an inviting list of possible topics known to be feasible; and, it will help to establish standards for the depth of original research appropriate for the term paper. Don't forget to consult with Barbara Burg, the History Department's liaison to the Harvard College Library; remember as well that there may be other relevant libraries and archives easily accessible from Cambridge or Boston, too.

NB: This preliminary scouting will be especially important in courses focused on eras and polities whose primary sources are mostly in foreign languages and/or distant archives. Because the Research Seminars have been designed to emphasize students' use of (published or unpublished) primary sources to address a historical question or problem, courseheads and tutors in these courses face an extra burden to identify collections or individual sources in Harvard libraries that would be well suited to the seminar topic. It may even be necessary to rely heavily on source anthologies and crucial passages that appear within secondary works. That's OK—you will just have to encourage students to work around the inevitable gaps in the historical record, something that all historians face in one way or another.

(2) Designing the syllabus. You and the coursehead should also meet to decide on a format and schedule of course meetings—including individual meetings with the Tutor—that will be outlined clearly on the syllabus. Because the major task of the seminar is students' completion of an original research paper, courseheads will want to stage assignments leading toward it. These might include (1) early submission of a proposal or alternate proposal ideas; (2) an annotated bibliography of primary and secondary sources, (3) an additional assignment regarding sources and their problems, (4) an oral presentation, and/or (5) a full draft 3-4 weeks before the final due date. As the Tutor, it will likely fall to you to explain and grade these interim stages, which should account for more than 50% of the final grade of the course. You and the coursehead must decide, clearly and in advance, when/how students will be expected to confer with you about their progress, to submit these assignments, and to receive your feedback.

Helping Students with Research and Writing

As the semester gets underway, and you begin supervising students' projects and their preliminary assignments, remember that your ultimate goal is to teach students the process of historical research—bibliographical development, primary research, source analysis, oral presentation, scholarly feedback, and other skills prized by the Department and required of anyone planning a senior thesis.

One of your first term-time duties as a Research Seminar Tutor should be to get students oriented in the Harvard Libraries, so that they will be able to begin work on their independent research promptly and with confidence. (It is strongly recommended that some sort of group library orientation, including an introduction to electronic databases and primary-source resources, be written into the syllabus from the start.) This orientation period is a great time to direct students to the 'virtual archives' that you hunted down prior to the start of the semester and explain the sorts of topics that you and the coursehead thought might be possible.

As students get into their research, and then their writing, remember these four tips first offered by Margot Minardi in a previous edition of this handbook:

(1) Be self-conscious. You are teaching a process that has probably become almost automatic to you after a few years of graduate school. Take some time to think about how the research and writing process works for you, and share your most effective techniques with your students. For instance, when they are trying to identify relevant secondary material for their projects, you might discuss using book reviews and review articles as guides to the literature, or you might walk students through the process of mining footnotes from one source to lead them to other useful historiography. Also think about the mistakes you've made in preparing seminar papers and theses, and help your students avoid similar pitfalls. Did you ever spend hours trying to come up with the perfect introduction, only to discover you had to redo it entirely once you had written the rest of the paper? Maybe your students would have a better start if they focused on the heart of the paper—stating an argument and building a case—rather than getting bogged down in elegant openings and detailed background information. Be generous about sharing such experiences. In the ideal scenario, teaching this tutorial will help you with your own dissertation work. You might find yourself taking your own advice!

(2) Be prepared to be a cheerleader. Many students have never written a paper as long as the one required for a Research Seminar, and most students are not accustomed to working on a single project for an entire semester. As a result, part of your role as tutor is to convince your students that they are capable of doing the seemingly impossible. Making the transition mid-semester from researching to writing might put even your most enthusiastic students into a state of despair. Commiserate with them. Share with them your favorite bits of wisdom from other despondent writers (I like Anne Lamott's *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*). Tell your students that their bewilderment indicates they are doing something right: much good historical writing comes out of the realization that the world is almost unbearably complicated. And then make sure they start writing.

(3) Don't let students be afraid of writing. If you require students to submit writing to you early in the semester, you will have more time to identify potential writing problems and help students address them before complete drafts are due. I was surprised that some students could describe their projects eloquently in tutorial

discussions but had a lot of trouble putting their ideas on paper. Writing early and often is also one of the best ways for students to find out which ideas work, which don't, and which require further research. In many Seminars, students' first writing assignment will involve some sort of summary of the paper's argument. While it's important for students to be able to articulate the major claims of their papers, I find summarizing an argument a difficult way to start writing. I taught in one seminar in which the first writing assignment was simply to fill up three pages with whatever students were most comfortable writing. They could write the first three pages of their paper, the historiography section, a preliminary overview of their argument, an outline in prose, an explanation of why the topic mattered to them—anything. For those who didn't know where to begin, I advised writing about the primary source that interested them most. This exercise worked well in that it allowed students to write without much pressure and proved to most of them that they knew more about their ideas and sources than they had originally thought.

(4) Talk about how to come up with an argument. By the time history concentrators are ready to enroll in a Research Seminar, they have had the mantra "thesis statement" pounded into their heads. But knowing that a paper needs an argument doesn't necessarily make it any easier to find one. Once again, thinking about how you have developed historical arguments in your own work should help you help your students. I came up with a list of possible techniques to stimulate thesis ideas, and tried out several of them. "Write a few paragraphs explaining your project to a layperson (such as your roommate or your mother). Tell the person not only what you're studying, but why it's important." "Choose two or three secondary works that come closest to what you're trying to do. Summarize the argument of each in a sentence. Then say how what you're doing differs." "Imagine the title and/or section headings of the paper you want to write. Think about what ties them together and how you might move from one heading to the next." "Look for key terms or (short!) phrases that recur in many different sources. Figure out how you could incorporate those words or ideas in a thesis statement." Keep in mind that some students will prefer more structured techniques, while others will appreciate the opportunity to do free associations or open-ended writing.

Grading and Evaluation

Grading and evaluating students' work in Research Seminars could be a bit tricky, as we are asking for courseheads and Tutors to collaborate as equals. While the Tutor will have graded many of the students' preliminary assignments, and will therefore be very knowledgeable about students' progress and process, the coursehead will take the lead in grading the final term paper. The grade assigned by the coursehead should take into account the Tutor's input about the student's process, but exactly how that conference will occur is left to the discretion of the coursehead and Tutor. Will you both grade the final paper "blindly," and then meet to hash out a compromise grade? Will the faculty member declare a preferred grade, which the Tutor will then be asked to review? Or will the Tutor offer an initial estimate, and the coursehead review it? This is up to you, and we urge you to be flexible in working out the process.

However grades are assigned, it is expected that you will prepare for each student a Research Seminar Report, which will be kept on file in the student's folder in the Tutorial Office and used, among other things, to determine the student's likelihood of success writing a Senior Thesis.

A Final Note

As a Research Seminar Tutor, you have much to do—sources to locate, syllabi to design, seminars to attend, individual projects to coach, preliminary assignments to evaluate … —but we also hope that the process will be an enjoyable and fulfilling experience for you. Research Seminars have the potential to offer you your most independent teaching role at Harvard, as you are expected to manage your own schedule of meetings with as many as fifteen students and to oversee their independent research. Though you should be in constant contact and cooperation with your coursehead, ultimately you will have to make many judgment calls about students' projects on your own. What does student A need to hear back about his prospectus? Where can student B go to research her topic further? Is student C missing some key subfield of bibliography directly relevant to his project? As a Research Seminar Tutor, you will learn what it is to be more than a section leader—you will become an adviser and a mentor. We hope that you'll appreciate the experience as much as students will cherish your expertise.

Advising the Senior Thesis

By Bradley Zakarin (History)

The one-on-one relationship between student and advisor is an essential element of the thesis experience. Though rewarding in many ways, advising thesis writers requires a great deal of time, energy, effort, and patience. The History Department's Tutorial Office largely leaves it to advisors to establish the norms of advisor-advisee relationships. For example, some advisors like to hold weekly meetings at a regular time, while others prefer a more flexible schedule based on a student's progress (or lack thereof). Regardless of how advisor-advisee relationships are organized, the Department has an overall structure in place to support these relationships. Advisors are encouraged to contact the Senior Thesis Seminar leaders if they have questions or concerns about their advisees.

The Senior Thesis is a specific intellectual experience intended to be a capstone for undergraduates pursuing the thesis program in History. Part of the challenge is submitting a final product in the spring. When theses arrive in black binders, they should be polished essays that are well-organized, well-researched, and well-written; they are not intended to be drafts of essays for publication or proposals for future research. Advisors need to know what is expected of thesis writers and how past students have met these expectations so they can better manage the process that begins in earnest in the fall term. To support new and veteran advisors, the Department collaborated with the Harvard Writing Project in the summer of 2005 to produce the first edition of *A Handbook for Senior Thesis Writers in History.* Distributed to all thesis writers and advisors, this handbook provides everyone with a common guide for the development, research, drafting, and revision of a Senior Thesis. While there is no single way to approach a research project of this magnitude, the handbook reminds students what they learned in earlier tutorials, outlines strategies for the various stages of the thesis process, and cites elements of past theses as models for structure, method, and analysis.

Throughout the thesis process, the Department works with students in groups to highlight the common experiences all thesis writers share. The Senior Thesis Seminar, which meets roughly every other week, complements the individualized, subject-specific work that advisors do with advisees by giving students an overall sense of the steps involved in producing a Senior Thesis. During these sessions, thesis writers examine a past thesis, discuss the challenges of interpretation and source management, review each other's work, and prepare for the final stages of the thesis. The goal is to make students aware of the bigger picture so they can be prepared for the kinds of decisions to be made during advisor-advisee meetings.

The "Timetable for Thesis Writers in History" is intended to help both students and advisors approach the thesis project in segments. Students who complete tasks according to this schedule will have a full month for revisions in the spring. The History Department's thesis submission date (traditionally the Thursday before Spring Break) is not negotiable, but there is some flexibility in the "Week of…" nature of earlier deadlines. Many advisors adjust the deadlines based on a student's interests, schedule, and goals. Advisors can also make adjustments to suit their schedules, but they should make sure to return drafts to students as promised to reinforce the need to maintain the overall timetable. Advisors should always keep in mind that time management is one of the biggest challenges for thesis writers because this is the largest academic project they have ever undertaken.

"Instructions Regarding Theses in History" contains many formatting details that will be relevant in the later stages of thesis production. There are, however, two items to consider in early advisor-advisee conversations about thesis organization. The first is the length of theses in the History Department. The minimum of 60 pages and maximum of 130 pages reflect the reality that a Senior Thesis does not need to fit into a narrow range of pages. Some topics with limited source bases might lend themselves to shorter studies while other topics require extensive historiographical or theoretical introductions. Advisees count on advisors for help in mapping out and revising the trajectory and scope of the thesis. The second item of note is the reminder to students about the proper use of sources. While intentional plagiarism is unlikely, accidental plagiarism is possible as students transfer research notes, reorganize filing systems, cut and paste segments of text, and revise multiple drafts. Advisors can help by reminding advisees about the need to be careful and consistent when taking notes, filing documents, and citing sources. Students often consider citation a matter of bureaucracy, not a fundamental part of responsible scholarship.

Within any class of thesis writers (usually between 35 and 55 students), there is a broad spectrum of preparation in September. Some students have just confirmed advising relationships and settled on a broad topic in need of refinement, while others are building on past term papers or summer research at distant archives. Much of the early fall-term advising involves giving advisees tasks for establishing their topics: reporting on the existing literature of the planned topic; meeting with a research librarian and reporting on archival materials available for the topic; and, preparing an annotated bibliography. The deadlines and expectations for these tasks should account for an advisee's familiarity with the topic. Occasionally, advisors oversee a project outside of their specialty. In such cases, it is useful to establish a dynamic whereby the student has to take responsibility for educating the advisor about the historiography and sources relevant to the project.

Regardless of where they stand in September, all thesis writers will have to make enough progress to participate in the December Senior Thesis Writers Conference. Much of fall-term advising is geared towards this annual event. Each student speaks for 15 minutes and the presentation is followed by a short question-and-answer period. Panels have 3-4 presentations and are arranged thematically (insofar as this is possible). Advisors are expected to attend their advisees' presentations and are also encouraged to attend other sessions to learn how their advisees' peers are progressing. The conference is intended as a springboard into the writing process. Most students use this opportunity to present their preliminary findings, usually a piece of their first chapter, which is due during the week after the conference. Advisors should review the audience's questions with their advisees at some point, particularly if they raise issues that need attention before more writing is done.

In January and the first half of the spring term, thesis advising turns to the reading of chapter drafts and steering advisees towards completion of a final product. Advisors should not hesitate to send students back to the archives for follow-up research, but the due date of the thesis should always be kept in mind. By this point, advisors should have a good sense of the speed at which advisees work. If a student's drafts require little revision and are produced quickly, then pushing for more research might be a good use of time. If, however, an advisor is concerned that extra research might leave insufficient time to edit a sloppy first draft, then concentrating on the materials in hand might make more sense.

Since students have never embarked on a project of this magnitude, advisors need to share the wisdom of experience to help advisees manage the process. Advisors play a critical role in guiding advisees through development (mostly fall term) and production (mostly spring term) of the thesis. Time will always be a constraint on a Senior Thesis because of the firm due date. While some thesis projects begin earlier than others due to diligence, serendipity, or some combination of the two, advisors are responsible for helping advisees recognize the limits and realize the potential of their thesis projects.

Teaching and Running a Core Class

By Rick Bell (History)

As a graduate student, teaching in the Core Curriculum is a mixed blessing. Compared to some departmental offerings, the lighter reading load, shorter assignments, and range of student interests in Core classes can be a welcome relief. However, the varied population in Core classes brings its own challenges, and adjusting to the vast range of abilities can be daunting. The Core is a requirement for all undergraduates and many students treat it with the contempt that mandatory learning sometimes deserves. Core courses usually rank lowest on students' list of academic priorities each semester – even among the most well-intentioned of students assignments can get rushed, readings can get skimmed, and even basic attendance can be a matter of chance.

