

A MODEST PROPOSAL REGARDING TA EXPECTATIONS

(The following are some thoughts from two experienced History TAs about how to make our work together more pleasant and more productive. Perhaps it can be a basis for dialogue during the coming year.)

What can you expect as a History TA?

You will:

- Work with your professor to ensure a balance between your academic obligations and your obligations as a TA.
- Communicate honestly with your professor and fellow TAs about issues such as grading, office hours, and review sessions.
- Attend all scheduled classes and review sessions.
- Hold regular weekly office hours.
- Complete in a timely fashion all readings assigned to your students.
- Grade class assignments and exams in a timely fashion.
- Uphold high professional and ethical standards with faculty, peers, and students.
- Cooperate with your professor and fellow teaching assistants in determining equitable workloads and common standards for evaluating student work.
- Keep accurate records of students' attendance and grades and ensure that a paper copy of all electronic documents is available to your professor.

Your professor will:

- Respect your need to devote time to your own work.
- Provide guidelines for the conduct of the course, including equitable distribution of workload among TAs, grading standards and timetables, office hours, review sessions, and content and format of discussion sessions.
- Communicate honestly and in a timely fashion with you about his or her expectations of TAs and your performance.
- Be supportive of you in interactions with students and will listen thoughtfully to your viewpoint before reaching decisions on issues involving students or other TAs.
- Offer you opportunities for professional growth, such as the chance to guest lecture, but not require you to fulfill his or her duties.

Your fellow TAs will:

- Respect each others as equals, appreciating the different perspectives each TA brings to our work together.
- Work together as a team to make the best use of each person's unique talents and strengths.
- Communicate honestly and in a timely fashion about issues that arise in our work with students and each other.
- Work together towards consensus on roles and responsibilities, grading standards and timetables, office hours, and content of discussion sections and review sessions.

The Department will:

- Help you keep a balance between your own academic pursuits and your duties as a TA.
- Provide you training to improve your teaching skills and help you decide if an academic career is for you.
- Provide you with a clean, safe office in which you may meet with students, grade assignments, and prepare for discussion sections or other aspects of the course.
- Provide access to a computer, printer, and photocopier for preparation and reproduction of course materials, such as handouts and overheads.

Your students will:

- Treat you with respect, as you will them.
- Communicate their needs, including special accommodations, as they arise so that you may make appropriate arrangements in a timely fashion.
- Not play you off against your fellow TAs or the professor.
- Not make unreasonable demands of your time outside your designated office hours.
- Read all assignments in a timely fashion (we promise!)

(As you will note, some of these expectations have not yet been fully met, but we hope by discussing them, we can as a community work toward making them a reality.)