DEPARTMENT OF PHILOSOPHY TEACHING HANDBOOK

I. Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to describe the Department's policies regarding our appointment of teaching assistants (TAs) and instructors, to state guidelines regarding the teaching responsibilities and workloads of TAs and their faculty supervisors, and to bring to the attention of all members of the Department the standards of professional conduct expected of teachers. The handbook can be used as a resource for addressing many of the issues and problems that arise for TAs.

Typically, graduate students on support serve as teaching assistants and instructors for at least a few semesters. TAs and instructors for the Writing, Speaking, and Argument Program play an important role in undergraduate education. In many of our larger classes, TAs lead discussion sections in which undergraduate philosophy students have a chance to discuss and to ask questions about the material from their readings and lectures. TAs often spend a great deal of time working with students individually on their papers and in preparation for tests. And, of course, TAs grade papers and tests. In performing these duties, TAs enhance the undergraduate philosophy program.

Most graduate students in philosophy are preparing for careers as teachers, and serving as a TA or writing instructor provides training for that goal. TAs typicariril to 50 0 0 Tm /TT1 1 Tf2 () -7 () -22 Tf2T[0 0 0.2

To avoid the possibility that TA assignments become overly time-consuming, the Department has adopted the policy that the number of hours a TA devotes to teaching related duties should not exceed 250 hours in any semester. In any case in which a TA believes that this limit has been, or will be, exceeded, the TA should first consult with the faculty member teaching the course and attempt to overcome the problem. If that does not lead to a satisfactory resolution of the problem, the TA may consult with the Department Chair, the Graduate Program Director, or any other member of the faculty.

The following estimates of the time devoted to the various aspects of a TAs duties are provided in order to assist faculty and TAs in predicting the workload associated with any TA assignment. These estimates are starting points for calculations, and more precise estimates should be used when they are available.

- A. All work for the course, including office hours, attendance at lectures, preparation for discussion sections, grading, and conducting discussion sections will be used in calculating time devoted to TA duties.
- B. The typical amount of time spent grading a five-page paper is 40 minutes. The typical amount of time spent grading a short answer exam is 20 minutes. These estimates, together with class enrollments and requirements, provide the data for rough estimates of the amount of time a TA will devote to grading in a course.
- C. Typically, a TA spends an average of 2.5 hours per week holding office hours and meeting with students. An additional 2 hours per week are spent doing required reading and 2 or 3 hours per week are spent attending the course lecture. This amounts to approximately 100 hours of work other than grading in a 14-week semester.
- D. These guidelines have the result that a TA leading 2 discussion sections each week and grading 2 exams and 2 papers for 50 students will have a maximal assignment. TAs not leading discussion sections may have considerably more grading.

IV.

grading is to be done, and how complaints about grades will be handled.

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- (d) Students in their fourth year of graduate study who have passed the qualifying exam and have taught one summer school course previously.
- (e) Students in their fifth year of graduate study who have passed the qualifying exam and have taught more than one summer school course previously.
- (f) Students beyond their fifth year of graduate study who have completed the qualifying exam.
- (g) Students beyond their third year of graduate study who have not completed the qualifying exam.

Notes: (a) For the purpose of making these assignments, students who take time off from the program and students who enter the program with advanced standing will be assigned to a year of graduate study by the Director of Graduate Studies. (b) Summer school assignments are typically made during the fall semester. Students who are expected by the Graduate Program Director to complete all requirements for the qualifying exam prior to the beginning of the spring semester will, for the purposes of these assignments, be counted among those who have completed the qualifying exam. (c) The likely effect of this policy is that students will typically teach courses following their third and fifth years of graduate study.

3) Students will not be given teaching assignments during periods in which they hold fellowships intended to free them from teaching responsibilities.

VIII. Positions in Other Colleges in the Rochester Area

The Department is sometimes asked to recommend one person for part-time teaching positions at other colleges in the Rochester area. Such requests typically include, implicitly or explicitly, a request that the person recommended is the most highly qualified candidate available. The Department will respond to these requests by recommending the person it judges to be most highly qualified. It should be noted, however, that students on support must abide by the College's rules. If support is in the form of a teaching assistantship, then no other employment is allowed. If support is in the form of a fellowship without teaching responsibilities, the student may work no more than 20 hours a week. In no case, should a full-time student on support be working full-time during the academic year.

Revised September 2016

SAMPLE STUDENT EVALUATION FORM (1)

STUDENT EVALUATION FOR PHL 105 DISCUSSION SECTIONS FALL 2012

- 1)
 How often did you attend the Monday/Wednesday classes?

 _____00-25 %
 _____51-75%

 _____26-50 %
 _____76-100 %
- 2) How often did you attend the Thursday discussion sections? _____00-25% _____51-75% _____26-50 % _____76-100%
- 3) Did you find the discussions helpful? In what way did they help you in PHL 105?
- 4) What aspects of the discussion sections did you find most appealing? What aspects did you find most appalling? Why? Did this keep you from attending the sections?
- 5) What improvements would you suggest for the content of the discussion sections?
- 6) What improvements would you suggest for the format of the discussion sections?
- 7) What are the weak and strong points of the TA for PHL 105?
- 8) Any additional comments?

SAMPLE STUDENT EVALUATION FORM (2)

Complete this form only if you have time after your exam!! DO NOT WRITE YOUR NAME ON THIS PAPER!!!

This survey is being taken to help us understand your reactions to, interests in, and concerns with your assigned recitation/discussion section. Our goal is to use your responses to help us improve the sections. Response to this survey is completely voluntary.

- 1. TA name?
- 2. How often do you attend your recitation section?
- 3. Do you believe you were graded fairly on the last exam? Why or why not?
- 4. Do you find the readings assigned Easy? Moderate? Hard?
- 5. What do you find most difficult about the lecture/reading material?
- 6. Do you feel free to speak in the discussion section?

Do you speak in the discussion section? Why or why not?

- 7. If you met with your TA outside of class, did you find him/her helpful?
- 8. Do you find you recitation section helpful? Why or why not?
- 9. What would you like to see less of/more of in your discussion section?

Additional comments? Feel free to use the back.