Yet the Core is also a wonderful opportunity to meet bright undergraduates from across the arts and sciences, and many of the best teaching moments I've had have emerged when non-specialists have applied some of their own training to historical questions. Teaching in the Core is thus a perfect opportunity to underline what makes history what it is, whether it be in Historical Study A courses that examine an enduring issue over the long durée or Historical Study B offerings that tackle a discrete historical event in depth. How we historians do things differently from, say, anthropologists or literary critics, and why we're so obsessed with *change over time* are subjects that flow naturally from class discussions in big Core classes. Indeed, Teaching Fellows in the Core are also recruiters, salespeople who can showcase the fundamentals of historical scholarship to freshmen and even tempt students in other concentrations to step into the light.

Serving as Head TF in a Core Class

As a Head Teaching Fellow in Historical Studies, the administration is more complex and time-consuming than it is for most departmental courses. The sheer volume of student requests and bureaucratic hoops to jump through can exacerbate the semester-long headache, particularly as students expect Core classes, often their lowest priority, to be especially responsive to their own schedules. Out of respect for the subject and the instructor, it falls to Head Teaching Fellows to ensure that the course structure and policies encourage students to prioritize the class. Firm late policies, regular writing assignments, clear messages about plagiarism and a sizeable and meaningful section participation requirement are useful aids here. Likewise, resisting the temptation to run concentrator-only sections, elite sections for history concentrators, should discourage other students from shirking their academic responsibilities.

As the semester begins you should establish a clear demarcation of authority between yourself and the Course Head – agreeing who is responsible for what (and when) will pay dividends later. Consistency and clarity should be the watchword for any large class. Using a minute of the weekly lecture time to disseminate class announcements can serve as an important way to keep the class as a whole on message. It makes more sense than passing announcements through Teaching Fellows – the result across ten or more sections can seem like a game of telephone.

The same principles apply to pedagogy. Running a Core class, which introduces new methods as well as new knowledge, requires an even greater attention to basic teaching standards across sections. Scheduling a microteaching session or arranging to videotape early discussion sections at the Bok Center is an excellent way to address differences in teaching approach and skill, particularly if your staff is drawn from more than one department. Similarly, with such a range of student interest and ability in the subject matter, the use of staff meetings to agree on the weekly priorities for section teaching is essential. In large Core courses, students should feel that all sections are equal and that all teaching and grading is being conducted to uniform standards. Thus grading exercises, team grading (for example, having each TF grade one section of every student's exam), and the coordinated planning and execution of review sessions can avert horrible messes.

Midterm evaluations are great ways to gauge the course's strengths and weaknesses while allowing time to correct any emerging problems. In this and all endeavors Core-related, you are never alone: the Core Office provides lunch funds, coursepack assistance, free photocopying, and handbooks for novice Head TFs; the Bok Center offers evaluation tools of every shape and size; and the folks at the Instructional Computing Group (ICG) add functionality and relevancy to your course website if requested. These resources, in addition to the skills and support of your Course Head and teaching staff, are at your disposal to help a good Core course become even better.

Teaching in History and Literature

By Sean Pollock (History)

History and Literature is not, strictly speaking, a department, but a "committee on degrees." Unlike the History Department, it has no full-time senior faculty members, no graduate program, no courses of its own except tutorials and tutorial seminars. Instead, it coordinates an interdisciplinary program of study assembled from courses offered in the College and gives its students depth and focus through instruction in field-specific tutorials. In deciding on a field of study, students choose from among three options: a) a single country or region (e.g., Russia) throughout its early modern and modern history; b) a time-period, usually focusing on two countries (e.g., France and Britain); c) an alternative field of study constructed in consultation with the Director of Studies. All students are expected to write a Senior Thesis and to take an oral examination at the end of their senior year.

To teach in History and Literature is to serve on its Board of Tutors. While graduate students who teach in the History Department's tutorial program serve on a Board of Tutors too, the responsibilities entrusted to Tutors in History and Literature are much more extensive. Tutors conduct admissions interviews. They design—often in consultation with their students—and teach the tutorials that form the heart of the concentration. They serve as their students' primary academic advisor, helping them choose courses and plan their overall program of study. Tutors meet to discuss proposed Senior Thesis topics, evaluate sophomore and junior essays as well as Senior Theses, and give oral examinations. Tutors, in other words, are involved in the academic lives of concentrators at every stage, from entry to exit. A representative group of Tutors also serves on the Committee on Instruction, which meets to consider student petitions and to oversee curricular matters.

The teaching load in History and Literature depends on one's field and can often be negotiated by the Tutor and Director of Studies. When first appointed to the History and Literature Board of Tutors, a graduate student receives a letter outlining the extent of the work offered (that is, the number of "fifths"). Tutors might not learn how those fifths will be divided—some combination of yearlong sophomore, junior, or senior tutorials—until the academic year begins. In coming to terms with these circumstances and responsibilities, I've found the *History and Literature Tutor Handbook* and my fellow Tutors to be excellent resources.

If History and Literature has a mission, it is to bring together historians and literary critics for the interdisciplinary study of both history and literature. The notion of "interdisciplinarity" should not give you cause to pause. Most historians I know or whose work I admire habitually work across disciplines. Moreover, History and Literature does not take a monolithic approach to the integration of these disciplines. Instead, it provides Tutors and students alike with many opportunities to discuss what doing interdisciplinary work entails. For me as a historian of Russia, doing interdisciplinary work means being open to the insights of scholars who share my passion for the serious study of Russia but who approach the topic from other disciplinary angles.

History and Literature, as its name suggests, is a concentration in which historians can feel at home. In tutorials, historians are expected to bring their special training and perspectives to bear on any given text or topic. Tutors and students read and discuss a variety of primary sources: official documents, private correspondence, statistics, memoirs, maps, literary works, and graphic images, to name only several kinds. We also read what historians and literary critics have written about texts and topics that interest us. Additionally, we read what some call "theory," that is, critical literature on topics such as "the historian and his facts," myth and madness, nation and narrativity, geopolitics and gender. The critical tools historians bring to the study and use of these materials in their writing are essential for students concentrating in History and Literature. The skills I work with students to develop in History and Literature—reading critically and writing effectively—are the same ones I taught in courses offered through the History Department. In many ways, then, teaching in History and Literature is much like teaching in History.

But there are also important differences. Interdisciplinary scholarship happens when the approaches and perspectives of scholars working in distinct disciplines are brought to bear simultaneously on a given topic. Nowhere is the thrill and frustration of doing this kind of work more manifest—for Tutors and students alike, I think—than in the year-long Sophomore Tutorial. Unlike its counterpart in History, the Sophomore Tutorial in History and Literature is co-taught by two Tutors (one historian and one literary critic) who work together to develop a syllabus, lead weekly two-hour seminars, and evaluate student work. Designing the tutorial involves negotiating which texts to read and topics to cover, and which study questions and paper assignments to give; grading is also a negotiated process. This was all new to me, and at first, a source of anxiety and frustration.

As a Tutor in History, I was accustomed to taking full responsibility for leading discussions and grading papers. As a Tutor in History and Literature, in contrast, I'm expected to share the stage with someone who often has very different ideas about how to read sources and what constitutes good writing. Of course, historians themselves can be of different minds on these matters. But the disciplinary disconnect, I think, can further complicate attempts to find a common language. (I've been through this process twice, each time with a colleague who, like me, had no prior experience teaching this way.) For some reason I decided that finding a common language meant agreeing on questions of interpretation and presenting a united front to the students. Worse, I worked hard, if vainly, to convince both my colleague and students that the historian's approach (as if there were only one!) to the materials being discussed was usually the most sensible and productive one to take. I may still hold this view, but I've stopped insisting on it in tutorial.

The Sophomore Tutorial is about exposing students to different points of view, and about developing the skills that can help them decide for themselves which approach or approaches are most sensible and productive when it comes to reading and writing about history and literature. As for sharing teaching responsibilities, it took months, maybe even an entire year, for me to feel comfortable with letting someone else lead discussion. It was only after letting go in this way that I truly began to understand the value of interdisciplinary work. Now, when I sit and listen carefully to discussion, I see new things in familiar texts and see students in a fresh light. I've found that I listen and learn better when I'm not talking.

Unlike the Sophomore Tutorial, Junior and Senior tutorials are individual: one Tutor works with one student. And unlike the Sophomore Tutorial, Junior and Senior tutorials are tailored to students' interests. This does not mean that they should be allowed to study whatever they want, however. In my experience, juniors require and respond well to guidance in selecting books and topics to be examined in tutorial. In fact, the purpose of the Junior Tutorial is to help students fill gaps in the coverage of their field and expand their knowledge of various methods of historical and literary inquiry. But I have worked with a junior so well prepared that our tutorial amounted to an independent study on Soviet involvement in the Spanish Civil War. Ideally, students will emerge from Junior Tutorial better writers and readers who are able to conduct research in Harvard's libraries and have at least some idea of what they might write their theses on. And you are likely to emerge from the experience having learned a lot about topics outside your area of expertise, perhaps even outside your discipline. (For example, I've advised students working on literary representations of non-Whites and non-Russians in nineteenth-century North America and Russia, and on Nabokov's use of the literary device of the double—topics far removed my own work on Russian empire-building in eighteenth-century Caucasia.)

In designing Junior and Senior tutorials, it is important to keep in mind that students' needs vary. The best way to get to know your juniors and seniors is to read their files (where you'll find their transcripts, sophomore and junior essays, and previous tutorial reports), listen to them talk about their strengths and weaknesses as students of history and literature, have them execute close-readings, and ask them to write well-structured papers *with arguments* in the first weeks of the term. In guiding seniors through their thesis writing and preparation for oral exams, it is crucial that Tutors find out about their students' other academic and extracurricular commitments, as success in these matters can depend on how well students manage their time. If much of this sounds familiar to those who have taught Junior and Senior Tutorials in the History Department, it should.

My intellectual horizons have broadened as a result of teaching in History and Literature. My own work is richer for the insights gleaned from scholarship I probably would not have read in the course of preparing my dissertation. Because I'm often forced to work outside my intellectual comfort zone, I think I've become a less rigid and more empathetic teacher. I've not always thrilled at having my disciplinary certainties challenged by colleagues in History and Literature, but the result has been, for me, both intellectually enlightening and pedagogically productive.

Teaching in Harvard's Summer School

By Judy Kertész (History of American Civilization)

Each summer, Harvard College students depart, leaving Cambridge quiet and Lamont ghostly empty. By mid June, however, a new troop of students—both younger and older than Harvard undergraduates—has arrived for Summer School

Harvard offers several history courses in its Summer School each year, and when enrollment numbers merit it, graduate students are hired as Teaching Assistants. Class meets five days a week for lecture and twice weekly for discussion sections. The summer term runs eight weeks, from the end of June until mid-August.

While you might think that teaching in Harvard's Summer School would enable you to gain a sense of what it would be like to teach at a public university, this is not necessarily true. Summer School students fall into three basic categories: 1) overachieving high school students from privileged backgrounds who in a few years will find themselves at places like Harvard (or at small, elite liberal arts colleges); 2) international students, also from privileged backgrounds, who are between the ages of 18-22 and who hope to gain experience in an American university; 3) slightly older, nontraditional students who hold white collar jobs and who are taking summer courses toward a master's degree or teaching license, or who are preparing to change career directions.

All Summer School students tend to be hardworking. The high schoolers in your Summer School sections might not be the brightest students you've ever taught, but as is true of all students attending Harvard, they are incredibly motivated. So, too, are the international students. As university students abroad, they are accustomed to the way university courses operate, and they are generally responsible. Because they are also tourists interested in exploring Boston and the United States in general, however, the international students will not throw themselves into the coursework as wholeheartedly as either the high school or nontraditional students. They are in some ways the easiest to teach since they tend to be relaxed about the enterprise. The nontraditional, white-collar students, in contrast, pose the greatest challenge. Already successful in a career, they have the most difficulty dealing with a TA who is younger then they are, and in a position of authority. These students may challenge you on your teaching method and analysis of course material. Because they are technically graduate students, however, the TA need not grade their exams or papers. These responsibilities *should* be assumed by the Course Head.

Summer School courses are FAS courses. Especially if the Course Head offers the same course during the summer as he/she does during the academic year, course reading assignments and the course grading scale should be the same.

Should you teach Summer School?

I signed on as a Summer School TA because a Course Head for whom I was currently teaching planned to repeat the class during the Summer Session; she asked if I would continue on as her TA during the summer months. Since I was already familiar with the course material and enjoyed working with the professor, I agreed. Had I not been a Teaching Fellow in that specific course the previous semester, however, I would never have considered TAing the Summer School class.

While the Summer School is only eight weeks in duration, the pace is intense. Courses consist of daily lectures and two discussion section meetings per week. Given such a schedule, accompanied by poor pay (little more than half of 1/5), a TA taking on an unfamiliar syllabus would not be able to prioritize his or her dissertation research and writing.

The one incentive for a Harvard PhD student to TA in the Summer School is the opportunity to expand one's teaching repertoire in preparation for going on the job market.

Teaching Writing in Departmental and Historical Studies Core Courses

By Lauren Brandt (History of American Civilization)

Teaching students how to write a history paper is probably the hardest part of being a Teaching Fellow. In my experience, many students also find that learning how to write a history paper is the hardest part of the course for them. In large lecture courses and in Core classes, you will encounter students with very little experience writing in college, let alone in college history courses. Yet we expect these students to produce well-written, interesting, and perceptive history papers, exam essays, and response papers, even when the act of producing such work is rarely discussed in lectures or reading assignments. Working to help these students hone their writing skills can be a demanding process, but it is also one of the most rewarding parts of the TF job. Using section as an opportunity to improve students' writing can help undergraduates feel more comfortable about assignments, and it will improve their general performance in the course.

As a Teaching Fellow, the most important step in addressing writing issues is to recognize the variety and range of students' writing backgrounds. In any one section, you might have first-year students encountering history papers for the first time as well as seniors in the process of finishing their history theses. Although the first-year student and non-concentrator may not be able to write as sophisticated a paper as the senior history concentrator, they can still produce excellent work if given adequate tools to work with.

