

## **BIOL 4696: Biology Undergraduate Teaching Assistanship**

3 credit hours, enrollment by permit only, audit only

Prerequisite: BIOL 4697. Prerequisite with concurrency: CETL 2000 BIO.

Wednesdays, X-X in room X

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### **Course objectives:**

This course is an introduction to teaching biology for undergraduate teaching assistants, with a focus on effective teaching, active engagement of students, and development of innovative classroom activities. Your experiences and assignments in this course will enable you to:

- Practice quality classroom management skills (e.g., conflict response, creating engaging learning environments);
- Discuss and implement sound pedagogical practices to achieve course objectives (e.g., providing constructive feedback to students; using active learning strategies);
- Locate and understand educational policies (institutional, state, or national) that impact classroom instruction/facilitation;
- Access and make appropriate referrals for institutional student support services; and
- Integrate peer and colleague feedback toward improving instructional practices.

This course may only be taken by returning teaching assistants in the School of Biology who have already taken BIOL 4697. Only students selected to be teaching assistants are eligible to enroll in this course.

### **Course content:**

A student's efforts in the course are divided among two core areas:

#### *1: Developing Teaching Skills*

Develop confidence and effectiveness in your teaching style; explore alternate methods in your teaching style to reach diverse audiences.

#### *2: Contributing to Course Content*

Design of a classroom assignment, exercise, and grading rubric; regular attendance and participation in class; one-on-one tutoring during student office hours.

Each student is expected to meet regularly with his/her course advisor to discuss progress in the course, and any performance concerns that develop will be raised in these meetings. Each semester should correspond to a different course assignment.

### **Biol 4696 Course Meetings:**

*If you are concurrently enrolled in CETL 2000 BIO*, the active learning assignment will be incorporated into CETL 2000 classroom dialogue. Your course meetings for Biol 4696 are concurrent with CETL 2000.

*If you have previously taken Biol 4696 and are not concurrently enrolled in CETL 2000 BIO*, we will meet four times during the semester to discuss your progress and explore new methods for effectiveness in the classroom. One meeting will be an opportunity to share your experiences at a prep session for the course you previously TA'ed. Since you have a semester of teaching experience, we expect you to share your knowledge and skills with new Biol 4696 students. We will also meet mid-semester to discuss and reflect on your teaching skills, as well as to troubleshoot any classroom issues. The active learning assignment will be incorporated into these meetings.

### **Evaluation**

Attendance and participation: Attendance and participation are both critical to your development as an undergraduate TA. Anticipated absences from your class for official university activities should be communicated with the instructor at least one week in advance. Unanticipated absences should be discussed as soon as is possible given the circumstances. It is your responsibility as the student to initiate and negotiate the terms of any make-up responsibilities.

Attendance and participation for Biol 4696 will be evaluated in terms of: (a) in-class attendance [3 points for each on-time attendance] and (b) level of demonstrated engagement within the course, including the completion of any homework assignments [5 points].

Attendance in your TA'ed course meetings includes all lab sessions, TA prep meetings, and lecture classes (where appropriate – please see your course advisor for any questions).

Accessibility and assignment grading: You must complete grading assignments in a timely manner and maintain regular accessibility to your students via office hours and other meetings.

Development of an active learning exercise: This project will give you experience in developing teaching materials, and will become part of the resources used in your TA'ed course materials. You will be responsible for developing an active learning exercise to be used in the course you are currently TA-ing. This will include developing a brief (1-2 page) proposal which will be peer-reviewed and then submitted to the instructors in Week 3 of the semester. The final project will be presented in class at the end of semester. Whenever possible, we encourage you to implement your activity during the current semester.

**Academic Integrity:**

Students are reminded of the obligations and expectations associated with the Academic Honor Code and Student Code of Conduct, available online at:

[http://www.deanofstudents.gatech.edu/integrity/policies/honor\\_code.php](http://www.deanofstudents.gatech.edu/integrity/policies/honor_code.php)

<http://www.deanofstudents.gatech.edu/codeofconduct>.

**Learning Accommodations:**

If needed, we will make classroom accommodations for students with disabilities. These accommodations should be arranged in advance and in accordance with the ADAPTS office (<http://www.adapts.gatech.edu>).