

Film and Media Studies Department Teaching Assistant Expectations and Practices

I. Teaching Assistant Duties

1. TAs are expected to read the following Department TA Expectations and Practices, as well as the hourly breakdown of assigned duties provided by the supervising instructor of record for the specific course. (See II.1-2.)
2. Film and Media Studies classes meet in person. TAs must attend all lectures, screenings (studios), and discussion sections in person unless the campus pivots to remote/hybrid instruction. UCI campus policy stipulates that courses offered in person must be taught in person.
3. TAs must be able to attend class consistently and in full, without recurring conflicts with their courses or other commitments.
4. TAs are expected to attend staff meetings. (See II.4.)
5. If a TA is unable to accept their assigned TAship in Film and Media Studies or decides to decline the TAship for another opportunity, the TA must notify the FMS Department Manager as early as possible to allow the department to find a replacement TA. Short notice in declining a TAship puts the department staff, the instructor, and potentially the students (who may have to change discussion sections) in a very difficult situation.
6. If the TA cannot meet their assigned duties (as outlined in I.10 and II.1), they must inform the supervising instructor of record as soon as possible. (See III.4.)
7. TAs are expected to be on time for classes and any TA staff meetings. The supervising instructor of record may request for TAs to arrive to class early or to stay after class to administer attendance or to be available to answer student questions, as long as this time is accounted for in the hourly workload expectations. (See II.1.) If a TA is not in class at the designated time and has not communicated with the supervising instructor of record about their absence or tardiness before the start of class, this absence or tardiness will be documented in writing and shared with the TA and the FMS administration (See II.5 and III1.)
8. Timely communication is expected: TAs must respond to instructor and student emails within two working days, preferably sooner. This is a basic professional courtesy and essential to job functions. (See II.7.)
9. The TA must notify the supervising instructor of record in the event of disruptive/distressed students, academic dishonesty, or other student issues. (See II.8.)
10. TAs are responsible for reading all of the assigned course readings and for leading discussions and answering questions related to course concepts and content in their sections. (See II.3 and II.7.) TAs need to understand the course material well enough to accurately grade student work. If TAs are unclear about any course concepts or content, they are advised to ask the instructor for clarification.

11. TAs are expected to cover the course content as outlined in the syllabus and lectures; they must not design their own parallel course with additional new content or concepts in their discussion sections without the approval of the supervising instructor of record nor should they alter assignments or create grading rubrics without the express permission of the supervising instructor of record. (See II.3-4.)

12. TAs must meet deadlines for grading student work and be prepared to adjust grades in order to ensure equity across sections. TAs must grade according to the criteria set by the supervising instructor of record; when questions arise, TAs are advised to seek clarification from the supervising instructor of record. (See II.9.)

13. If a student disputes a grade, they are advised to first approach the TA for clarification of any misunderstandings, errors in tabulating scores, or missing grades. Grade changes are at the discretion of the supervising instructor of record; any recommended *changes* beyond correcting tabulation errors or inputting missing scores must be communicated to the supervising instructor of record with the relevant contextual information. If a student persists in challenging a score, TAs are advised to direct the student to the supervising instructor of record. (See II.10.)

14. All final course grades are determined in consultation with and at the discretion of the supervising instructor of record. (See II.10.)

15. If a TA needs to miss lecture or sections, the TA must inform the instructor and the relevant students in advance, if possible, or promptly thereafter. The TA must watch recordings of any lectures they have missed (if available) before teaching sections. If a TA needs to miss their scheduled discussion sections, the TA is advised to coordinate with the supervising instructor of record to find another available TA to cover those sections. (The absent TA will be expected to reciprocate in a later week.) (See II.11.)

16. Any TA who requires or anticipates needing accommodation to perform their assigned duties must contact the department manager for instructions. Note: Work-related accommodations (managed by Disability Management Services) are different from student accommodations (managed by Disability Services Center). (See I.12.)

17. The maximum number of hours of assigned work during any quarter cannot exceed 220. If a TA anticipates that they will be unable to manage the workload for assigned duties within the hourly limits of the union contract or as described in the duties outlined at the beginning of the term (see II.1), they must alert the supervising instructor of record immediately to make necessary adjustments. The TA should confirm any agreed-upon revisions to work duties in writing to the supervising instructor of record. (See also II.13.)

18. TAs in their first year may expect to be observed leading their discussion sections; continuing TAs may request to be observed leading their discussion sections. Written feedback of such observations will be provided by the supervising instructor of record. (See II.14.)

