

Manual for Teaching Assistants

Albert Gnaegi Center for Health Care Ethics

Updated as of July 7, 2019

Table of Contents

- 1) Welcome from the Director of Undergraduate Programming
- 2) The Mission of Saint Louis University
- 3) Compliance Policies and Resources
- 4) Useful Links Regarding Policies, Support and Counseling Services, and Teaching Resources
- 5) Information on CHCE Dropbox Folder for Teaching Assistants
- 6) Things to Do Before the Start of the Semester
- 7) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. Welcome from the Director of Undergraduate Programming

Dear Graduate Teaching Assistant,

I write to welcome you to your (perhaps new) role as a Teaching Assistant (TA) in the Albert Gnaegi Center for Health Care Ethics (CHCE). Our undergraduate programming depends on the work of TAs like you. On behalf of the Center's faculty, I feel comfortable saying: We appreciate it!

And I hope that you do so as well. Teaching undergraduate courses while a graduate student can be difficult, and intimidating. But it can also be extremely rewarding. Your students may feel closer to you than they would to full-time faculty members. You can reach them in powerful ways that will transform them for the rest of their time as undergraduates—perhaps even for the rest of their lives. I remain in touch today with some of the students that I taught when I was doing my own PhD. It is my hope that you can do so as well. Relationships like these are one of the main reasons why, I believe, we become academics.

The work you are doing now will lay the foundation for your future career. You are gaining experience teaching that you will build on for decades to come. This experience will help you to obtain employment in the university, should you choose to do so. Should you become a professor one day yourself, it will give you the skills that you need to do your daily work. As a graduate student, I taught four distinct courses, each one of which had 20-30 students. It was a lot of work, but it was great experience that helped me to get a job, and that I still draw on regularly in my current work. Teaching is the best preparation for life as a professor that you can get.

You will have many questions. This manual is here to assist you with the most routine ones: the ones that we expect you to ask, and can answer in a reasonably succinct fashion. We advise you strongly to read it. But even after you read it, you will continue to have some questions—and will have more questions as you continue to teach. No teaching manual, no matter how thorough, could be exhaustive. It is for that reason that I encourage you, when further questions arise, to **contact me**. I am happy to help you talk through the particulars of whatever situation you are facing. Resolutions to dilemmas in teaching are not always “tidy.” But, like anything, they can go better or worse.

This manual is best understood as divided into two general sections of three “chapters” each. Chapters 2-4 contain material pertaining to the policies of Saint Louis University. You will not, at this point, likely need to read each of these policy documents in detail. But you should skim them and be aware of their contents, as you may need to draw on them when particular issues arise. Chapters 5-7 contain material pertinent specifically to the Center for Health Care Ethics. This material should be read in detail right now. If you have any questions pertaining to either of these sections, please contact me.

I thank you for participating in our program and look forward to working with you over the course of your time here.

Sincerely,



Harold Braswell, PhD
Assistant Professor of Health Care Ethics
Director of the Undergraduate Programming in Health Care Ethics
Saint Louis University
Email: harold.braswell@slu.edu

2. The Mission of Saint Louis University

NOTE: This section contains the Mission of Saint Louis University. This mission underpins the design of our courses and should animate the spirit in which they are taught. The Gnaegi Center's obligation toward the Mission is particularly high as it provides the rationale for our very existence as a department on this campus. If you would like further guidance in how the Mission relates to, or can be better embodied in, your teaching, feel free to consult the Director.

The Mission of Saint Louis University is the pursuit of truth for the greater glory of God and for the service of humanity.

The University seeks excellence in the fulfillment of its corporate purposes of teaching, research, health care and service to the community. It is dedicated to leadership in the continuing quest for understanding of God's creation and for the discovery, dissemination and integration of the values, knowledge and skills required to transform society in the spirit of the Gospels. As a Catholic, Jesuit university, this pursuit is motivated by the inspiration and values of the Judeo-Christian tradition and is guided by the spiritual and intellectual ideals of the Society of Jesus.

