

University of Toronto, Winter 2023
SOC6811H: Seminar in Teaching
Wednesday, 11am-1pm – Room 385
Prof. Christian Caron

Course Description

The goal is to create and deliver meaningful courses on the one hand, and to develop the ability to articulate this meaningfulness to students, colleagues, and prospective employers on the other. A key to good teaching is reflection, so that one can be purposeful and deliberate with all pedagogical decisions, from course planning to course delivery. This is also a crucial element in communicating effectively the objectives of the course and our expectations to our students. As such, this seminar is organized to provide opportunities for discussion and reflection on the what, how, and why of different aspects of university teaching. Another key to good teaching is practice. As such, the seminar will provide opportunities and guidance for hands on practice in the development of various teaching materials and classroom delivery.

The course will benefit both graduate students with and without teaching experience. For those with no experience, the seminar will sensitize you to the many components of effective teaching and provide you with guidance as you go through the process of preparing a course. For those with classroom teaching experience, the seminar will encourage you to think systematically about your teaching and to consider alternative ways of teaching. For both, this course addresses current research and practice in teaching in higher education. The course is designed to assist graduate students to develop knowledge and skills from the existing research on teaching in a university setting.

The seminar challenges graduate students to discover and hone their teaching styles, to develop a personal philosophy about teaching and learning, to learn about the teaching resources that are available to them throughout the university and elsewhere, to experiment with designing engaging courses of study, and to discover that teaching can be a rewarding and stimulating element of an academic career. The seminar will discuss the major components of a course, including course objectives, being mindful of equity, diversity and inclusion, use of readings, use of class time, use of technology, evaluation of students, and evaluating yourself, dealing with various challengers, among others. In each case, we will consider the options available and their strengths and limitations.

In the classroom, it is important that we create and maintain a classroom environment that is conducive to experimentation and personal development. We need to be able to be honest and supportive with each other. To this end, all comments, suggestions, and feedback will be presented and received in the spirit of learning and with a genuine intention to help each other improve. Being respectful of each other is of the utmost importance. It is my hope that throughout the semester each student develops her, his, or their “teaching voice” and that we have fun doing so!

My own view is that there is no single correct way to decide each of the issues one faces in teaching. How you use class time or evaluate students depends on the course objectives, content,

size, your personal preferences, and other factors as well. Thus, this seminar is not designed to indoctrinate you to a particular style. Rather, the goal is to stimulate you to think about each of these issues and make decisions about how you would teach a particular course.

Course Objectives

Broadly the course has three aims.

1. To help make sure that you have a rewarding experience in your early days as a university teacher, including helping you:
 - a) teach in an effective and engaging way so your students get a lot out of your courses and you enjoy them also.
 - b) manage your time to minimize being overloaded as a junior teacher/faculty member. A key aspect of this is being well prepared to start teaching before you begin your first full-time teaching job.
2. To help prepare you for job applications and interviews when you will be asked about teaching, and when you will want to produce evidence of your teaching ability and potential. In the job application and interview process, you may be asked to produce a teaching dossier, including a statement of teaching philosophy and other items. The teaching course aims to help you have all of these items prepared in advance, before you get your first job interview.
3. To help you situate your teaching in research and theory. The course aims to move beyond a simple “how to” class on techniques, and provide you with the opportunities to reflect on the various objectives of your courses, and thus move to the “why” behind the host of decisions affecting teaching.

Specific Learning Objectives for the Course: Participants in this course will be able to meet a number of objectives:

- 1- demonstrate knowledge and comprehension of principles of learning, principles of teaching, and their application
- 2- develop an appreciation for the diversity of learning and teaching styles and show the ability to design meaningful curricula and learning activities, assignments and exams
- 3- design a course syllabus and curriculum that takes into account research on teaching and learning and be able to justify your pedagogical choices
- 4- create a teaching dossier that reflects your professional development as teachers
- 5- articulate a teaching philosophy, including an understanding of key aspects of the professional responsibilities of the university teacher, as well as being mindful of equity, diversity and inclusion principles related to university teaching

Academic Integrity Clause

Copying, plagiarizing, falsifying medical certificates, or other forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated. Any student caught engaging in such activities will be referred to the Dean's office for adjudication. Any student abetting or otherwise assisting in such misconduct will also be subject to academic penalties. Students are expected to cite sources in all written work and presentations. See this link for tips for how to use sources well:

(<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>).

According to Section B.I.1.(e) of the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters it is an offence "*to submit, without the knowledge and approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought in another course or program of study in the University or elsewhere.*"

By enrolling in this course, you agree to abide by the university's rules regarding academic conduct, as outlined in the Calendar. You are expected to be familiar with the *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* (<https://governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/secretariat/policies/code-behaviour-academic-matters-july-1-2019>) and *Code of Student Conduct*

(<http://www.viceprovoststudents.utoronto.ca/publicationsandpolicies/codeofstudentconduct.htm>) which spell out your rights, your duties and provide all the details on grading regulations and academic offences at the University of Toronto.

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Ouriginal for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Ouriginal reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Ouriginal service are described on the <https://act.utoronto.ca/pdt-change/> web site.

Accessibility Services

It is the University of Toronto's goal to create a community that is inclusive of all persons and treats all members of the community in an equitable manner. In creating such a community, the University aims to foster a climate of understanding and mutual respect for the dignity and worth of all persons. Please see the University of Toronto Governing Council "Statement of Commitment Regarding Persons with Disabilities" at

<http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/ppnov012004.pdf>.

In working toward this goal, the University will strive to provide support for, and facilitate the accommodation of individuals with disabilities so that all may share the same level of access to opportunities, participate in the full range of activities that the University offers, and achieve their full potential as members of the University community. We take seriously our obligation to make this course as welcoming and accessible as feasible for students with diverse needs. We also understand that disabilities can change over time and will do our best to accommodate you. Students seeking support must have an intake interview with a disability advisor to discuss their individual needs. In many instances it is easier to arrange certain accommodations with more advance notice, so we strongly encourage you to act as quickly as possible. To schedule a registration appointment with a disability advisor, please visit Accessibility Services at

<http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as>, call at 416-978-8060, or email at: accessibility.services@utoronto.ca. The office is located at 455 Spadina Avenue, 4th Floor, Suite 400.

Additional student resources for distressed or emergency situations can be located at distressedstudent.utoronto.ca; Health & Wellness Centre, 416-978-8030, <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/hwc>, or Student Crisis Response, 416-946-7111.

Equity and Diversity Statement

The University of Toronto is committed to equity and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect. As a course instructor, I will neither condone nor tolerate behaviour that undermines the dignity or self-esteem of any individual in this course and wish to be alerted to any attempt to create an intimidating or hostile environment. It is our collective responsibility to create a space that is inclusive and welcomes discussion. Discrimination, harassment and hate speech will not be tolerated.

Additional information and reports on Equity and Diversity at the University of Toronto is available at <http://equity.hrandequity.utoronto.ca>.