

PEER TEACHING EVALUATION GUIDELINES

**Department of Political Science
University of Florida
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Department of Political Science College of Liberal Arts and Sciences University of Florida

Faculty in the Department of Political Science regard high quality teaching as an integral part of their professional responsibilities. Indeed, high quality teaching is essential to the educational mission of the Department. The Department aspires to improve student-teacher interaction and to systematically identify, evaluate and reward good teaching at all levels of course offerings.

The Department will use the following guidelines and criteria to identify good teaching, to evaluate the quality of teaching, and to encourage all faculty to improve their teaching methods. The guidelines and criteria may be used for a number of purposes, including the following:

- evaluation and improvement of tenured and untenured faculty teaching,
- guidance and self-help for faculty wishing to improve their teaching capabilities,
- supporting evidence for tenure, promotion and/or Merit Committee decisions,
- evaluation and improvement of graduate students' teaching, and
- nominations for College and University teaching awards.

With specific regard to the mentoring of untenured faculty, the Departmental Mentoring Plan (approved by the Faculty on 2/21/05) states, "The mentor will complete an evaluation following the classroom visitation using the department's Teaching Evaluation Form. The untenured faculty member and the department chair will receive a copy of the completed Teaching Evaluation Form. In subsequent years, the untenured faculty member may request that the chair assign other tenured faculty members to conduct the classroom visitations, so as to broaden the feedback that he or she receives. The completed Teaching Evaluation Form will be forwarded to the mentor." These Peer Teaching Evaluation Guidelines will facilitate peer evaluators' providing systematic, comprehensive and comparable evaluations and letters on an annual basis for use by tenure and promotion committees' assessment of the instructional abilities and progress being made by untenured faculty members.

At minimum, the following procedures are suggested:

- evaluation will occur over a period of time appropriate to the purpose of the assessment. For example, untenured faculty will likely arrange an evaluation session with their mentor at least once a year to augment their portfolio leading up to the Third-Year

Review for Tenure-Accruing Faculty. Graduate student instructors will be evaluated at least once during the semester the course is being offered.

- dates of the classroom visits by the peer evaluator will be arranged jointly by the instructor and the peer evaluator; i.e. no “drop-in” evaluations are envisioned.

- evaluation will include a discussion of the instructor’s “Philosophy of Teaching” and in-depth discussion of all aspects of the instructor’s teaching employing the PEER TEACHING EVALUATION GUIDELINES to structure the conversation.

- results of the evaluation will be discussed with the instructor and at a subsequent meeting of the instructor, peer evaluator and the Departmental Chair.

- the peer evaluator will generate a letter based upon these procedures and discussions to be placed in the instructor’s personnel file, available to the Departmental Chair, Merit Committee, and promotion and tenure committees, as appropriate.

GUIDELINES

The following is a set of guidelines evaluators may wish to consider during examination of faculty or graduate students’ portfolios of teaching materials, statements of teaching philosophy, classroom visitations, discussions with the faculty member or graduate student, and preparation of the written narrative evaluation of the faculty member/graduate student.

It is to be emphasized that this list is a set of guidelines and suggestions, it is not a checklist or recipe to be slavishly followed. Some categories may be inappropriate for specific evaluation occasions; for other occasions, additional observations and materials may be important or even necessary.

On balance, however, narrative evaluations of faculty and graduate students will include most of the following:

I. Instructor's Knowledge of Material/Subject

- a) depth and breadth of professional preparation
- b) updated lecture/discussion materials

II. Contribution to Teaching

- a) offers new course development and innovation
- b) performs curriculum supervision and revision
- c) teaches university honors course
- d) teaches cross-disciplinary courses, seminars or tutorials

- e) supervises cross-disciplinary academic activities such as MA and PhD committees

III. Organization of Course

- a) adequacy of syllabus
- b) clarity of student responsibilities and performance
- c) appropriateness of workload for course level
- d) attendance policy explained
- e) grading policy explained
- f) dates for exams/assignments clear
- g) special instructions clear

IV. Teacher's Choice of Texts-Reading Materials for Class

- a) timeliness of readings and assignments to class
- b) level of text material appropriate
- c) quality of reading materials assigned

V. Evaluation of Students

- a) gives appropriate assignments
- b) offers appropriate test for size and level of course
- c) returns assignments and exams in a timely fashion
- d) explains students' evaluation
- e) comments on how to improve work, offers constructive criticism
- f) outlines procedure for student appeal
- g) offers fair distribution of grades

VI. Out of Class

- a) assists with undergraduate internships
- b) supervises undergraduate theses
- c) participates in graduate program(s)
- d) supervises graduate students – theses/dissertations/teaching/mentoring
- e) advises students on papers for other classes, career, and graduate school issues

VII. Student-Teacher Interaction

- a) facilitates student-teacher communication
- b) engages students intellectually
- c) shows concern for student understanding
- d) encourages student discussion as appropriate
- e) promotes active learning in students
- f) shows students how subject applies to

- students' lives
- g) poses questions to students and seeks student contributions

VIII. Presentation of Material

- a) able to communicate clearly
- b) shows confidence in presentation
- c) uses appropriate teaching techniques for class size and level
- d) sets appropriate level of discourse
- e) integrates classroom activities, readings and other materials
- f) uses lectures and discussions appropriately
- g) relates subject to students through examples and other techniques
- h) presents material designed to engage and stimulate students to deeper levels of understanding
- i) encourages critical, independent thinking

IX. Student Letters (optional)

- a) under some circumstances, letters from former students (especially graduate students) can be helpful in assessing a faculty member's teaching competence.

X. Overall Assessment of Teaching Competence

- a) strengths/positives
- b) any areas of weakness/needs help