Students who are articulate and well-prepared for section but who falter when it comes to essay exams and writing assignments may do so because they are unclear about the goals of and techniques for history writing. Many first-year students and non-concentrators come to class with only their high-school education and the Harvard Expository Writing course as preparation for writing analytical, evidenced-based essays. As a TF, you want to equip your students with the tools they need to write papers that match the sophistication of their thinking and oral contributions to class discussion.

One of the most common problems for non-concentrators and first-year students concerns their unfamiliarity with terms like "primary source," "historical context," and "discourse," which are often used by Course Heads when framing essay question and writing assignments. I once had a student who was confused by the term "close reading." Setting aside time in section to discuss assigned papers gives students a chance to ask for clarification about unfamiliar terms. It also gives the TF an opportunity to walk students through the kind of exercise they are being asked to do; for example, a TF can guide students through an exercise in close reading. Making sure that everyone understands academic terminology goes a long way towards reassuring those students who are intimidated by the demands of writing a history paper.

Another technique that helps equip first-year students and non-concentrators with the tools of historical writing involves preparing a handout that guides them through the questions they should ask themselves as they prepare a historical argument. For example: do I have a clear, well-defined argument? Does this argument grapple with the historical question of change-over-time? Do I draw on multiple documents as sources of evidence? Do I address the biases of my sources? Have I avoided generalizations? Do I address counter-arguments? At times, you may find it helpful to prepare a handout that addresses a particular aspect of a history paper (i.e., one that discusses the different forms of historical evidence or the meaning of academic terms like "historiography" and "secondary sources").

Additionally, you will find it helpful to give students explicit instruction about footnoting, which tends to be confusing and alien to most first-year concentrators and non-history students. The following website, created by the Expository Writing Program, is extremely useful as a quick reference (see URL to right). You can also point students to Turabian's *Manual for Writers of Term Pa-*

www.fas.harvard.edu/~expos/sources/

pers, Theses, and Dissertations. Both of these resources provide detailed overviews of the proper citation format for many different types of documents. At the more basic level, your paper writing handout should also include information on the expected format and style of the paper (page length, font size, citation guidelines). And it's always a good idea to remind students of the importance of spell checking and reading over a paper before submitting it.

Although instruction in section and paper writing handouts provide good means of teaching students history writing skills, individual meetings with students provide the best opportunities for a TF to work intensively on their students' writing. Ideally, students should meet with you before an assignment is due. For many non-history students, constructing a historical argument is a new and somewhat daunting process. Individual meetings offer a safe environment for them to try out some ideas, to ask for suggestions, and to get feedback before actually beginning to write. For most students, the process of generating a workable thesis statement is the hardest part of writing a history paper. Require students to bring a short paragraph or outline containing their thesis statement to your office hours. You can then work with them to revise and refine their central argument. This will not only improve the quality of the student's final paper, it will also foster a dialogue between you and the student. This opens the door to discussing other writing concerns (i.e. structural problems, how to work with different types of evidence, etc.) after the paper is submitted and returned.

Individual meetings also give you an opportunity to get to know your students outside of section, and to gain a better sense of how they think about the readings and the course in general. If a student has done particularly poorly on an assignment, it is often useful to meet with them again after the paper has been submitted. You can use this meeting to expand upon your written comments as well as provide constructive criticism. If the student has done something well, let him or her know. Then be sure to offer negative criticism in a constructive manner. The question guiding the paper conference should be "How could this paper be better?" not "What is wrong with this paper?" Remember that you can always refer students to the Writing Center for extra help.

Not all of your students will become historians or writing professionals. And there is only so much you can do in five months. Hopefully, however, you will see improvement in their writing over the course of the semester. By establishing clear expectations and providing some basic guidelines, you can leave your students well-equipped with the tools to write a successful history paper and earn the undying gratitude of their future TFs.

Techniques to Help Students Write As Historians

By Professor Jill Lepore

Your job, of course, is first to help students learn to write well, and only second to help them learn to "write as historians." To begin with, assume that your students have never before written a history paper. But count this as an advantage. It means they have fewer bad habits to break. Meanwhile, make clear that writing matters—to you, and in your class and, more importantly, to anyone hoping to have his or her ideas understood—by spending time talking about it when you discuss readings, and not just when you're handing out paper assignments. And if students grumble, "But this is a history class, not an English class," ask them if they would make the same complaint about how much math there is in a physics course.

Even if the professor hasn't, don't hesitate to ask your students to buy Strunk and White, *The Elements of Style*, and require that they purchase a citation guide, like Kate Turabian's *Manual of Style*. And, even though class time is precious, devote some time to discussing one of your most beloved essays about writing: mine are E.B. White, "Will Strunk," and George Orwell, "The Politics of the English Language," from which my favorite passage is where Orwell quotes Ecclesiastes (a) and then offers a substitute (b) in "modern" (i.e., vague and slovenly) English:

(a) I returned and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favor to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.

(b) Objective consideration of contemporary phenomena compels the conclusion that success or failure in competitive activities exhibits no tendency to be commensurate with innate capacity, but that a considerable element of the unpredictable must invariably be taken into account.

I like to spend time asking students to name the differences between (a) and (b) and, better yet, to talk about passages in the writing we read for class. Learning to write history well requires learning to read it critically. When you're reading secondary sources, require that your students bring to class a concise statement of the author's thesis, to read aloud. The more you talk about writing when you discuss course readings, and dissect specific passages for argument and clarity and evidence and voice, the better your students will write.

When students set about tackling writing assignments for the course, there are a few common problems, particular to historical writing, you should anticipate, and head off.

• **What kind of assignment is this?** Is it research (writing about the past) or historiography (writing about what historians say about the past)? It's a distinction you can easily make, but one that is harder for students to intuit.

• **Citation.** Be sure that you have fully explained your expectations for citation of primary and secondary sources—and the differences between those kinds of sources. Don't assume that they know how to cite; teach them.

• **Evidence.** How much evidence, and what kind, is enough to support an historical argument? When and where is speculation warranted? If you've made a priority of talking about this when discussing course readings, it will be easier to address students' concerns about evidence in a writing assignment. In discussing the assignment, be as specific as possible about what you expect by way of evidence.

• **Presentism.** A hold-over from high school writing is to measure and relate everything to some contemporary problem or debate. It's not a terrible idea—the present matters—but it leads to some awful historical analysis, especially at this level. Forbid the use of phrases like "long ago" and "in today's world" and the kind of vague then-and-now comparisons that creep into far too many undergraduate history papers.

• **Verb tense.** This seems like a minor issue, but it can really trip students up: they are so unused to writing about the past that their papers are riddled with inconsistent verb tenses, as in "John Winthrop lived in the seventeenth century but he writes, in a 'Modell of Christian Charity,' that Boston is a 'city on a hill.'" Often, students have been schooled in the use of the "literary present," so that they want to use the present tense when they quote. I usually advise them to always use the past tense, whether offering description, or quoting from a primary or secondary source. (Although another reasonable route is to ask them to use the present tense when talking about secondary sources.) In any event, give them specific examples and instruction on this.

Some useful techniques for making sure students are on the right track as they draft papers include requiring either an outline or, better yet, a thesis statement, one week before the assignment is due. Urge them to read a draft of their paper aloud to a friend or roommate or to you, during office hours. And for students who come to discuss a paper with you after you've graded it, require that they read it aloud to you in your office—most likely, they will hear prose and evidence problems better than they can see them.

Incorporating Low-Stakes Writing and Writing-to-learn Exercises Into Your Teaching

By Laura Serna (History of American Civilization)

As a Teaching Fellow, you might think, "why would I want to add more writing to courses that already demand substantial written work? Do I really want to read any more undergraduate writing? Why would I give myself more to grade?" All reasonable questions. I argue that adding more writing to your section and tutorial teaching will both help your students learn and, surprisingly, minimize the end-of-the-semester burden of reading and grading assigned student essays.

I like to think of writing as thinking on paper—putting one's thoughts into phrases, complete sentences, or even paragraphs. Writing is a way of analyzing sources, developing theses, and organizing facts. And as most graduate students know, the more you write, no matter what form that writing takes, the better your writing becomes. **Incorporating short, ungraded writing assignments—"low-stakes writing" or "writing-to-learn exercises"—into your teaching can lead to more polished, well-thought out, sophisticated student essays.** And writing exercises that make students better writers will make your job of evaluating student papers easier in the end.

Low-Stakes Writing as a Warm-up

"Low-stakes" writing assignments break down the process of writing a history essay into smaller steps – first reading critically, then gathering evidence, then making an argument. Learning to break an assignment into steps will help students not only with formal course assignments in your class, but also with other courses they take in the history concentration.

Low-stakes writing works particularly well in history courses in which at least some students are facing primary sources or the analysis of historiography for the first time. Try to design low stakes writing assignments that teach students ways of approaching primary and secondary sources. Show them how to use writing as a more formal version of note taking. Illustrate how they can work through sources critically by asking particular questions as they read and identify key information. Throughout, try to make the assignments fun.

Below I have listed some short, ungraded writing assignments that I have found work particularly well. These exercises can be assigned as homework or used as part of an in-class exercise, whichever you think will be most useful to your students.

- Compile a list of the key actors in…
- Prepare a chronology of all the important events in… Why you include and exclude the events you do?
- Write a brief evaluation of one of the assigned sources. [Possible questions for secondary sources include: identify the main argument, evaluate its effectiveness, identify the sources used by the author, etc. For primary sources: Who is the author? When did he or she write? Is the source reliable?]
- Write two 1-sentence theses that you could use to structure a paper on…
- Make an index of the themes you find in one primary source.
- Write three paragraphs (approx. one page) using just two sources. (Ask students to write in response to a particular question or encourage them to come up with their own approach to the material).
- Ask students to create a "handout" for their fellow students about the material you'll be discussing in class. The list of possible topics is endless and depends on the sources assigned and what you want to focus on.
- Write a two-paragraph response to a primary source as if you were one of the historians (or authors) of a secondary source we've read. How would that historian interpret this piece of evidence? What sorts of questions would he/she ask?
- Write for 10 minutes (in-class) about…
- Give students an image (film clip, photo, drawing, etc.) or other source (music, material object) and ask them to write about how that source can be understood given the course's assigned reading.
- Ask your students to debate a topic (a contested historical interpretation, the points of view of two groups

of historical actors, etc.) in teams. Allow the teams 10-15 minutes to prepare and WRITE DOWN the main points they will use in their arguments.

In giving low stakes writing assignments, emphasize that the exercises are ungraded (but will count toward their participation grade) and are designed to help orient students towards their longer paper assignments. Students are much more likely to respond enthusiastically if they understand the point of the exercise—that it will help them develop into better writers and prepare them to write stronger essays.

I find it helpful to give students brief written comments on these short low-stakes assignments. In doing so, TFs have an opportunity to work with students on both major conceptual issues and more minor problems, like repetitive writing or over use of passive voice. Ideally, comments on low-stakes writing assignments can help minimize or eliminate writing problems before students begin their longer, graded papers.

Alternatively, you can have students share their low-stakes writing with each other in class. You can have them read what they've written out loud—a great way to get shy students talking—have them read and present each other's work, or have students pair off and peer-review the writing. If you find a particular class discussion seems to stagnate, a 10 minute in-class writing assignment followed by one of the above sharing models can provide a much-needed break and generate fresh ideas for discussion.

Low-Stakes Writing as Part of the Formal Writing Process

Since the rapid pace of most courses doesn't allow much time for reading paper drafts (and because I generally find that the payoff of reading drafts is less significant than the amount of time reading them requires), I instead ask my students to meet with me before the first and last papers are due. The first, short meeting is a good way to get to know students and have them discuss with me their perceived strengths and weaknesses as a writer. The second time I meet with students, before the last paper is due, I ask them to bring a written thesis statement and some ideas they would like to develop in their paper. During this meeting, I engage with the thinking they've already done and help them develop strategic arguments. Additionally, you might consider asking students to prepare a short outline or a thesis paragraph for a paper—low stakes writing again—both of which are easier to read than an entire draft and probably enable you to give sufficient feedback to students.

Low-Stakes Writing as Self-Reflection

I often ask my students to turn in a "writing self-evaluation" with their formal writing assignments. In this informal and un-graded reflection piece, students can tell me what their argument is (or what they intended it to be), what they liked best about the paper, what they liked least, and what they would like feedback on. Some Teaching Fellows feel this might bias their reading of the paper; personally, it helps me figure out what students think they are up to (sometimes, but not always a mystery) and can help me address areas that they themselves perceive as weaknesses in their writing. This exercise also reinforces the idea of writing as a process—even a finished product can be improved. If you're afraid you might be biased, you could read self-evaluations after reading the essay and arriving at a grade. You can then comment on student concerns in your final written comments.

I've also experimented with asking students to write short written evaluations of their peers' writing when peer evaluation is a formal part of the class (for example, in History 97). This helps students organize their thoughts before peer-review sessions, encourages them to take the task of peer-review more seriously, and perhaps most importantly, gives them ideas about questions to ask when evaluating their own writing.

All of the above examples of low-stakes writing—warm-up exercises, paper planning, and self-reflective essays—enable you to streamline your process of reading and commenting on student papers. When writing end comments on student essays, you can refer back to comments you've made on shorter, ungraded assignments as well as to comments students themselves have made in their reflective self-evaluation essays. This not only saves you time, but also reinforces key ideas for students, thereby helping them to become better writers.

Responding To and Evaluating Student Writing

By Emily O'Brien, Preceptor in Expository Writing

"The influence of comments can't be overstated. Good comments are the difference between reading the course books and taking the course."

"It made such a difference when the instructor would write 'insightful' next to something I had written. It was so encouraging. He took our views so seriously."

Harvard students from the Class of 2001
(Harvard Study of Undergraduate Writing)

The words, letters, and numbers you write on your students' papers are among the most powerful teaching tools you will use as a TF. In addition to helping students sharpen their skills of historical thinking and writing, your feedback can build their self-confidence as writers, deepen their interest in their material, and make them feel part of an intellectual community. Responding to student writing is one of the most important tasks you will take on as a TF in the History Department, but it can also be one of the most challenging. What are the hallmarks of a good written comment? What and how much should you write in the margins of a student essay? What are the best strategies for grading a stack of papers? The tip sheet below is designed to answer these difficult questions. While it may not make grading and commenting more enjoyable, it will help to make the process more efficient and the results more useful for your students.