In support of its mission, the University:

- Encourages and supports innovative scholarship and effective teaching in all fields of the arts; the humanities; the natural, health and medical sciences; the social sciences; the law; business; aviation; and technology.
- Creates an academic environment that values and promotes free, active and original intellectual inquiry among its faculty and students.
- Fosters programs that link University resources to local, national and international communities in collaborative efforts to alleviate ignorance, poverty, injustice and hunger; extend compassionate care to the ill and needy; and maintain and improve the quality of life for all persons.
- Strives continuously to seek means to build upon its Catholic, Jesuit identity and to promote activities that apply its intellectual and ethical heritage to work for the good of society as a whole.
- Welcomes students, faculty and staff from all racial, ethnic and religious backgrounds and beliefs and creates a sense of community that facilitates their development as men and women for others.
- Nurtures within its community an understanding of and commitment to the promotion of faith and justice in the spirit of the Gospels.
- Wisely allocates its resources to maintain efficiency and effectiveness in attaining its mission and goals.

<https://www.slu.edu/about/catholic-jesuit-identity/mission.php>

3. Compliance Policies and Resources

NOTE to Chapters 3 and 4: Please be familiar with all of the policies and resources contained in the next two chapters. You will be drawing on them throughout your time here.

Harassment Policy

Saint Louis University prohibits harassment because of sex, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, disability, age, sexual orientation, marital status, military status, veteran status, gender expression/identity, genetic information, pregnancy, or any other characteristics protected by law. This policy is intended to complement other University policies, including but not limited to, the Americans with Disabilities Act, Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action Policy, Family and Medical Leave Act Military Leave Policy and the Sexual Assault and Relationship Violence Policy.

Equal Employment Opportunity Policy

Saint Louis University is a Catholic university sponsored by the Society of Jesus. It welcomes persons from all racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds and beliefs to join its faculty and staff and seeks to create a sense of community which facilitates their development.

Saint Louis University prohibits discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, military/veteran status, gender identity, or other non-merit factors. All University policies, practices, and procedures are administered in a manner consistent with our Catholic Jesuit identity.

Saint Louis University is committed to the principles of Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action. All administrative and management personnel involved in the hiring and supervision of University personnel, along with the Diversity and Affirmative Action Officer, have the responsibility to recruit, hire, train, promote and in all ways provide fair treatment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, military/veteran status, gender identity, or other non-merit factors. Such action includes, but is not limited to the following:

Employment, promotion, demotion, transfer, compensation, assignment of work duties, recruiting, advertisement, layoff, termination, rate of pay, benefits, and selection for training. Saint Louis University will take affirmative action to ensure that persons from minority groups, females, Vietnam Era Veterans, disabled persons, and disabled veterans are identified, recruited, and enter the University's workforce.

Diversity and Affirmative Action Training

Training on equal opportunity and harassment policies and programs on diversity and inclusion is offered through the SLU Office of Institutional Equity and Diversity.

Disability Services

The SLU Office of Disability Services offers educational support through access to academic accommodations and services.

Resources for faculty and staff can be found here: <https://www.slu.edu/life-at-slu/student-success-center/disability-services/faculty-staff-resources.php>

Bias Incident Protocol

Saint Louis University has developed a Hate Crime and Bias-Related Incident Protocol to provide a response for members of the SLU community who experience a hate crime or bias related incident. Information on how to report an incident and information on support and resources can be found at <https://www.slu.edu/general-counsel/institutional-equity-diversity/hate-crimes.php>.

The preceding material is taken from: <https://www.slu.edu/about/key-facts/diversity/compliance.php>

FERPA: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records. Please review the Act here and follow it. If you have any questions about privacy, please contact the Director.

The preceding material is taken from: https://www.slu.edu/provost/policies/academic-and-course/policy_records-management-and-retention_6-5-2007.pdf

4. Useful Links Regarding Policies, Support and Counseling Services, and Teaching Resources

Academic and Course Policies: University level

<https://www.slu.edu/provost/policies.php>

Includes:

- Academic Integrity Policy
- Course Consistency Policy
- Course Syllabus Policy

Academic Support Services

<https://www.slu.edu/life-at-slu/student-success-center/academic-support/index.php>

<https://www.slu.edu/pre-college-access-trio/trio-program/student-support-services/index.php>

Includes:

- University Writing Services
- Tutoring
- Supplemental Instruction
- TRIO-Student Support Services
 - Standing tutoring appointments
 - SSS Writing Fellow
 - Advising
 - Peer Mentoring
 - Early Registration
 - Free Printing
 - Scholarships

-Financial Literacy

Counseling Services

<https://www.slu.edu/life-at-slu/university-counseling/>

Includes:

-University Counseling Center

-Crisis Resources

-Call 911 immediately if you are facing a life threatening emergency.

