

Date: August 27, 2008  
To: FAS Faculty and Graduate School Students  
From: Deans Jon Butler and Peter Salovey  
Re: Faculty and Teaching Fellows and Section Registrations

As the new semester begins, we write to discuss the exceptional intellectual and pedagogical opportunities offered -- and responsibilities created -- when faculty members and graduate students combine their efforts to teach the stimulating courses that distinguish the Yale College curriculum. Although this note is of most direct interest to faculty teaching lecture and laboratory courses and to graduate students appointed as Teaching Fellows for the fall semester, we believe it is of interest to faculty and graduate students more generally.

We encourage faculty to participate in on-line registration for discussion and lab sections. The Registrar's Office has emailed instructions and a form to sign up both for section on-line registration and section room scheduling. If you are teaching a lecture course, the Teaching Fellow Program Office has already forwarded its understanding of the number and sizes of your sections to the FAS Registrar and to your DGS and registrar. These forms are to be sent to your registrar for submission to the Registrar's Office. On-line discussion and lab registration will be adopted for all courses in the future; please notify Diane Rodrigues if you wish to opt out for the spring.

In addition, Judith Hackman is sending faculty a notice about the information to use during the course selection period to assess the need to alter the number of discussion or lab sections offered. Once any section change requests are received, the Teaching Fellow Office will act as swiftly as possible to add (or delete) sections and to allocate needed TFs.

Yale's Teaching Fellow Program is designed to provide a superb pedagogical apprenticeship and experience for graduate students and achieves its ends best through vigorous faculty-graduate student engagement. This interchange produces outstanding teaching in lectures, laboratories, and discussion sections and prepares graduate students for careers as engaged teacher-scholars.

The following principles should guide this relationship:

- Teaching Fellows supplement rather than replace faculty presence as teachers. Faculty members are expected to prepare course syllabi, lectures, homework assignments, and examinations. If designed as a learning experience for the teaching fellows, Teaching Fellows may be asked to assist in the preparation of these materials.
- Teaching Fellows might be provided an opportunity to give a lecture or part of a lecture with supervision, followed by the faculty member's evaluation. (It would be regrettable to send Teaching Fellows to new faculty positions without having had the opportunity to lecture under their mentors' supervision.) But Teaching Fellows typically should not be asked to give lectures when faculty members are unable to attend class. A faculty member who must be absent should ask a colleague to substitute or should schedule a make-up lecture.

- Faculty members are responsible for administrative activities such as placing course materials on library reserve, making photocopies for class, ensuring that working audiovisual resources are available, maintaining websites, and the like. Normally, Teaching Fellows should not expect to be asked to perform these and similar duties.
- Faculty members are expected to meet their Teaching Fellows for a regular discussion every week (many faculty members do this in a weekly bag lunch session) specifically to help Teaching Fellows prepare for the coming week's sections, to discuss grading policies and practices, to coordinate class activities, and to discuss the inevitable peculiarities of teaching, all as part of helping Teaching Fellows learn how to teach undergraduate courses. The weekly faculty meeting with Teaching Fellows offers unique opportunities for wide-ranging mentoring, not only on teaching but also on career issues, professional life, and strategies for research success.
- The Graduate School's FEAST FOR TEACHING program now also provides four free lunches for faculty and Teaching Fellows in each lecture course in four different locations across the Yale campus to encourage the weekly faculty-Teaching Fellow meetings. FEAST FOR TEACHING has been an overwhelming success, and we urge you to participate; you will receive details as classes begin.
- Faculty members should encourage Teaching Fellows to refer to the *Becoming Teachers* handbook, <http://www.yale.edu/graduateschool/teaching/handbook.html>, for a description of the responsibilities consistent with the level of various teaching appointments. Frankly, this terrific handbook can help faculty as much as graduate students in improving teaching.
- Faculty members are strongly urged to encourage Teaching Fellows to attend seminars and workshops offered by the Graduate Teaching Center and to arrange such seminars for Teaching Fellows in their own courses when the course materials present special and intriguing teaching problems and opportunities. For additional information, email Bill Rando, the Director of the Graduate Teaching Center: [william.rando@yale.edu](mailto:william.rando@yale.edu), or consult <http://www.yale.edu/graduateschool/teaching/>.
- Faculty members are expected to visit a section taught by each Teaching Fellow at least once early in the semester and to offer helpful suggestions appropriate to the faculty member's role as a mentor.
- Discussion sections must be restricted to 18 students. Exceptions are rarely allowed and only with written permission from Judith Hackman, Director of the Teaching Fellow Program (432-2757).
- Faculty members are responsible for managing section enrollment, including the maximum section size of 18 students, and for reporting section enrollments to their departments. If section sizes are unbalanced, the faculty member should work with Teaching Fellows to redistribute the students more evenly.

- Teaching Fellows are not provided to lead discussions in courses with enrollments under 30 students nor are they appointed as graders for such courses except for laboratories, language courses, and courses with heavy problem-set grading. Each term we work with departments and programs to review course sizes in which Teaching Fellows are appointed and to estimate enrollment for new courses as carefully as possible. It is always the case that graduate students in their "teaching years" will continue as Teaching Fellows even if course enrollment drops below 30 unless a change is agreed to by the student, faculty member, and DGS.
- Faculty members are expected to lead one discussion section in their own lecture courses of 30 or more except in one or more of the following circumstances: when the course has four or more Teaching Fellows whose sections the instructor should visit and evaluate; when the instructor is teaching a new lecture course; or when discussion sections are in addition to a full, 150-minute weekly lecture schedule (i.e., three 50-minute classes or two 75-minute classes).
- Faculty members are the instructors of record for lecture courses and should keep an ongoing record of grades assigned to student work during the term. Faculty members are responsible for reporting course grades at the end of term to the Faculty of Arts and Sciences Registrar.
- The scheduling of discussion sections should be balanced sensibly across the week and day. Sections should not be concentrated in the very late afternoon and evening to avoid excessive conflicts with broad student interests in community service, music, theater, varsity and intramural athletics, masters' teas, and visiting lectures. A majority of sections should meet in mid-morning and early afternoon and at times when fewer classes meet, such as Friday mornings.
- The Faculty of Arts and Sciences Registrar's Office will assign classrooms for discussion sections unless otherwise indicated on the Discussion/Lab Section Request Form. Questions concerning classroom allocations may be sent to [classrooms@yale.edu](mailto:classrooms@yale.edu).
- Departments appointing graduate students as Part Time Acting Instructors (PTAIs) are expected to supervise instruction actively through regularly scheduled meetings with PTAI instructors in courses where sections have a common curriculum and through consultation before instruction begins and as the semester progresses in seminars taught independently. No graduate student may teach a lecture course independently or supervise teaching fellows.

Year after year, faculty members and graduate students report that lecturing and leading discussion sections provides exceptional pleasure and intellectual satisfaction. We trust that you will experience this same pleasure and fulfillment. Faculty learn immensely from their interaction with graduate students, and Teaching Fellows use the courses in which they have taught as models for their own professional development for years to come.