Final Comments

The final comment is your opportunity to evaluate your students' written work, but it serves other purposes as well. You can use it to articulate your expectations about writing, and to offer your students guidance and encouragement on their future writing assignments. To help you fulfill these goals:

- **Limit your points.** Three or four major points of criticism are usually enough. Adding more may leave your students feeling overwhelmed.
- **Pair criticism with praise.** Students benefit from seeing what they're doing right as well as where they are struggling.
- **Organize your comments logically.** Arrange your criticisms hierarchically, beginning with your most serious concern. Try using headings and bullet points to make your points more accessible, and consider using the following as an overarching framework: salutation / restatement of the essay's thesis or topic / summary of strengths / summary of weaknesses / concluding remarks / signature.
- **Be specific.** Students will understand your points more clearly if you illustrate them with specific examples from their paper.
- **Use a stable vocabulary.** By using a consistent set of terms to discuss your students' writing (thesis, analysis, counter-argument, etc.), you will help them to understand your standards and to see how their essays relate to one another.
- **Make your comments portable.** Show your students how the lessons they've learned writing one essay can help them tackle future writing assignments.
- **Use a respectful tone.** Show your students the same respect that you would your colleagues. Doing so will make it clear that you are taking their ideas seriously.

Margin Comments

Your margin comments show students that you have read their papers carefully. They also document how you arrived at your final comment. When you write margin comments, strive to:

- **Identify patterns.** Rather than marking every strength and weakness you spot in an essay, look for patterns —and mark those patterns only once or twice.
- **Ask questions.** By asking questions, you'll be able to guide your students' thinking without telling them

what to think. You'll also teach them to anticipate similar queries in future papers.

- **Make your comments reader-friendly.** Strings of "????," sentence fragments, and poor handwriting are more likely to confuse your students than help them.
- **Make some positive comments** (see above)
- **Use a respectful tone** (see above)

Grading

Your goal when grading a student paper is to measure that paper's accomplishment. Accurate measurements depend on your ability to remain objective and to apply a consistent set of standards. To help you do this:

- **Read or skim through your stack of papers first.** This will help you to discern the range of responses to the assignment. It may also help you to clarify your grading rubric.
- **Design a grading rubric.** Clarify for yourself the criteria according to which you will assign grades (thesis, evidence, structure, etc.) and consult your rubric regularly as you go through your stack of papers.
- **Grade only the essay.** Other criteria such as the paper's author, the effort put into the paper, or the number of improvements since the draft should not factor into the grade.
- **Pace yourself.** Give yourself a reasonable amount of time to read, comment on, and grade each paper, and stick to your schedule. Take breaks when you need them, especially if you find yourself getting tired or impatient.
- **Finalize your grades at the end.** You may find it easier to determine if an essay deserves a "B+" or a "B," a "B-/C+" or a "B-," by comparing it to other essays in the stack.
- **Distribute the grading rubric to your students.** By making your standards clear to your students, you will help them to understand their grade on a particular paper and to see how to strengthen their writing in the future.

Responding to Student Writing

By Michelle Morris (History)

We've all been there. It's the Friday night after a long week, and instead of sitting back with a Coke and the TV remote, you are hunched over your desk with a stack of student essays. Some are engaging and insightful. Others are a jumble of fact and error with no discernable point and a limited grasp of spelling and punctuation. Most of them – by far the most difficult to grade – are somewhere in the middle. How can you evaluate and respond to these papers in such a way as to assign consistent grades, motivate your stronger students, encourage those who are having problems, and help all of your students to write better history papers?

I find it useful to begin by reading through an entire set of papers quickly to get a sense of the range and quality of the essays. On the first read, I make a note of the thesis of each paper, write only the most basic marginal notes, record my general impressions of each paper, and assign a provisional grade on a separate sheet of paper. I then organize the papers in grade order before sitting down to the real work of evaluating and responding to the essays. After all, very few student papers look good if I have just finished reading the work of a professional historian, but all of my "B" level papers will look like "A's" if I have just read through two "D" papers. On the second reading, I spend more time on each individual paper. This is what I look for:

1) Does the essay fulfill the assignment?

An essay may be engagingly written, clearly argued and well substantiated, but if it fails to answer the question asked or speak to the topic assigned, it is still deeply flawed. Although you should respond to the essay as written, it may be necessary for you to ask the student to rewrite his/her essay if it fails to fulfill the assignment.

An essay which does not quite fulfill the assignment may sometimes be a sign that a student has found an essay on a similar topic and submitted it as his/her own work. If one of your students submits an off-topic essay which differs substantially in character from that student's usual work, you may need to investigate for evidence of plagiarism.

Very specific assignments can be the easiest to evaluate. If the question is specific and tied to a pre-selected set of readings, it may be helpful for you to make a list of important points which all papers should include and check them off as you read.

2) Does the essay have a thesis?

Sometimes the hardest concept to convey to students – especially less experienced ones who are used to writing reports rather than essays – is that papers should be written to advance arguments rather than simply to recite facts. The first thing to look for and comment on in a student essay is the thesis statement. I find it useful to underline the thesis statement both for my own reference later on and to underscore its importance for the student. When such a statement is missing, I usually write "thesis?" at the end of the paper's introduction. More often you may need to suggest that students state their theses more clearly or revise them to fit more closely the evidence they have presented.

3) Does the student's evidence support his/her thesis?

All too often, students find their theses as they write. At its most basic level, evaluating whether or not the evidence supports the thesis is an exercise in seeing whether the argument at the end of the paper is the same as the argument at the beginning and in the middle. This is also the point at which you need to evaluate how deftly your student has used the available evidence. Are the facts supporting the thesis correct? Does the paper show signs of strong critical reasoning skills? Has your student simply taken primary sources at face value or has he/she thought about issues such as audience, genre, etc.? Is the student making broad generalizations based on a single event or opinion? Does the paper make good use of all available evidence or does it ignore inconvenient facts?

4) Does the student convey his/her argument clearly?

Writing counts. Organization, appropriate diction, punctuation and clear prose are what allow the student to convey to you what he/she is thinking. But if a student fails to write clearly, you do still need to muddle through his/her thesis statement, which appears for the first time on page seven. You do need to force yourself to read the paragraphs written in passive voice, as well as all those words which do not mean what the student thinks they mean. You then need to help students understand how poor writing skills undermine the arguments they are trying to make and how strong prose can make reading their papers a pleasure. We may not be teaching composition courses, but we are, nevertheless, always teaching writing.

Writing Comments

Once you know what you think of a paper, the next step is to convey those ideas to your student in clear and constructive ways. Remember that if you demand good writing of your students, it is essential that you model good writing in your written response to their work. In practice, you will make two sets of comments. The first is the marginal notes interspersed throughout the body of the paper, and the second is the paragraph or two at the end of the paper. The two sets of comments serve complementary purposes. The marginal notes are the most immediate way to address specific, and sometimes relatively minor, issues. This could be anything from pointing out spelling mistakes and overuse of the passive voice to flagging factual errors and noting the lack of a thesis statement at the end of the introduction. The challenge here is to find a balance between being comprehensive and being nitpicky. On one hand, you want to point out any glaring errors in the paper. On the other, you do not want to discourage students by covering their papers in red ink, or distracting them with minor issues when there are more important areas that need work. If you have a paper with many, many problems, be selective. For instance, if a paper contains a host of spelling, grammatical and punctuation errors, you might want to simply correct the first paragraph. If factual errors and argument are a problem, you may want to note these and suggest that the student visit the Writing Center for help with his/her prose rather than pointing out every grammatical misstep.

Marginal notes are not just for criticism, of course. Whenever possible, write something positive. The occasional "good point" and "well put" is as important as "this does not support your thesis" and "clarify this." Students need to know what they are doing right. Finally, be careful about making stray notational marks without explaining their purpose. Some students will look carefully at everything you write, so when you make marks on their papers, be sure that the import of those marks is clear.

The second set of comments, those you write up at the end of an essay, summarizes your overall evaluation of the broader strengths and weaknesses of the paper. I find it helpful to begin by restating the paper's thesis. This lets students know that you have engaged with their work and it may also help them remember what, exactly, they argued in their paper. Restating the thesis also provides a starting point for your comments. If the paper does not contain a thesis statement, you can still try to summarize the argument of the paper (as best you can discern it). The lack of a thesis statement is, of course, an omission you will always want to address. Even more than with marginal notes, it is crucial to pick your battles in end comments. Choose the three or four aspects of the paper you would most like to see improved, and do not waste your time or their attention on the small stuff when there are larger issues to be addressed. It is important to be as constructive as possible when addressing these issues. Although you certainly do not want to rewrite a student's paper, you do want to give them some concrete ideas about how they might improve the weaker aspects of their work. Suggest other sources they might have used or ways to revise their theses so that they fit more neatly with their evidence. Be careful of your phrasing. Although you do need to be critical, you should avoid belittling students at all costs. "You may find it useful to review a survey text for background on this subject" is fine. "I would expect anyone who got into college to know this" is not. As with marginal notes, look for opportunities to say something positive. Even the weakest essays have one or two good points.

I like to treat all papers as if they were drafts because this turns criticism into suggestions for the future. Students may not rewrite, but you do hope that they will rethink. Above all, your comments should tell your students that you believe they are capable of writing strong papers, even if they need to improve certain skills (or work a little harder) to achieve that result.

Improving Students' Speaking Skills in Section

Rebekah Maggor, Research Fellow at the Bok Center for Teaching and Learning

"Um…sort of, in the same sense, like…I think, a lot of times we assume that…like…when you see a graph or a table that, like, the science facts are always correct, or that, like, institutions, like, the courts are always fair, um…and we sort of operate like that—that's sort of the mindset we're taught when we're young, and so when we hear something like, oh, the court said this we sort of assume that, oh, that must be true, that must be right. And you sort of have to unlearn—or, like, learn that there are biases, like there are—like, all those things are fallible too."

- a Harvard College student, in section

Improving students' speaking skills not only empowers them to voice their opinions clearly and persuasively, it also teaches them to listen actively to their fellow classmates, and it moves them from passive to active engagement with course material. Even though speaking, like writing, is integral to the learning process, many professors and Teaching Fellows hesitate to comment on or critique their students' speech. While students are accustomed to receiving constructive criticism on their writing, they usually consider their speaking skills, the way they "talk," to be a personal matter outside the realm of pedagogical review. Because of this attitude, instructors fear that commenting on students' speech would be counterproductive: students might "shut down," avoiding class participation altogether. There are, however, many ways to advance students' speaking skills without deterring class participation.

In the past, teaching students to speak and reason well in public was one of the central goals of the College. Because speaking was not considered a natural gift but rather a skill that required dedication and practice, instruction in speaking was a rigorous and regular part of the curriculum. In 1642, President Henry Dunster implemented the Ramean teaching method whereby students studied one subject each day in a three-part rational procedure including: professor's lecture, individual study, and discussion and disputation with classmates. According to Harvard historian Samuel Eliot Morison, this third oral element "gave the students practice in applying their knowledge, taught them to think on their feet, sharpened their wits, and provided a wholesome element of competition and fun for each class." At the end of the eighteenth century, when the emphasis on the teaching of speaking faded, students complained of a "cold indifference to the practice of oratory."[1] They responded by forming their own clubs in which they could practice public speaking.

For the most part, instruction in speaking slowly declined throughout the nineteenth century despite periodic attempts to revive it. In 1806 John Quincy Adams was named the first Boylston Professor of Rhetoric and Oratory. While Quincy Adams used the post to teach the practical skill of oral persuasion, the men who followed him focused more on the scholarly rather than the practical aspects of rhetoric. In 1903 Irvah Winter succeeded in organizing a formal department for instruction of speech, but the department suffered from poor funding. When Frederick Clifton Packard Jr. took over the department in 1920, he was the sole faculty member. Although many of Packard's students, including John F. Kennedy and Peter J. Gomes, built successful public careers in no small part due to the arts of communication they studied under his tutelage, the Department of Public speaking ceased to exist following Packard's retirement in 1965.

Packard recognized "the importance of speech training in preparing men for life in the real world where success seems to depend on 'our swift and full communication with one another.'"[2] There is no doubt that these skills are just as crucial for students today as they were for the students of Harvard's past. Whether your students choose to pursue a career in academia, law, medicine, business, or any other profession, they will need to learn how to express their ideas orally.

As a Teaching Fellow, you can raise the level of your class discussion by setting an example of good speaking and by helping your students become aware of their speech.

Set an Example for Your Students

- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Emphasize important words. When you use historical terminology or mention important names, slow down, enunciate, and use pitch and volume variation to stress these key words. As a graduate student, you are immeasurably more familiar with the material than your students.
- Eliminate fillers such as "like," "um," "sort of," "kind of," and "you know."
- Do not fear silence. Pausing gives listeners a chance to "catch up" with you.
- Make eye contact with your students. By connecting with your class in this way, you can make sure they are following you and each other.
- Listen to and watch yourself teach. This is the best way to improve your speaking.
    - Videotape your class at the Bok Center and meet with a teaching consultant to discuss the tape.
    - Make an audio recording of your section (be sure to obtain students' permission if you wish to record the class).

Improve Your Students' Speaking

Preparation

Passive learning during lectures and reading of course material becomes active knowledge during section discussion. Good discussions can motivate students to prepare better for section, encouraging them to develop their opinions about the material. As a TF, you can inspire lively preparation for discussion in several ways:

- Be explicit about the purpose of section: the goal is for students to participate in a group discussion, not to get a summary of the readings or the "right answers" from the TF.
- Organize an occasional debate during section. Assign

[1] Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Founding of Harvard College* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1935), 140-147.
[2] William Alfred, Peter J. Gomes, and B.J. Whiting, "Faculty of Arts and Sciences-Memorial Minute" *Harvard Gazette*, Jan. 20, 1989.

each student to one point of view.
- If "response papers" are required, emphasize to your students that the papers should present a cohesive argument. Remind them to critique the material and connect it to prior readings.

Commenting on the Quality of Discussion

Address the issue of speech with your students early in the semester, emphasizing that quality of participation is as important, if not more important, than quantity of participation. Explain that demanding thoughtful participation of themselves and each other enables everyone to improve their ability to form and express their opinions and ideas.

