Physics Department TA Orientation

Part One: Practical Information for TAs (Patrick Doane)

*Group Exercise*

Part Two: Pedagogical Expectations (Matthew Storms)

Part Three: Trac Representative Presentation
Before we begin

*What you need to know about Zoom for this orientation*

- How to join the meeting if I’m dropped
- Muting/unmuting yourself
- Using a background
Before we begin

What you need to know about Zoom for this orientation

• How to join the meeting if I’m dropped
Before we begin

*What you need to know about Zoom for this orientation*

- Muting/unmuting yourself
Before we begin

What you need to know about Zoom for this orientation

• Using a background
Before we begin

What you need to know about Zoom for this orientation

• BONUS! Mobile experience
Practical Information for TAs

Outline

• What is a TA workload / Who can have one?
• TA Contract / Workload Sheet.
• Available Resources
What is a TA workload?

- Fall & Winter: 130* hours over about 13 weeks
  
  About 10* hours per week

- Summer: 65 hours, usually over half of the semester (6.5 weeks)
  
  Also 10 hours per week

* An extra 10% is added to these 130 hours during the pandemic to compensate for adapting to online tasks.

Am I sure to get one?

Guaranteed for full time grad students with no external funding

- Masters: 7 semester
- PhD: 4 years
Do I Have to TA?

• Talk your supervisor: If their funds allow it, they can cover your TA salary so that you have more time for research (often in summer)

If I am not guaranteed a TA, will I still get one?

• We try to give a TA to all grad students that want a workload.
• Sometimes not possible in summer.
TA Workload Sheet

- Make sure to check the tasks involved
- See if the time for each task makes sense
- If you need explanations or have worries, talk with the course supervisor (to possibly modify the sheet)
Signing Procedure

- Refer to instructions for all the details

- You must sign the TRAC union agreement once every year before getting access to signing workload sheets or contracts

- Once your workload sheet is signed, a contract will be created

- Sign promptly both workload sheet and contract (waiting too long can create delays in payment)
TA Resources

Any problem with your TA work?

- Too many hours, given the contract
- Expectations not well defined
- Problem with students

Act as quickly as possible

- First, speak with the course’s supervisor
- Still no resolution? see The Undergrad Program Director (Currently, Laszlo Kalman)

Check in with your union, TRAC
http://trac-union.ca

Know the rights and responsibilities of the Concordia community
http://www.concordia.ca/content/dam/common/docs/policies/official-policies/BD-3.pdf
TA Resources

CTL (Centre for Teaching and Learning)
https://www.concordia.ca/ctl/digital-teaching/create-deliver-content.html

Resource for help with designing a course / use of technologies
Help with creating videos, ZOOM sessions, etc.

GradProSkills (Professional development resources for grads)
https://www.concordia.ca/students/gradproskills.html

Feeling overwhelmed? A student looks like they need personal help?

Well Being hub:
https://www.concordia.ca/coronavirus/wellbeing.html

Mental health support:
Before the exercise

What you need to know about Zoom for this exercise

• How to join a breakout room
• How to leave a breakout room
Before the exercise

What you need to know about Zoom for this exercise

• How to join a breakout room
Before the exercise

*What you need to know about Zoom for this exercise*

- How to leave a breakout room
Group Exercise

https://forms.gle/Yra7YZNFhKSAv1FX8
Pegagogical Expectations

Outline

• Types of TAs in Physics
• University / Department Expectations
• Recommended Pedagogical Practices
• Using ZOOM
• Using YuJa
Types of TAs in Physics

Freshman-Level Courses

- Freshman Course Tutorials (PHYS 204, 205, 206)
  - Problem solving weekly live sessions (or videos) covering the class material
  - No marking

- Freshman Course Marker (PHYS 204, 205, 206)
  - Mostly grading assignments for these classes
  - No student communication