-Contact your resident advisor or residence life professional staff.

-Speak to on-call campus ministry staff at 314-630-9197.

-Call the Department of Public Safety at 314-977-3000.

-Consult with an on-call University Counseling Center staff member at 314-977-8255 (TALK).

-Important numbers:

-Behavioral Health Response (BHR): 314-469-6644 or 800-811-4760

-Saint Louis University Hospital: 314-577-8000

-Life Crisis Services: 314-647-4357

-Grassroots Suicide Hotline: 1-800-422-0009

-National Hopeline Hotline (English and Spanish): 1-800-784-2433

-First Call for Help Hotline (English and Spanish): 1-800-492-0618

-ULifeline National Suicide Prevention: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Teaching Resources

University-level teaching resources

<https://www.slu.edu/ctl/resources/inclusive-teaching.php>

Guide for beginning teachers

<https://www.slu.edu/ctl/resources/guide-for-beginning-teachers.php>

Resource Guides

<https://www.slu.edu/ctl/resources/resource-guides.php>

Center for Transformative Teaching and Learning: Certificate Programs

All graduate student teachers are highly encouraged to participate in the SLU's "CUTS" program (Certificate in University Teaching Skills). This multi-year FREE program consists of seminars, workshops, online courses and portfolio development all aimed at improving your teaching skills and making you a more marketable candidate on the academic job market. Learn more and apply here:

<https://www.slu.edu/ctl/certificate-program/certificate-in-university-teaching-skills-overview.php>

5) Information on CHCE Dropbox Folder for Teaching Assistants

NOTE: The CHCE Dropbox folder contains shared syllabi and course content from current and previous teaching assistants. Below you will find the link and login information to access this content. You will find it extremely useful as you design your syllabus and grade assignments. As you develop your own course content, it is requested that you contribute to the shared Dropbox so that TAs may continue to learn from each other.

Link to Dropbox folder:

<https://www.dropbox.com/h>

Login Information:

Email: hcmanualta@gmail.com

Password: SalusCenter

6) Things To Do before the semester/teaching starts

1. Order book(s) for your class via bookstore.
2. Prepare syllabus. Include assignments, class expectations, due dates, calendar of class to include school breaks, etc.
3. Send a copy of your prepared syllabus to Harold at least two weeks in advance, so that he review it prior to the start of the semester. His email is harold.braswell@slu.edu
4. Know where and when your class is.
5. If you want to use a computer, go to the room you'll be in and make sure there's a computer there. You should be able to use your SLU login. It might take a while the first time you login to the new computer. There is usually a media center screen on the instructor desk that operates the projector. For instructions/questions about classroom technology: <https://www.slu.edu/its/about/services-and-products/classroom-technology.php>
6. Decide if you're going to use Blackboard; if yes, upload your syllabus and any class readings you will be providing.

7) FAQ

NOTE: This section some frequently asked questions, with corresponding answers. It will likely no answer every question you have, so feel free to reach out to Harold when needed. Most of these questions have been asked (and in some cases answered) by previous TAs, so you will likely find them to be practically useful.

How do I find where and when my class is?

Go to:

mySLU → Banner Self-Service → Faculty tab → Faculty Dashboard in upper L → Click on the class: this will show location, class dates, final exam.

What's on mySLU?

The “Faculty” tab will have info about your classes. The “Employee” tab will have pay & benefits info, etc.

Course reserves (site) - how to access readings? How to distribute?

The best place to access class readings is via the Dropbox folder. Harold will, however, ensure that they are on ereserves and, at the start of the semester, will send you the relevant username and password.

How to get stuff scanned for course reserves?

The Undergrad assistant can copy part of a work into PDF format, or you can do it yourself using the big printer next to the mailboxes. Try not to copy more than 10% of a work/book. If you're using more than 10% of a work, you need to get the rights to do or use the entire book. Talk to Ron at the library about how to get rights. To the extent possible, avoid doing this. Either use enough of a book to justify buying it or use a selection that is less than 10% of the book's length.