- Do not shy away from making explicit comments on the quality of class discussion.
- Remind students to back their arguments with support from the text and to connect themes appearing throughout the readings.
- Review the progress of discussion mid-way through each section. It is better to comment on the general trends in that day's discussion than to single out individual students. You might say:
  - "The discussion so far has been interesting, but some comments lacked textual evidence. Remember to support each claim with specific evidence from the text."
  - "Some of you have made excellent points, but certain comments have been quite repetitive. Try to listen more closely to what your classmates are saying and don't repeat what others have already said."
- End each section by summarizing the quality of the discussion as well as the important content points. You might say:
  - "Today's discussion was useful, but unbalanced. A few of you participated often, while most of you participated very little. I hope that during the next session, more of you will speak up."
  - "Clearly most of you have done the reading, but try to avoid general comments such as 'I liked this part of the reading," or, "this essay was interesting.' Tell me why you believe this particular reading was assigned and what it might have to do with last week's readings."

Encouraging Participation

A sure way to help your students improve their speaking skills is to point out, and even repeat, their insightful and well-phrased comments. You might say:
- "Well said." or "Well spoken."
- "You made a very important and eloquent argument. Did everybody hear the last comment?"
- "That's an excellent way of expressing that point."
- "That was an articulate way of presenting that idea."

Oftentimes you might have a student who turns in perceptive and well-written papers, but who rarely speaks in class. By offering some encouragement, you might help that student voice his or her opinions orally.
- If this student has turned in a particularly good response paper or in-depth discussion questions that week, bring up one of his or her points during section. You might say: "Judy brought up a relevant point in her response paper…Judy, could you explain your perspective to the class?"
- If a shy student speaks up in class, take time to commend the student verbally or by e-mail.

Commenting on Language and Voice

Both TFs and professors find that directly commenting on students' use of language and voice can be a challenge. But there are many explicit and implicit ways to help your students speak articulately and confidently without offending them.

If a student uses language that is not useful for section (for example: "the Kaiser was, like, totally pissed-off by that"), you can address this use of language either directly or indirectly. You might say: "Yes, Bismarck's actions angered the Kaiser." This indirect method rephrases the idea and models appropriate language. A more direct method would be to ask, "How might a historian make that statement?"

If you cannot understand a student because he or she mumbles, speaks too quietly, or speaks too quickly, try to address the issue directly without making it personal. State a fact, followed by a suggestion:
- "I didn't hear what you just said. Could you speak up?"
- "I didn't catch your last point. Could you slow down

a little?"

If you have a student who speaks particularly unclearly or a student who tends to ramble and take up a lot of time in section, meet with the student privately. You might say:

- "You make some excellent points in class, but sometimes we miss what you are attempting to say because you tend to take a long time to get to the point. If you could be more concise when you speak, your ideas will get heard."

Just as TFs should be selective when commenting on students' papers—being careful not to overwhelm them with criticism and advice—TFs should be discriminatory in critiquing students' speaking. A good way to get a student to "clam up" for the rest of the semester is to give the student a list of ten things he does "wrong" when he speaks (constantly uses the word "like," does not speak in complete sentences, rambles, etc). Try to address the one or two things that most affect his comprehensibility.

If students recognize that speaking is a skill, they will more willingly accept guidance from you. Teaching speaking skills is inseparable from teaching the skills of historical analysis and argumentation. When you teach your students to prepare, to persuade, to listen, and to speak eloquently, you are in fact instructing them in the art of thinking.

Teaching and Professional Development

The Bok Center offers a variety of programs centered on professional development as it relates to teaching. While participation in the following offerings is rewarding in its own right—in particular, it connects TFs to graduate students and postdocs across the University who are interested in effective teaching and learning—it can also indicate to future employers a commitment to developing into a skilled teacher.

TF Professional Development Dinners

The Bok Center offers a series of dinnertime lectures, panel discussions, and workshops focused on teaching and professional development. Past topics have included Creating a Teaching Portfolio, Teaching for Student Learning, Lecturing, Gender & Pedagogy, Mentoring & Advising Students, and Publish & Flourish: Becoming a Prolific Scholar. Watch for notices of upcoming dinners in the *GSAS Bulletin* and on the Bok Center, Dudley House, Office of Career Services, and Graduate Student Council email lists.

Christensen Discussion Leading Seminar for Faculty and Advanced Teaching Fellows

This ten-week Master Class uses the Case Study Method to enhance participants' skills in discussion leading and managing "hot moments" in the classroom. Seminar members, who are drawn from across the University, work together to foster open, reflective dialogue about teaching and learning at Harvard. For additional information, contact Bok Center Associate Director Lee Warren at lawarren@fas.harvard.edu

Senior Teaching Fellow Program

Each year a group of exemplary post-doctoral instructors and advanced Teaching Fellows are selected as Bok Center Senior Teaching Fellows. Fellows meet six times over the course of the semester to discuss teaching and learning. Discussions, which draw on recent educational research and on participants' own experiences in the classroom, are characterized by the same scholarly rigor participants bring to bear on their academic fields. For more information, or for an application, contact Bok Center Associate Director Cassandra Horii at: cvolpe@fas.harvard.edu

Bok Center Consultant

Successful, experienced Teaching Fellows can apply to become a Bok Center Teaching Consultant. After completing initial training with one or more Bok Center Associate Directors, the Consultant will assist Bok Center staff members in conducting microteaching sessions, offering videotape consultations, and giving presentations at the Fall and Winter Teaching Conferences. Bok Center consultants receive compensation for their work. For more information, contact the Bok Center: 617-495-4869.

Lead Teaching Fellow

Each year, one advanced Teaching Fellow in History may be appointed by the Derek Bok Center as a Lead Teaching Fellows. LTFs are usually nominated for the position by the History Department.

After completing initial training with one or more Bok Center Associate Directors, the Lead Teaching Fellow identifies departmental TF-training needs and works independently and with others, in the Department and around the University, to address them. Additionally, the Lead Teaching Fellow holds weekly office hours for TFs in the Department and offers microteaching sessions and videotape consultations.

Cabot Postdoctoral Fellowships in Innovation in Teaching

Advanced graduate students who are nearing completion of their degrees and have a strong interest in teaching may consider applying for a Cabot Postdoctoral Fellowship. Cabot Fellows design and carry out a research project centered on pedagogy, particularly as it relates to teaching and learning at Harvard College. The fellowship supports half-time commitment for one academic year; this is usually supplemented by support from the fellow's academic department. For more information, or for an application, contact the Bok Center: 617-495-4869.

Watching Yourself On Videotape

All first-time Teaching Fellows in History are required to have one of their discussion section videotaped and to discuss this recording of their teaching with a member of the Bok Center staff. Because some university search committees now request evidence of a job candidate's successful teaching, some advanced Teaching Fellows also choose to have a discussion section (or guest lecture) videotaped for their Teaching Portfolio.

Although watching a videotape of your teaching can be a bit nerve-wracking, it is an invaluable experience. Observing your class in action helps you get a feel for what it is like to be a student in your section. It also gives you an opportunity to pay close attention to the dynamics of the classroom discussions you lead.

Strategies for Success

1. Arrange for videotaping through the Bok Center by calling 617-495-4869 or emailing bokcenter@fas.

2. Select a typical class to be taped; teach as you normally would on any other day.

3. Let the students know in advance that the class will be videotaped, and that the tape is to help *you* improve your teaching. The tape is not a means to assess their class performance.

4. **While you are being videotaped, try to focus on your teaching, not on the camera.**

5. Get written feedback from the students on how class is going around the same time you get videotaped. Reading students' comments before watching yourself on tape can help you interpret what you see and what students said. Sample early feedback forms can be found online at the Bok Center's website.

bokcenter.harvard.edu

Viewing the Videotape

1. **View the videotape as soon as possible.** When your memory is fresh, you can recall what you were thinking and feeling during class.

2. **View the tape with a supportive consultant.** Most people are hypercritical when watching themselves. A consultant can help you identify your strengths and areas for improvement and can temper your natural tendency to be overly critical. You may view the tape in the Department with the Lead Teaching Fellow or at the Bok Center with an Associate Director or Teaching Consultant.

3. Plan to spend about twice as long analyzing the tape as it took to tape your class.

4. **Go for the gestalt.** Watch the tape and ask yourself:
- What are the specific things I did well?
- What are the specific things I could have done better?
- What do students seem to enjoy most?
- What do students seem to enjoy least?
- If I were a student, what would I like about this section?
- If I could do this section over again, what things would I change?
- How could I go about making those changes?

5. **The next time you view the tape, focus on selected aspects of your performance.** For example, look at the tape and analyze the kinds of questions you ask, or how you respond to students' questions and comments. Identify both your strengths and the areas that need improvement.

6. **Chart the frequencies and types of classroom interactions.** Who does most of the talking? You? Or the students? How many questions actually requested a re-

sponse from students? Did all of the questions start with the same phrase? Did they all require yes/no or short answers? What level of thinking was required in the responses? Did you allow sufficient time between questions for students to respond?

7. **Use checklists to focus your analysis.** Broad categories to consider include the following:

- organization and preparation
- style of presentation
- clarity of presentation
- questioning skills
- student interest and participation
- classroom climate
- discussion

Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning
Adapted from Barbara Gross Davis, *Tools for Teaching* (Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Inc., 1993), 355-361.

On Being Videotaped

By Sonia Lee (History)

Whether this is your first semester teaching or you consider yourself a well-seasoned TF, you should have one of your discussion sections videotaped. Think of it as an opportunity to finally discern the difference between the real weaknesses in your teaching style and the unnecessary, nagging, self-criticism of your teaching that nobody cares about but you. After you videotape a section and sit down to evaluate it with one of the Bok Center staff members, you'll be able to ask all sorts of questions—both silly and important—about the way you teach: do I talk too much or too little? Do I pay too much attention to particularly shy or aggressive students? Do I know how to listen to students' questions and comments? Do I know how to direct the discussion to a specific point? Are my students comfortable enough to speak their minds even if they disagree with me? Although the post-videotaping evaluation session is a time to confront your weaknesses and self-doubt, it's also a chance for you to hear somebody point out your natural talents as a communicator. You will receive affirmation on what you have already accomplished as a teacher.

When I prepared to teach the discussion section I had scheduled to have videotaped by the Bok Center, I made the typical mistake of trying to do something new. I decided to use an overhead projector while walking the class through a review exercise. Sure enough, I misplaced the markers I had just bought and got really distracted as I frantically searched for them at the beginning of class. As I watched this very embarrassing clip with Mary-Ann Winkelmes, an Associate Director at the Bok Center, she helped me step back and think about priorities. Worrying about lost markers distracted me from the more important task of focusing the class on the particular question I had raised. By not maintaining eye contact with my students, I had not been able to do that as successfully as I could have. The task of finding the markers could have waited for a later time, or, I could have just chucked the plan entirely and used the blackboard instead.

Surprisingly, Mary-Ann also gave me a lot of affirmations about my teaching. For example, as I was squeamishly watching myself in front of the TV screen with her, we both noticed that I had asked the students a confusing, long-winded question at one point. Their facial expressions clearly showed how puzzled they were, and I had noticed that as soon as the question left my mouth. I quickly admitted I had made no sense and rephrased the question. The class burst into laughter, and once they understood me, they responded to the question, which furthered class discussion. Mary-Ann pointed out that my rephrasing of the question not only showed how self-aware I was about communicating with my students, but also showed the level of comfort I had established with the class – we were able to laugh at my mistake and move on to the actual work at hand.

Once I sat down and began to think more critically about my teaching with Mary-Ann, we brainstormed together about all sorts of situations and students. Among the topics we discussed were how to deal with particularly provocative and aggressive students, how to create an environment in which students feel encouraged to disagree openly, and how to establish authority as a teacher without scaring students into silence.

I know that it can seem really scary to watch yourself on a screen and scrutinize the way you speak, look, and move within a classroom. After five minutes of watching yourself on tape, though, I guarantee that you'll completely forget about how your voice sounds, how you look, and any other silly self-judgment that doesn't help you develop as a teacher. You'll be able to focus on your students' expressions and the way they react and respond to you, and to each other. This will give you valuable insight into your class and your teaching that you can't gain in any other way.

The Specifics: How to Arrange for a Videotaping

Call the Bok Center to set up a videotaping appointment (617-495-4869). Make sure you do this during the first few weeks of class so that you can schedule a taping during the middle of the semester – a time when you've gotten familiar and comfortable with your class, but still have lots of time to improve your interaction with them. The Bok Center will assign you a meeting room in the Science Center during your regular section time (an adjacent room will contain videotaping equipment). During the week of your videotaping, you will tell students that section will be held in this Science Center classroom, and you'll post a reminder notice on the door of your regular section room. Make sure you tell students that the purpose of the videotaping is to help you improve as a teacher – it is not a tool to help you evaluate them. This will help minimize their nervousness. You can also let students know that the History Department requires all first-time TFs to have a section videotaped. It's one way they, as students, can be assured that their TFs are well-prepared to teach.

Bok Center
617-495-4869
bokcenter@fas

Afterward the videotaping, call the Bok Center again to arrange for a consultation with one of the Bok Center staff members or arrange to view it with the Lead TF. After viewing the tape, you can request a copy of the video to review on your own. You can also file away the tape to use as part of a job application teaching portfolio in the future.

Making Sense of CUE Evaluations

Professor Mark Kishlansky

In teaching sections for large lecture courses, Teaching Fellows will inevitably become familiar with CUE evaluations. Since no one works harder or cares more profoundly about the quality of their teaching than do beginning Teaching Fellows, CUE evaluations are a double-edged sword. Officially they are forms sent out and gathered together by a committee of faculty and undergraduates eponymously named the Committee on Undergraduate Education (hence the acronym CUE). Most of the form evaluates the course and its professor, but one section is directed at the performance of section leaders and asks for both numerical ratings (1-5) and prose responses to general questions (strengths and weaknesses). The numerical scores are tabulated to create an overall evaluation of course, professor, and Teaching Fellow, though the actual weighting of factors is slightly mysterious. These scores and a qualitatively neutral account of the commentary are published annually in the CUE guide.