- Freshman Labs (PHYS 224, 225, 226)
  - Main instructor for the lab students
  - Grading the student reports
Types of TAs in Physics

- Physics program course TAs (most 200 and 300 undergrad courses)
  50% of time for each of the 2 following tasks:
  - Weekly live problem-solving sessions (or videos) covering the class material
  - Grading assignments

- Physics program lab TAs (PHYS 230, 330)
  - Lab instructor
  - Grading the student reports

- eConcordia TAs (PHYS 200-EC, 204-EC, 205-EC, 273-EC, 284-EC)
  - Assisting in grading evaluations
  - Moderating / answering question on the class forum
University expectations

“As much as possible, course content must be delivered in an asynchronous format to accommodate students who are unable to come to campus. Planned synchronous activities should account for this reality.”

What it means?

Materials should be recorded beforehand if possible. Discussions should be recorded and made available.
University expectations

“Lectures and other methods for delivering content should be pre-recorded, edited into digestible pieces and available in an asynchronous format. Segments of lectures should follow major themes (chunks), but should not exceed 20-30 mins in length.”

What it means?

Materials should be recorded beforehand if possible. Discussions should be recorded and made available.
University expectations

“Lectures and other methods for delivering content should be pre-recorded, edited into digestible pieces and available in an asynchronous format. Segments of lectures should follow major themes (chunks), but should not exceed 20-30 mins in length.”

Tools available?
Yuja

to record and upload materials
to provide students with materials in an accessible format
to protect your intellectual property
University expectations

“Lectures and other methods for delivering content should be pre-recorded, edited into digestible pieces and available in an asynchronous format. Segments of lectures should follow major themes (chunks), but should not exceed 20-30 mins in length.”

Tools available?

Zoom

host meetings
enable synchronous interaction
University expectations

“What Moodle will be used as the University-wide Learning Management System. No other platforms should be used to house announcements, course content, and grades. Consistency across courses is essential for students navigating their online courses.”

What it means?

You should use the tools previously mentioned.
These tools are already integrated into Moodle.
Department Expectations

Meet with the course supervisor!

What it means?

- Establish clear timelines and expectations
- Establish whether hours are flexible or rigid
- Ask for help *right away* if you face an issue
- Solicit feedback regularly
Good Pedagogical Practice

- Try to answer students as soon as possible (when part of your work).
  - Especially important when teaching online.
  - Check forums often

- When your supervisor asks for something, at least reply to acknowledge the message.

- Know that we will generally try to be accommodating to students because of the current health crisis.

- Give feedback to students when marking.

- Be as clear as possible when answering a question on a forum.
  Don’t assume students have the same information or knowledge as you.

- When answering a question, tell students what they are doing well
Good Pedagogical Practice

- Ask for advice!
  - To your supervisor,
  - To the other TAs with the same responsibilities,
  - To TAs having done the same job in past semesters,
  - To your students.
Using ZOOM

Use a waiting room and/or password!

Matthew Storms
Using ZOOM

Use a waiting room and/or password!
Using ZOOM

Use a waiting room and/or password!
Using ZOOM

Use a waiting room and/or password!
Using ZOOM

Advanced Options

Return to Meeting  
Join

Schedule  
Share screen

12:06 PM  
September 3, 2020

Add a calendar
Using ZOOM

Advanced Options

My Personal Meeting ID (PMI)

911 741 4138

Copy Invitation

Edit

Join from a Room

Show Meeting Invitation

Personal Meeting ID Settings

Personal Meeting ID
911 741 4138

Password
 Require meeting password
Montreal

Video

Host: On Off
Participants: On Off

Audio

Telephone
Computer Audio
Telephone and Computer Audio

Dial in from United States

Advanced Options

Enable Waiting Room
Enable join before host
Mute participants upon entry
Only authenticated users can join
Automatically record meeting on the local computer

Alternative hosts:

examplejohn@company.com
example@school.edu

Save
A Word from TRAC