What are the course requirements for HCE 2010 “Foundations in Clinical Health Care Ethics?” Recommend syllabi for 2 days vs. 3 days, possibilities.

There is no required midterm, but students are required to take a final & complete the Burkemper method for a major presentation/paper/project. Subject areas you must cover are listed in Dropbox.

- Stick closely to the template syllabus, which will be sent to you by the Director; you may adjust or replace a couple session topics based on your interests but only a couple and you need to clear these with the Director of Undergraduate Studies; please do not add additional readings to the syllabus.

- Include all major assignment details and rubrics as soon as possible, preferably in the syllabus.
- Stick to the syllabus as closely as possible and if you need to make an adjustment, do so with ample notification.
- If you do adjust the amount of readings/assignments, you should generally only *take away* readings/assignments. Do not add additional ones.

Where to record grades?

- mySLU → Faculty Services → Final Grades → Enter Grades and click “Submit” at the bottom

Do I have to use powerpoint (ppt) slides? Blackboard?

- No, you do not have to use either one, though both could, potentially, be helpful. See the Director of Undergraduate Studies for questions/concerns.

What if I suspect plagiarism? Inappropriate behavior?

Talk to the Director of Undergraduate Studies prior to confronting the student.

Is there a master slide list for 2010?

No, but students who have taught in the past are usually happy to share their lectures. Some of these can be found in Dropbox. Nevertheless, each instructor is encouraged to develop their own course material.

Is there a data bank of previous grading rubrics?

Yes, it is available in the Dropbox folder.

General recommendation for percentages of assignments/tests - allowed to tweak.

See syllabus examples in Dropbox and consult with the Director.

How to address the sensitive and controversial nature of HCE material?

Since many of the issues you discuss will be sensitive and personal, consider including something like the following in your syllabus:

“Some of the topics and issues we discuss in this course may hold personal significance for you and while we will focus mainly on the scholarly components of the issues, there will be opportunities to draw on personal experiences and emotions in assignments and class discussion. This is encouraged—my goals for you are not just academic growth, but

personal growth as well—but you should always feel free to: refrain from sharing a personal story if it is too uncomfortable for you; step out of the room for a few moments if you need a break from a difficult discussion; contact the professor if you have any concerns. Also, please contact SLU Student Counseling Services (314-977-7192) if you think it might be helpful.”

When is it ok to cancel class?

If you have a conference or medical/familial emergency it is appropriate to cancel class, though you should generally avoid doing so more than 1-2 times a semester. If you do cancel class, please have a plan to make up whatever material it is necessary for you to cover. If you need to miss more than 1-2 classes a semester, you must, at minimum, find another graduate student or faculty member to cover those classes; however, in the event that you anticipate having to do this, you should consult with the Directors of Undergraduate and Graduate programming about being taken off TA work for the specified period of time.

Absence policies?

Typically students are allowed to miss the number of classes that corresponds to the number of days per week class is held; for example, for a M-W-F class, 3 unexcused absences are acceptable.

If a student misses more classes without an excuse, they should lose 1/3 of their **final letter grade**.

“Excused” absences must generally be accompanied by a note from a health care professional or SLU administrator. On rare occasions, instructors may “excuse” absences without such documentation if he/she feels that the student has a sufficient excuse.

As per university policy, if a student misses more than 1/3 of the required classes, they cannot receive credit for the course.

What about classes that overlap slightly in their content? What if you have to miss part of a class?

A slight overlap in content can help students in transitioning between topics that are difficult but related. But, more than that, you may want to combine materials into one class session to minimize overlap. This is a judgment call, and if you need guidance, consult Harold and/or other TAs.

Having to miss part of a class occasionally is not a big deal. Just utilize the class time that you do have to teach the material that students need to learn to meet course requirements.

Blackboard: What is it, and do I have to use it?

Blackboard is an online learning platform, and you are not required to use it. However, it

does make some things easier: generate class lists, send all-class e-mails, and post readings. Students can also submit assignments through Blackboard. It is particularly useful for organizing the readings into topical folders that students can easily access.