CUE evaluations are necessarily a blunt instrument. Because they are the only structured way in which Teaching Fellows gain feedback on their teaching, they are eagerly anticipated and studiously examined by those being evaluated. They are commonly the cause of much elation and much depression; both responses are inappropriate. In the first place, CUE evaluation forms are often filled in hurriedly and thoughtlessly and most offer no substantive information whatsoever. Students simply color in the numerical dots and leave the evaluative sections empty. Many who have had a rewarding experience in the course will simply use one-word superlatives (GREAT!!!) to express their approval. Second, the most comprehensive information on CUE forms is usually provided by students who have a grievance (legitimate or otherwise) and thus even highly rated Teaching Fellows will gain the most lasting impression of their evaluations from negative commentaries. Some of these can be quite deliberately hurtful and need to be seen as mirror images of written feedback on not very competent assignments. Finally, when constructive criticism is offered on CUE forms, it is usually of the contradictory "speaks too quickly" / "speaks too slowly" variety.

For all of these reasons it is necessary to use CUE evaluations cautiously in attempting to improve one's section performance. Despite the fact that there will be some unfair criticism, it is vital that it not be defensively dismissed, just as unabashed praise cannot be enthusiastically embraced. The best use of CUE evaluations is to identify and act on what appear to be thoughtful assessments. This may mean repeating techniques students described as helpful or altering ones described as ineffective or unhelpful. Frequently students will provide evidence that key concepts are not being clearly communicated, that discussions do not flow properly, or that questions are not clearly answered. This is the kind of useful information that can be gained from a careful reading of CUE evaluations.

The final thing to be observed is that for all of the CUE's shortcomings, there is a rough equity to the overall scores that Teaching Fellows receive in their evaluations. Students are usually evaluating performances comparatively, and when they rate one TF a "5" and another a "4," they are making a comparative, rather than an absolute, judgment. Over time these judgments tend to hold up and while individual TFs frequently improve their scores as they gain experience, it is rare that they experience significant decline or that multiple sections judge the same TF differently.

On Cue: Teaching Evaluations

By Mara Mills (History of Science)

In his contribution to *Pedagogy: The Question of Impersonation*, Joseph Litvak addresses a passage from "The Resistance to Theory" in which Paul de Man disavows the theatrical and the intimate aspects of teaching. Resisting his former dissertation advisor and, in a moment of strong reading, his own student-evaluators, Litvak writes:

> The passage chills me because, to tell you the truth, the reason I got into teaching is precisely that it seemed to combine the best of both show business and guidance counseling. Starting in about the first grade, I cathected my teachers—and hoped to be cathected myself one day—in much the same way that I cathected my favorite stars of stage, screen, and television. (Much as I suspect a backhanded compliment, I'm in fact delighted to read on a course evaluation: "Mr. Litvak should be an actor." And though I *know* it was meant as a put-down, one of the evaluations that I remember most fondly is the one that commented, "My friend and I referred to this class as The Litvak Show.") [1]

Would that we all received such tender criticism! Consider one of the more cutting comments from my personal archive of CUE evaluations—"The TF set up and relied on a large divide between herself and the class. She often answered questions, instead of opening them up to the class, by restating the question in the context of her advanced knowledge of the area." This is a criticism redeemable only by a vanity lacking all playfulness.

Impersonation, ventriloquism, mimesis, and

[1] Joseph Litvak, "Discipline, Spectacle, and Melancholia in and around the Gay Studies Classroom," in *Pedagogy: The Question of Impersonation*. Ed. Jane Gallop (Indianapolis: Indiana UP, 1995), 19.

play are keywords in pedagogical theory, but there's something about being criticized for one's teaching that elicits the most literal feelings of fraudulence. What's more, even lauded teachers experience insecurity about their classroom "performances." When I was recruiting speakers for a Derek Bok Center panel on "Teaching Strategies from CUE Award Winners," most of the ten or more graduate students I approached felt they weren't qualified to lecture on the topic, despite the fact that they had won CUE awards, often in multiple years. Some of this ambivalence towards teaching must be a remnant of the previous generation, when Lynne V. Cheney was the most visible advocate for taking instruction as seriously as research, and articles such as "Teaching Awards: Aid to Tenure or Kiss of Death?" appeared in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.[2]

In the last ten years, trends have begun to shift. Our institution has launched "Harvard College Professorships" and "Excellence in Mentoring Awards" to recognize faculty dedication to teaching, in addition to the "Certificate of Distinction in Teaching" available to graduate students. *The Chronicle* has more recently published articles titled "What Makes a Teacher Great?" and "Student Evaluations Deconstructed," which report, with some circumspection, on the increasingly specific evaluation systems being developed for university teaching as well as the establishment of increasingly remunerative teaching prizes.[3]

A few straightforward words, then, about the CUE Guide system, which many of us know nothing about until our students receive an email from the CUE office in their inboxes informing them that the evaluations are available for them to fill out online. (TFs do not get an email from the CUE guide but they can check how many of their students have filled out the evaluation by going to their class tab at my.harvard.edu.) First, at the end of each semester your students will be given the chance to rate nine aspects of your teaching (for instance, "Encouraged participation," "Used blackboards, visual aids, handouts and problem set keys well" and the grim "Assignments and/or problem sets returned promptly"). If your overall score falls between a 4.5 and a 5.0, as it does for 10-15% of TFs each term, you will receive the CUE certificate from the Bok Center, an award that can be noted on your C.V.

According to the 2004-2005 data, there is usually a positive correlation between grading and CUE scores, within and across disciplines. Departmental averages range from Statistics (3.79) to Sanskrit and Indian Studies (4.59), with the History and History of Science departments averaging 4.32 and 4.45, respectively. Oh yes, and a description of your performance may become publicly available in the CUE Guide, if you teach for a regularly-offered course.

More important, and affecting, I think, than this tallying, your students will also have the opportunity to *write about you*. Their comments can be judiciously excerpted for job applications, more and more of which are requiring "teaching statements" or "teaching portfolios."[4] TFs should remind their Course Head to forward the online evaluations to them. Be sure to print the files in full or to keep them electronically in a safe place. The CUE office will not necessarily store them for your future use.

All business-mindedness aside, an afternoon's happiness can be crossed-off somewhere between an N/A and a "pretty helpful" in the "comments" section of the CUE bubble forms. Of course, how much teaching evaluations matter really depends on what we've gambled, day to day, in our classrooms. In terms of my aspirational pedagogy, I take counsel from Eve Sedgwick, whose recent *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* tells of another way to take student criticism:

> Teaching privileged undergraduates, I sometimes had a chilling intimation that while I relied on their wish to

[2] Scott Heller, "Teaching Awards: Aid to Tenure or Kiss of Death?" *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 16 March 1988, A14. For a more recent critique of teaching awards, see David G. Evans, "How Not to Reward Outstanding Teachers," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 20 May 2005, B20.

[3] Thomas Bartlett, "What Makes a Teacher Great?" *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 12 December 2003, p. 8; Joel Gold, "Student Evaluations Deconstructed," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 12 September 1997, p. B8. For another take on the current performance-imperative, see Jon McKenzie's *Perform or Else: From Discipline to Performance* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

[4] The Bartlett article notes that as of last year, over 2000 colleges were making use of portfolios, though generally for tenure review, and that this system had emerged from marketing programs.

> mirror me and my skills and knowledge, they were motivated instead by seeing me as a cautionary figure: what might become of them if they weren't cool enough, sleek enough, adaptable enough to escape from the thicket of academia into the corporate world…It's so often too late when we finally recognize the 'resistance'…of a student/patient as a form of pedagogy aimed at us and inviting our mimesis. We may wonder afterwards whether and how we could have managed to turn into the particular teacher/therapist needed by each one. Perhaps their implication has been: Try it my way—if you're going to teach me. Or even: I have something more important to teach you than you have to teach me.[5]

Whether our teaching is met with impersonation or with intense dissent, these anonymous dispatches from the classroom—these CUES—are always spurs as much as evaluations.

[5] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham: Duke UP, 2003), 154.

Giving the Guest Lecture

By Lauren E. Brown (History)

You've stared down the steely eyes of your generals committee, you've mastered the art of leading a discussion section, and you may be well on your way to actually writing that dissertation. But are you ready to take on a room of 100+ students who just had too much dining hall chicken parmesan for lunch? How about the 50 students in your 11 a.m. lecture class who seem to have rolled out of bed without drinking their morning coffee? Here are some things to consider as you prepare to deliver your first guest lecture:

Know your audience. You have two – the professor and the students. First, the professor. Think about the type of lectures she normally gives: are they heavy on audio-visuals? are they argument driven? do they encourage audience participation? do they ad lib or are they very structured? what kind of lessons have they (and the course) been trying to teach the students? Now think about which of these aspects you'd like to emulate or practice using.

Give some thought to who it is you're substitute-lecturing for. By this point, you know the Course Head well and can gauge how she will respond to different scenarios. Is she open to you doing something totally different in class, or will she read that approach as you not taking the situation seriously? The best way to avoid disappointment on either end is to communicate. Most professors will happily chat with you about how they see you putting your own stamp on things, as well as the goals they'd like to see you accomplish in taking on the particular lecture they have assigned to you.

In an ideal scenario, you would schedule a meeting with the Course Head a month in advance of the lecture (or earlier). Come prepared with one or two reasonably detailed plans of attack for your lecture. Prior to the meeting, think about answering the following questions (if you get stuck, you can always ask the professor to think through them with you):

1. What material leads in to this lecture?
2. What are my main goals? am I focusing more on substance (facts, narratives, timelines) or method (how historians have dealt with a topic, particular ways to approach history)?
3. What must be covered to head into the following week's material?
4. What ways might I be able to tap into methods I've used in section during the lecture? (for example, doing a close-reading of a text, asking students to answer a question, taking apart a visual image?)

The last item, in particular, plays to your strengths. You already know several ways to make learning interactive. Review techniques you've used successfully in section and see if they'll translate to a lecture scenario. By running one or two outlines or proposals by the Course Head, you will have a clearer sense of what you need to accomplish when you finally sit down to write. Some professors will offer to look over drafts ahead of the lecture, others won't. As with anything you write, a good proof is always a smart move.

Know your audience: the students. Those surly kids who are wont to nap during lecture… Humor aside, odds are that the students are on your side. They know that guest-lecturing is a big deal for you, and unless you are the notorious TF who gives nothing but Cs, they will cheer you on throughout, regardless of your actual performance. Nonetheless, the students are your true audience, and you need to give some thought to how best to appeal to (and entertain) them. Here you've actually been dealt a better hand than the professor, as you know these students far better than she does. You've taught them in section and have a decent sense of what they think is and isn't working in the course. Having read their papers and listened to their in-class comments, you also have a clear sense of their skill level and background knowledge. Use this to your advantage. Does the professor talk too fast or cover too much material for students to process? If so, say less, talk slower, and emphasize more. Think about ways to mediate between what the students want and need and what the Course Head will expect from you.

Know yourself. Theoretically, you came to grad school because you want to be a professor. The idea of getting up in front of students and lecturing, that is, explaining concepts in which you find (an admittedly perverse) joy, should do nothing but excite you. Excitement, however, does not necessarily translate into public speaking talent. By this point you've had enough experience in smaller presentations to know your tics. Are you a fast-talker? Do you pace or twitch? If this is your first time delivering a lecture, get yourself into that lecture hall and do a few dry runs with a trusty friend. Make sure you remind yourself to pause. Time yourself. Ask your colleague or friend to keep an eye out for quirky behavior. The more comfortable you are in your surroundings and routine, the smoother the lecture will go.

Know the task. Also important, however, is knowing what's required to prepare a good lecture. You've already taken the first step in meeting with the professor and devising a game plan. But in sitting down to write, first-time lecturers are often at a loss for what to do, where to start, and how to find material. In other words, what rules apply to this type of writing exercise? You will be relieved to know that your options are open in terms of sourcing. Most first-timers later reveal that they essentially "cribbed" the factual material (not the wording!) from one or two texts. Extensive research is not necessary, with two exceptions: one, if you're lecturing in a topic area new to you; and two, if you're trying to make a methodological point. In these cases, doing (and showing) some primary research is helpful. Let your writing style, be it text-oriented, narrative, or argument-driven guide you in building your source base.

As you prepare to write, consider that for a 45-minute lecture, you will need approximately 14 double-spaced pages. I guarantee that the first few lectures you write will take you twice as long to prepare as expected. You will develop a newfound respect for junior faculty who lecture twice a week while continuing their own research and writing. Make sure you give yourself plenty of lead time for your lecture – you'll need it. As this is your first go and you want to make the best impression possible, working on your lecture off and on for a month is not unreasonable. Remember, however, that eventually you will be the junior faculty member and you will need to be able to write these with a reasonable amount of speed and efficiency. Fortunately, one solidly written lecture can frequently be re-used and re-tooled again and again for a variety of lecturing occasions. Thus, time well spent now may indeed save you time later.

Know your point. Good teaching and lecturing can be boiled down to simple show and tell. Or, more specifically – tell, show, and tell. There is nothing more frustrating for students than sitting for an hour listening, copiously taking notes, and leaving not knowing what they were supposed to take away from the lecture, or what they may be asked to recall. It is akin to reading an essay without an early thesis statement – the author may know where he/she is taking the reader, but the reader sure doesn't! So as a lecturer, you must tell, show, and tell. You must know the 2 or 3 large points you want the students to take from the lecture. ***Tell*** them upfront: "Today we're going to discuss situation X. I'd really like you to keep in mind Y and Z." (Be it in a section or a lecture, I start almost every class by listing these items on the board or a slide). Then ***show*** them how the material fits these points. And then ***tell*** them again what those important points were. The best lectures find ways to continually reiterate the main points as the lecturer uses material to illustrate those points. Like signposts in essay writing, take moments during the lecture to summarize what you've covered and what you're about to cover. And then tell them what those main points are again. It will feel painfully redundant to you. It will sound gloriously coherent and cohesive to the students and they will thank you for it.