19. TAs will receive a copy of the completed standardized department TA evaluation form after the respective term. (See II.16 and III.3.)

20. If a TA has concerns about the supervising instructor of record's fulfillment of class duties, they should discuss this with the supervising instructor of record. If this is not possible or does not lead to a satisfactory outcome, the TA is advised to notify the department administration (staff department manager and/or faculty department chair).

II. Faculty Duties

1. The supervising instructor of record will share the assigned TA duties and hourly breakdown for the quarter in writing in advance of the first class meeting. These will be shared with the staff department manager as well as with TAs. (See I.1.)

2. The supervising instructor of record will share and review these FMS departmental TA expectations and practices with students at the beginning of the term. (See I.1.)

3. The supervising instructor of record will arrange for copies of the assigned textbook (if any) to be given to the TAs and will share the course syllabus in advance of the first class meeting.

4. The supervising instructor of record will typically hold weekly staff meetings to discuss course content and concepts, pedagogical goals and strategies for discussion sections, grading guidelines, and any student issues. (See I.4.)

5. The supervising instructor of record will begin class punctually, will make course materials available in a timely manner, and will communicate any changes to the syllabus or to course meetings in a timely manner. (See I.7.)

6. The supervising instructor of record may ask TAs to supervise a screening, request feedback or suggestions about assignments, and offer TAs the opportunity to give a guest lecture. They may not require TAs to perform the supervising instructor of record's primary duties, such as giving full course lectures or writing assignments and exams.

7. Timely communication is expected: The supervising instructor of record will respond to TA concerns within two working days, preferably sooner. The supervising instructor of record may not expect TAs to respond to emails after hours, on weekends, or on holidays. (See I.8.)

8. The supervising instructor of record will take the lead on addressing disruptive/distressed students, academic dishonesty, or other student issues, in consultation with the TA. (See I.9.)

9. The supervising instructor of record will communicate grading deadlines in writing in advance of assignment due dates. The supervising instructor of record will also communicate grading criteria for assignments and will be available to clarify questions that arise through grading. (See I.12.)

10. The supervising instructor of record will have final authority in determining assignment and final grades; they will consult with TAs in the event of grade challenges. (See I.13-14.)

11. The supervising instructor of record will coordinate with the TA to cover instructional responsibilities for TA absences. (See I.15.)

12. The supervising instructor of record will make work accommodations as required by Disability Management Services. (See I.16.)
13. The supervising instructor of record will respond to TA concerns about workload as needed. The instructor is advised to follow up in writing to confirm any agreed-upon adjustments to job duties. (See I.17.)
14. The supervising instructor of record will typically observe discussion sections once per quarter for first-time TAs. More advanced TAs may request to be observed by the supervising instructor of record. Written feedback will be shared with the TA following observation and typically included in the end of quarter evaluation. (See I.18 and III.3.)
15. The supervising instructor of record will document in writing any problems the TA has in performing job duties, including problems with time management (lateness or absenteeism; late submission of grades); the instructor will share this documentation with the TA and the department administration. (See III.1, III.5, and III.6.)
16. The supervising instructor of record will complete the department's standardized TA evaluation form at the end of the term. (See I.19 and III.3.)

III. Evaluation and Remediation

1. Faculty will communicate expectations clearly (see II.1-2) and will respond as quickly as possible regarding any concerns about the TA's performance of job duties. Problems will be documented in writing and shared with both the TA and the FMS department administration. In cases where the TA's home department is a different department, their home department administration will be notified as well. (See II.15.)
2. TAs typically enroll in FMS 399 University Teaching concurrently with their TAships. The supervising instructor of record will provide a syllabus for FMS 399 at the beginning of the term to communicate clear expectations and grading criteria; the academic requirements outlined in the FMS 399 syllabus are separate from job duties outlined here. TAs will not be graded for their 399s on the basis of their job performance.
3. Every TA is evaluated in writing by the supervising instructor of record at the end of each quarter via the department's standardized evaluation form (attached). (See I.19 and II.16.) Evaluations are collected and kept by the department; they are shared with the TA at the end of the respective quarters. Evaluations will also be included in the program's end-of-year reviews of students.
4. Most issues can be resolved with timely and clear communication.
5. In the event of documented problems or a negative evaluation for a TA, the department may develop a mentorship and improvement plan for that TA for the remaining quarters of the academic year.
6. In the event of serious infractions, the department will consult with UCI Labor Relations and/or Graduate Division to determine if action is warranted.