To access Blackboard: login to mySLU → Tools tab → Blackboard Learn. This will take you into Blackboard; there will be a list of “My courses” on the right hand side. You will have one section labeled “Courses where you are: Instructor” Click on that course to access the main page for your course.

How-to videos for Instructors in Blackboard:

https://help.blackboard.com/Learn/Instructor/Watch_Videos - this site also includes an FAQ section.

Help page for SLU technical issues with Blackboard:

https://help.slu.edu/sims/helpcenter/common/layout/SelfHelpHome.seam?inst_name=slu

How can I make powerpoints available for the students?

Either upload them in Blackboard (see how-to video above) or e-mail the lecture out to the class.

Procedures about incompletes?

When possible, avoid giving students incompletes. In the event that a student, even with accommodation, needs to take one, you can allow them to do so by giving them an “I” for their grade in Banner Self-Service. It is their responsibility to complete the course material in a timely fashion—generally less than a year—so that the “Incomplete” does not turn into a “F.” Before agreeing to give an “Incomplete,” require that the student consult with the Registrar and make a realistic schedule so that they can complete the required material in time.

What do I need to do if a student withdraws from class?

Nothing. The student should process the withdrawal in consultation with their advisor.

Honors credits - what about their “extra project”? Is it a Pass/Fail project? Suggestions on what projects might look like. What if an honors section student doesn’t complete the honors project? Will that student fail the course as an honors course?

In general, the “Honors Project” should build on existing assignments—forcing students to go deeper, without asking the instructor to grade a separate project. If there is a final paper, it is appropriate to ask students to write an additional 5 pages, and to include an additional 5 peer-review sources. If it is not possible to easily “add on” to an existing assignment, the instructor might have Honors students do an additional presentation or write a brief 3-5 page analysis of a scholarly book relevant to their interests. In the event that the student

does not satisfactorily complete the Honors project, the instructor should notify Robert Pampel, the Director of the Honors Program, and take action as he recommends.

What's the deal with mid-term reports for student athletes?

Instructors have to fill out a brief mid-term report for student athletes. It is the responsibility of the athlete to give you the necessary information to complete this requirement, and to remind you to do so.

Can one give extra credit?

Yes; for example, if students go to Writing Center they get an extra point; attend Bander Center events & write a short paragraph about it; attend the Spring HCE conference. Typically, the total percentage of extra credit that should be available to a student in a given semester is about 5-10%.

How can I encourage students who are reluctant to participate to do so?

As a general rule, small group (2-4 students) chats at the beginning of class can help “grease the wheels.” Beyond that, we might suggest doing a brief “in class” writing exercise (ungraded) in which students, anonymously, are encouraged to identify what you could do to make them better able to participate. If a student seems particularly reluctant to share their perspective with the group, you may wish to chat with them individually.

How do you describe/teach what a normative paper is?

A normative paper is one that makes recommendations about what *should be done*. It contains a descriptive component—an analysis of a given situation, topic, or work—but should draw on this description to recommend a course of action that will help resolve the problem in dispute. The rationale for this recommendation should be made clear over the course of the paper.

Who can I turn to for mentoring over the course of my teaching?

You can always meet with Harold to discuss any pedagogical issues that arise over the course of your teaching. But in addition, you will be assigned a faculty teaching mentor who will observe your teaching once per semester and meet with you once or twice a year to discuss evaluations and pedagogy. Please let Erica and Harold know if you have any problems connecting with your mentor.

General Tips for success:

- Aim to be as NEUTRAL as possible ALL the time. Your students should not be able to guess what your ideological allegiances are. Neutrality encourages open discussion of the arguments and ideas while biased teaching can easily shut down balanced discussion.

- You should return grades on all assignments within ONE WEEK of the assignment being due. Students rely on prompt feedback to assess and adjust their performance.
- Do NOT “friend” students on Facebook and avoid interacting with students on social media, in general.
- There is not a strict “dress code”, but be mindful of how you dress when you teach and make sure it doesn’t interfere with your ability to portray professionalism in the classroom.
- Please only hold meetings with students in the classroom or your office. We recommend keeping the door open during one-on-one meetings unless the student has indicated that they would like privacy.