Know your purpose. The easiest way for a first-time lecturer to understand the purpose of a lecture is, in some ways, to think of what it need not be. It is not a dissertation. It does not involve a complicated explanation of historiography, wherein you show how all prior historical efforts were weak-minded and wrong. It need not be heavy on original argument or material. Here is where lecturing differs from article writing. First, you must realize that students do not have the wealth or breadth of knowledge that you do (see, you've learned something in graduate school!). You are in charge of explaining to them a time period, a phenomenon, a genre, or a method. What feels overly simplistic to you is still probably something they need to hear. Make no assumptions of prior knowledge. (Harvard kids in particular are extremely skilled in talking expertly about things they have absolutely no knowledge of.) I taught a section in which I asked the class to define the word "canon." The response, given seriously: "When one person starts singing, then another, and then another." It's always good to work with the basics and then build one or two more complicated points into the lecture.

Next, do not feel as if your lecture need be appropriate for a conference talk. Again, more likely than not, you will rely heavily on 2 or 3 texts and will essentially crib the lecture from them. The more lectures you write and give, the easier it will become to learn how and when to assert your own voice and opinions. But in the beginning, it's fair to rely on the work of others – paraphrasing and attributing as necessary. (Note: it's a good idea to write footnotes or parenthetical citations for yourself so you remember, down the road, which ideas were "borrowed" and which were your own.) Finally, remember your purpose is also to enjoy the experience. Think about the things that draw you to this material and feel free to shape the lecture around that!

I hope these suggestions will get you thinking actively about how to step into the role of professor for a day. The most important thing to remember is to be prepared. This means having those written pages in front of you, whether or not you read from them continuously or insert some moments of discussion, questioning, or adlibbing. And finally – when all else fails: everyone loves audio-visuals. Good luck!

Writing Letters of Recommendation

By Heather Smith (English and American Literature & Language)

This essay is reprinted, with permission, from the Teaching Fellow Handbook: Department of English *(2003).*

As both a TF and a resident tutor, I have written a number of letters of recommendation. During my spell as Junior Secretary for Admissions at Homerton College, Cambridge, I have also seen a few (as well as some heinous ID photos). Here are my tips/thoughts/things to consider:

Can You Do It?

The first thing to remember about writing for people is that you can refuse if you really can't bring yourself to do it. NB – not knowing a student very well is no reason to decline to recommend them. They can supply plenty of supplementary information to you. Writing letters for people is a great way to get to know them. This proviso applies to the rare student who appalls you and whom you just cannot praise.

If you cannot honestly recommend the student, then there are a variety of tactful ways to tell them that you're not the best person for this task. Something about how you don't feel you can write them a great letter, or even that you really don't have time, will be inoffensive, and will spare you the morally damnable position of writing them a lukewarm letter that will lose them the job anyway. Employers or fellowship committees can see right through faint praise, and it's a waste of your time and the student's two/three chances for strong letters if you write a flabby one because you've nothing much worth saying about this person.

If you are in doubt, consider whether you can honestly recommend the student. Occasionally you will find yourself in a position where a student you just can't like asks you for a letter. Bear in mind that, if they're desperate enough to have to ask you (their random TF), it may be that no one who has lived or worked with them wants to perjure themselves by praising this person on paper. There are a lot of lines of defense between the average TF and the letter of recommendation – the student's house entryway tutor, their house Senior Tutor, maybe their junior or senior tutorial supervisor, etc. If you're uncomfortable, it's reasonable to ask them if there's someone who knows them better, who could write the letter they want.

Is There Time?

You will need at least a week's notice, absolute minimum. Two weeks is the practical minimum for comfort. Since what they are asking you for is a professional service, this is reasonable.

Also bear in mind that you will very likely need to obtain a signed waiver form from the student, where they certify that they waive their legal right to see your letter – often this has to be enclosed in the sealed envelope you put your letter into, so be sure you get that in time.

NB – of course I've written an occasional brief thing for people who need it at the last minute, anything up to 10pm the night before it was due, but this is totally down to what mood you're in, whether there's physically time to do what they ask, and whether you've been drinking – it is therefore entirely at your discretion. This is much more of an issue for the live-in tutor (whose students are also her neighbors) than for the TF, but I've never felt taken-advantage-of in either capacity. Students here can feel enormously entitled, but nobody can despise you for having to refuse to write at 24 hours notice - nor do they despise you if you are available to do them this massive favor.

The Devil is in the Details

First of all, on a practical formatting level, make sure that the student's name is right near the start of the letter in bold, or put it as a "Re: Angela Thing" on a separate line below the "Dear Sirs". Do something to make it nice and clear who you are writing for and why. As a general rule, employers etc. will not waste time trying to extract or intuit embedded information from a fuzzy letter. That is "game over" before you even begin.

Beyond that, the best advice is to know your task. It is often useful to ask the student who else will be writing in their support, so that your letter will not overlap with the others and you can provide fresh evidence of the student's strengths. No committee or employer wants three similar letters about a person. So find out if they would like a purely academic letter from you, or one tailored more to showcase their efficiency and other abstract business qualities, for example.

So, once you've been asked in good time, and have decided to do it (and once you know your boundaries), find out more details about what the letter is for. You should have no qualms about asking the student to write you a brief explanation of the fellowship/ job/ funding they're applying for, or to photocopy their own application materials for your information. All of this is great fodder for you to write the strongest letter possible, so it's very much in their best interest.

It is also fine, and sometimes a good idea, to ask the student to explain how they want to look in this portrait you are writing – you don't have to stick to their self-image if it doesn't fit how you see them, but the student will know more about the application than you do, and if they want their independent research to be emphasized in the letter, then it will be very useful for you to know that. It's much easier to proceed according to your conscience (and your personal perjury radar) once you know what spin they want and what the purpose of the letter actually is. You can decide what you are or are not willing or able to say about them, once you know what they want.

The strongest letters I have seen or written have been ones where the author has written both generally and specifically about the student, giving (brief) anecdotes that illustrate their outstanding qualities. This is where the details you have been obtaining above will really make a difference. For instance – you know that the student is always punctual for your tutorial, and always hands in their neatly proofread work on time. In itself this isn't make-or-break material. However, you can then go on to qualify and enhance this with mention of their demanding extracurricular public-service career; where they also give their all but get everything done, efficiently, thoroughly, and on time. A specific example is one of my students who takes a lot of Chinese language classes – I was able to write in his recommendation that he also contributes a lot to a program in Chinatown, giving English lessons and citizenship classes bilingually. So the context or ramifications of an activity or achievement are also important. Being a great footballer is something any doofus can do. Being a great footballer, at the same time as gradually overcoming dyslexia, and also going from a C- to a B+ in your class is much more interesting to an employer or fellowship committee. (With regard to grades, it can't hurt in this context to point out that Mr. Linebacker's final B+ grade meant he'd risen to rank 6th out of a class of 24).

The letter of recommendation is therefore a collaborative effort, something where you use information supplied to you by the student (or by your colleagues too) in order to really stand behind their application. Your letter actually will make a huge difference to their chances. Do as you would be done by.

An Aside About Harvard 'Financial Aid' Recommendations

If you are asked to write a "letter" for a financial aid student's application for further years of internal, Harvard financial aid funding, be aware that these are extraordinarily easy, very quick, and are submitted online.

You will need to fill in and sign off on four paragraphs of information: 1) In what connection have you known this applicant? (125 words) 2. What can you tell us about this student's intellectual interest and abilities, and academic achievements? (125 words) 3. What can you tell us about the applicant's personal qualities? (125 words) and 4. We welcome any further statement you may wish to make about the applicant. (an unlimited amount of text).

It is not considered strictly unprofessional to have the student draft the latter three replies themselves, if they're not too shy to puff themselves a bit – or if they are very modest, the least they can do is to give you a bare list of their extracurriculars, awards, etc. These little online financial aid recommendations are basically arbitrary paperwork to make sure that the student is not utterly goofing off in their time here, so although you should make them strong and positive like a full-length letter of recommendation, they are much shorter and can be done with more student collaboration. Bear in mind that you need the student's Harvard ID number in order to submit it, and keep the confirmation code you receive, in order to update or edit the record if need arises.

Ordering Your Information into a Killer Letter

First piece of advice is not to repeat parts of the student's own application. The student may have chosen to give you her own application letter and CV for your information, but you should write as a complement and support to this, not to reiterate any part of it, but to flesh it out and back her up with your professional opinion.

All this can be done as best pleases you. My preferred model is to introduce myself very briefly, so that the reader is not left to wonder if I am a janitor, or a blood relative of the candidate. It never hurts to explain quickly that you have "been their Teaching Fellow for XYZ class, and have worked closely with Miss Thing all semester." If you have been her junior or senior tutorial supervisor, even better, because your letter becomes more plausible the more time you have spent professionally with the student. This all strengthens the reader's interest in your support for the applicant's magnificent qualities.

You can then go on, in the body of the letter, to list their very high level of commitment, the quality and maturity of their work, the strength of their independent study, or whatever else seems tailor-made in relevance to the purpose of the letter. A management consultancy firm is going to care very little about essays per se, but will be pleased to hear about the strength and cogency of the student's verbal expression. Pitch it for the audience. Most of this is common sense… but make sure you keep it nicely focused. You don't want to make a huge list of personal excellences and give equal weight to all of them, with an example for everything. This is (again) where it really helps to know what the letter is for. Mention as many great things about this student as seem relevant to you, but you need only use a couple of stunning examples to really get your point across.

Time

The average 1.5 page letter will probably require 2 drafts, and will take around 3 hours total. This will be a serious time investment if you have several letters due at the same time, so budget carefully so that you don't have to toss them off in a lunch break. The ideal length for a letter is one to one and a half pages (usually single spaced) – so depending on your font, one page is often a little short to get all the good bits in. Be succinct, but include a spread of great details.

What If There's Something Bad?

Hmmm. Rare here at Harvard, but not unheard of. Plenty of students are depressed for a semester or more, or have personal or family crises that cause their grades to suffer, or even make them drop out of school. Luckily, the employer / funding committee, etc. is generally interested in their potential, the person not the grade transcript, and here your letter really has the power to make a difference.

Contextualize and explicate an underachievement somewhere in the body of your letter, not near the beginning. Pay attention first to the sketch of the student's achievements or progress in the area where you have worked with them. You can then go on, against this background, to explain that the loss of a parent, or their episode of serious depression, or their bout of mono etc., resulted in a loss of grades but was handled bravely and with maturity. The student never made excuses for himself, but still tried to perform at a high standard – or perhaps they sensibly and maturely decided to get help. You can find some way to turn a student's darker moment to their advantage, simply by explaining an admirable quality that you would not otherwise have had chance to see in them.

Admittedly, you are unlikely to need to do this – usually their house Senior Tutor will write the detailed and admittedly difficult explanatory letter for the underperforming or prematurely departing student, but in case you ever need to, it's pretty common-sensical. Give information in an order which best serves the student's interest.

The Dismount

A great way to end a strong letter is with a phrase like – "In short, I wholeheartedly support Miss Thing's application to this program. It will provide exactly the environment which, in my opinion, will maximize her skills, as well as enhancing her contribution to the [company/community/whatever]. Many thanks for your time and attention…." Feel free to use your official titles (Teaching Fellow, etc.) under your name if you want to, if you didn't already totally blow your wad at the start of your letter. Don't forget to sign it properly, too.

Other similarly strong notes to finish on are things like "I believe this funding would be key to maximizing the great potential that Mr. Such has already demonstrated in his field." The key to these being realistic endings, not just so much puff, is that the body of your letter should already have shown, in lovely detail and beautifully set out for the ease of the reader, all the ways in which the student has already demonstrated his or her ability, resourcefulness, great potential, etc., etc. Your ending just sums this up. Letters do not look "inflated" or overly enthusiastic when they contain a good density of supporting evidence, specific instances, etc.

Save it! File It So You Can Find It

Just when you thought it was safe to go back in the water, someone's inevitably going to ask you for more copies of their previous letter for later applications… file them on your hard drive, and be prepared to do a little updating. This is especially important if you are writing a generic letter to be held over until the student is really applying for things – be prepared to bring it up to date.

Also ascertain, if you're revising the letter for a different audience, that you have re-tailored it. You don't want to be writing to a law-firm and telling them that Miss Thing will be super as their swimming coach because she is great with kids, unless this really is entirely the case.

Print It on Letterhead, and Other Points of Etiquette

Also, as you tidy it up to print and mail: make sure you address the letter to the specific committee or people for whom it is written. "To whom it may concern" is not a pleasant or particularly professional way to begin, especially since you should have a clue about the audience for your letter. Even if it's "Dear Admissions Tutor," that's better than "whom it may concern."

For additional information on writing a letter of recommendation, see:

"Writing Your first Letter of Recommendation"
bokcenter.harvard.edu/docs/TFTrecs.html

"GSAS Guide for Teaching Fellows on Writing Letters of Recommendation"
bokcenter.harvard.edu/docs/Verba-recs.html

Professional Development: Advice from the Department

By Professor Hue-Tam Ho Tai

Most graduate students going on the academic job market will be asked about their teaching experience. The more extensive and varied your experience at the time of your job interview, the better. It is therefore important to begin accumulating a variety of teaching experiences early on in your graduate career. Ordinarily, you will begin teaching after you have passed your General Exams. Bear in mind that at most institutions, especially liberal arts colleges, professors will be expected to teach outside their area of expertise; try, therefore, to gain teaching experience both in and outside your immediate field of specialization. Graduate students in History can serve as Teaching Fellows and Tutors in a variety of courses, including introductory departmental offerings, Core courses in Historical Studies or Foreign Cultures, departmental tutorials, and lecture courses and tutorials offered in related departments or programs, such as History of Science, History and Literature, East Asian Studies, Social Studies, and so on.

Graduate students' teaching careers can take one of several trajectories. Most G3 students begin by serving as a section leader ("Teaching Fellow") or as a tutorial leader ("Tutor") in the Department or Core. After one or more semesters serving as a TF and/or Tutor, a graduate student may be asked to serve as a "Head Teaching Fellow" or as an "Administrative Tutor." In these cases, a graduate student not only teaches his or her own section or tutorial, but also works in conjunction with the Course Head to coordinate the staff of graduate students teaching in the course. Beginning in the G3 year, but more often in the G4 year or later, graduate students may also advise senior theses. Even more than serving as a section or tutorial leader, this teaching job entails significant independent work. Graduate students directing senior theses design exercises and structured one-on-one meetings to help an individual student complete a major research project. Each of these teaching opportunities provides valuable experience.

As a section leader, you will practice various teaching techniques as you learn how to vary section instruction by using debates, role playing, and other pedagogical tools. You will also gain valuable experience in being a reflective teacher as you think about the ways the professor's lecture and your own section teaching fit together to form a coherent whole. You will act on this knowledge by contributing weekly study and/or response paper questions to the course's Teaching Fellow staff meeting and by commenting on and grading students' response papers, essays, and exams. Moreover, as a Teaching Fellow you will gain valuable expertise in a subject matter by completing both the readings assigned to students and supplemental readings that will give you more detailed knowledge, enabling you to answer the questions your students will likely pose.

As a tutorial leader, you will hone skills in leading small-group discussions. With only 4-6 students per class and a two-hour meeting period, tutorials in the History Department enable you to use active learning techniques, such as having students give oral presentations and conduct peer reviews of each other's writing. Because of the small class size and frequent assignments, tutorial teaching also enables you to develop a deep relationship with students, whom you will advise (informally) as well as teach. During the course of a semester, you will come to know your students' strengths and weaknesses as writers and thinkers, probably more so than anyone else on campus. Teaching a tutorial also provides you with the opportunity to reflect on the tutorial program as a whole—how does the Department conceptualize the learning process students undergo in learning to think and write like historians? And as in the case of section leading, tutorial teaching gives you an opportunity to reflect on the relationship between your teaching, conducted in tutorial, and the Course Head's teaching, conducted in course seminars.

If you become Head Teaching Fellow or Administrative Tutor, you will gain experience in the administrative side of teaching as you learn how to reserve classrooms, order books, assign students to section, maintain a course website, and deal with the College bureaucracy. Most importantly, you will lead or co-lead Teaching Fellow or Tutor staff meetings and discussions about pedagogy, and you will learn how to utilize Harvard's extensive teaching and learning resource centers such as the Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning, the Harvard Writing Project, and the Instructional Computing Group.

Specific Recommendations for Professional Development

Keep a teaching notebook on the courses in which you have assisted. Even if you had no hand in designing the course, take a critical look at the syllabus as the course progresses. How would you have constructed the syllabus differently? What different readings would YOU have assigned? Take good notes on the volume and type of readings assigned, and keep track of students' reactions to the assignments. Note what worked and what did not in both sections and lectures. How would you have presented the lectures differently? If Powerpoint or other technology was used, how effective was it? Would you be comfortable using it? If the course had a website, how would YOU have designed it?

Gather syllabi of courses you might like to TF if given the opportunity, or that you would like to teach in the future. Use these as a starting point for designing your own courses. Many search committees expect job candidates to bring sample syllabi.

Give a lecture in the course in which you are assisting. Delivering a guest lecture will give you a good sense of how long it takes to design a fifty-minute lecture, how much information you can present in one class period, and what level of difficulty you should aim at. Again, make sure to record your observations about the process of putting together the lecture and delivering it in your teaching notebook. Were your jokes well received or did they fall flat? Were you able to get your main point across? Did you run out of time? If you make arrangements in advance, the Derek Bok Center can often videotape your guest lecture and have a teaching consultant review it with you afterward.

Keep teaching evaluations. Even the most critical ones can be useful as you think about how to improve your teaching. If you receive plaudits, you will be able to point to them in job interviews and/or include them in your teaching portfolio.

Ask the course instructor for a recommendation when the course is over. This is the best time for seeking one, when the instructor still has your performance fresh in mind.

Keep track of the time you spend teaching as opposed to doing your own research and writing. Try to maintain a healthy balance between the two.

Use the resources of the Office of Career Services. It can provide tips on writing CVs and resumes, on self-presentation, on public speaking, and various other topics.

Attend job talks. Do not limit yourself to talks in your own field of interest. A common challenge for speakers is how to address mixed audiences. Consider whether the topic was well chosen for the audience and the occasion and whether the speaker provided enough context for the listeners to follow the arguments being presented and evaluate the interpretation being offered.

Give mock job talks and seize opportunities to present your work in progress to others. This will give you experience in time-management and in presenting your research to a mixed group. Comments will range from the substantive to issues of style and self-presentation.

Attend professional workshops and conferences; better yet, participate in some. Harvard graduate students have a wealth of opportunities on campus. An impressive number of students also participate in panels at national and international conferences. This level of involvement gives them both valuable experience and a high level of visibility among prospective employers. Take advantage of these opportunities.

Preparing for Teaching-Related Questions on the Job Interview

A Few Basic Guidelines

Do as much background research as possible on the institution, department, and faculty/search committee conducting the interview. Check the undergraduate catalogue for courses and authors typically taught. Check the school website for learning resources such as library or computing assistance.

Have sample syllabi prepared in advance (including texts, course outlines, and means of assessment), but do not read aloud from them. You may or may not be asked to distribute syllabi.

Arrange for mock-interviews in the Department or at the Office of Career Services.

Be able to describe your research, teaching, and future projects succinctly and engagingly. Interviewers will ask general questions, but you should give specific answers.

Be prepared to answer the same questions over and over again during a day-long interview.

Sound flexible. (Or, rather, do not sound too specialized/esoteric). Be willing to teach to department needs and student interests, as well as to experiment with various formats (team teaching, computer-assisted learning, etc.).

If you have the opportunity to give feedback at the end of the interview, do not ask any questions you should have researched already. Use "Do you have any questions for us?" as an opportunity to say a bit more about yourself. (For instance, "I ran a working group on X at Harvard. Do you think there would be any interest in a similar endeavor here?" Or, "I noticed that you have a Humanities/Gender Studies/Teaching and Learning Center here. How involved are department faculty with this outside institute?"

Sample Interview Questions asked of Recent PhDs

1. What is your basic teaching philosophy?

2. How would you teach...? (Anything from an introductory service class to an innovative course in the department.)

3. If you could teach any course you wanted, what would it be? What would you teach next if you could teach two of them?

4. Which text would you use (have you used) for the U.S. Survey, for Western Civ, etc.? Or, how would you teach (specific major work in your field)?

5. Take course X. As you would teach it, what three goals would the course achieve? When students had completed your course, what would they have learned that is of lasting value?

6. Tell us how your research has influenced your teaching. In what ways have you been able to bring the insights of your research to your courses at the undergraduate level? How do you balance teaching and research?

7. How do you use technology in the classroom?

8. Describe your classroom environment.

9. How would your work fit with the work of this department?

10. Do you know x historian's work? (Read up on your orals list before your interview!) How does it relate to your teaching?

11. What is the difference between history and American Studies?

12. How do you teach writing? What kinds of essays do you want students to write? How do you know you've been successful?

13. What critical approaches do you find most persuasive? How do they translate into your teaching?

14. What interdisciplinary courses could you teach?

15. How will you deal with "hot topics" (for example, explosive political issues) in your course?

16. How do you (as a Harvard graduate) anticipate teaching students at this school?

17. What role do primary sources play in your classroom?

18. Describe your best teaching experience.

19. How will you teach nontraditional students? Non-native speakers?

20. What teaching-related responsibilities are you prepared to assume in the department?

Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning
Much of the information has been drawn from the following websites:

- www.otal.umd.edu/~sies/jobquess.html
Mary Corbin Sies, Dept. of American Studies, University of Maryland, College Park
- www.english.upenn.edu/Grad/placement.php
University of Pennsylvania, Department of English Placement Information website

Creating a Teaching Portfolio

Search committees are increasingly considering teaching experience and pedagogical expertise as significant factors when evaluating faculty members' profiles. There is evidence that in a competitive job market, and when other things are equal, the candidate with a strong—and documented—teaching record will get the job offer.

Because teaching is often undervalued at Harvard, despite recent efforts by the Deans to change the University culture, GSAS students sometimes overlook the importance of their skills and experience in the classroom when envisioning their overall "package" as a job candidate. This is understandable: at most large research universities, teaching does not play a significant a role in hiring or promotion decisions. If graduate students chat with junior faculty members in their department, they will likely hear that the assistant professors they admire do not have a teaching portfolio or statement of teaching philosophy and have never been asked to show one. But this does not mean that GSAS students should follow their example.

The reality of today's job market is that most GSAS graduates will apply for college and university jobs in which teaching plays a central factor in making hiring decisions. Small liberal arts colleges ranging from Amherst to Sweet Briar, as well as state universities large and small, look carefully at a job candidate's ability to teach and advise effectively. And the culture at top-flight research institutions like Harvard is also changing, albeit slowly. As a result, almost all schools will require that job candidates submit a statement of their teaching philosophy. At a growing number of colleges and universities, teaching portfolios, "a collection of materials that document teaching performance," are often requested in addition.[1] In some cases, these have even become the preferred means of evaluating a job candidate's potential. Peter Seldin has estimated that 2,000 colleges and universities in North America use Teaching Portfolios for evaluative purposes in hiring, promotion decisions, or both.

Because Harvard graduate students operate in a university environment that elevates research far above teaching, it may at first seem silly to devote time and effort to creating a Teaching Portfolio. There are three things to keep in mind: 1) Harvard is the exception, not the norm. Teaching, and documentation of teaching, is important in the larger academic world. Moreover, Harvard itself is changing. Despite a longstanding culture of devaluing teaching, the Deans are working hard to ensure that teaching is a factor in promotion decisions; 2) although there are a lot of uninspiring Teaching Portfolios floating around the Web, teaching documents can be organized into a Portfolio that demonstrates both serious thought and rigorous standards of disciplinary scholarship; 3) Peter Seldin, the accepted authority on Teaching Portfolios, suggests that they take between 12-15 hours to create. That is a small time commitment given that the process can generate considerable results, both in terms of one's own growth as a teacher and in terms of more pragmatic benefits, like attracting attention on the job market.

The Bok Center and the Office of Career Services advise Teaching Fellows to develop and then update a Teaching Portfolio early in their teaching careers at Harvard. TFs can begin the process during a regular teaching consultation appointment at the Bok Center. The staff will brainstorm with you different ways to design a Teaching Portfolio that captures your educational philosophy and documents your ongoing teaching efforts. They can also provide a template developed for the typical Harvard experience.

Before making an appointment, take some initial steps:

- Save all syllabi, handouts, and assignments from courses in which you teach. Make sure to make a note of questions, exercises, and materials you developed yourself.

- Think about and begin working on a statement of teaching philosophy, which are often a required part of a job application. The strongest statements are those that have received as much attention as a statement of research aims developed for a fellowship application. They should be rooted in real experiences in the classroom.

- Request letters from professors who have employed you to teach, particularly those who have observed your teaching and/or read over your comments on student work. Ask for these letters while the professors' memories are fresh.

- When course grades are submitted and there is no appearance of impropriety or favoritism, consider asking a student or two for a letter of recommendation.

- Have a section (or if you give a guest lecture, the lecture) videotaped as part of a consultation at the Bok Center. Ask to keep a copy of the tape. Videotaped segments of teaching are occasionally requested in lieu of or in addition to an onsite job talk. Watching yourself teach on tape, especially in consultation with a Bok Center staff member, can be a springboard to reflecting on and articulating your teaching philosophy. Use the Bok Center handouts "Watching Yourself on Videotape" and "Observation Guide" as aids during this process.

[1] Peter Seldin, *The Teaching Portfolio: A Practical Guide to Improved Performance and Promotional Tenure Decisions*, 3rd ed. (Boston: Anker Publishing Co., 1994), 3.

- Keep all student evaluations of your teaching. Mid-semester evaluations (using forms you develop or forms available from the Bok Center), combined with final CUE evaluations, make a good package. Your CUE scores are sent to Course Heads at the end of the semester, and the portion pertaining to your teaching may be detached from these. A shortage of storage space and concerns about confidentiality limit access to your CUE scores, but you do have a right (and responsibility!) to examine them. If the Course Head does not pass them along to the TFs, ask for copies.

The above may seem like a lot of work that will distract you from completing the PhD. Try not to see it as such. Instead, envision the process of creating a Teaching Portfolio not as a necessary evil—something akin to assembling a CV—but rather as a means of productively *preparing* for the job market and a successful academic career. The process of creating a Portfolio should provoke the kind of thought and attention to teaching that academics more commonly reserve for research.

Obtaining Letters of Recommendation from your Students

If the short-answer questions on CUE evaluations do not provide substantive commentary on your teaching from students, you may wish to solicit "teaching recommendations" from 2-3 undergraduates whom you have instructed. These letters can be included in your Teaching Portfolio. Of course, you should only request a letter of recommendation from a student when you are no longer involved in evaluating their work.

Because undergraduates usually do not have experience writing letters of recommendation, you will want to give them some guidance. Direct them to the Bok Center website for assistance in composing a letter. You might also want to provide them with the following tips, which have been adapted from Cynthia Verba's *The GSAS Guide for Teaching Fellows on Writing Letters of Recommendation*.

a. You should promptly identify yourself and the basis of your knowledge of the instructor: Were you their student in a tutorial or small seminar for department concentrators? How often did it meet? How many students were in the class? How many papers were assigned? Do you also know the instructor through exposure in the tutorial system, or through some other capacity? Has your acquaintance been sustained over a number of years?

b. In evaluating an instructor's intellectual and pedagogical capabilities, try to describe the instructor in terms that reflect their distinctive or individual strengths. Whatever strengths strike you as particularly salient, be prepared to back up your judgement with concrete examples - class activities, organization, discussion leading or lecturing skills, paper comments or other writing assistance, general mentorship. Above all, avoid the misconception that the more superlatives that you use, the stronger the letter. Heavy use of stock phrases or clichés in general is unhelpful. Your letter can only be effective if it contains substantive information about the instructor's qualifications.

c. In discussing an instructor's character, proceed in a similar fashion to the intellectual evaluation, highlighting individual traits and providing concrete illustrations.

d. After discussing each of the above points, your letter should have some brief summation, giving the main thrust of your recommendation for the candidate.

Remember that letters of recommendation can be filed through Harvard's web-based Dossier Service. Contact Pat Pearson at OCS (dossier@fas.harvard.edu) for more information.

Pat Pearson
dossier@fas.harvard.edu