

Course Description

Course offers Graduate Teaching Scholars opportunities to observe university course organization and instruction. Observations serve as a platform for course discussions focused on planning course instruction, examining student centered teaching strategies, and design of student assessments. Scholars work with faculty mentors to become familiar with the teaching expectations and resources for course assigned in the program. Pre: First year CALS Graduate teaching scholar (1H, 3K, 2C)

Learning Objectives

Having successfully completed this course, Graduate Teaching Scholars will be able to:

- Work with faculty mentor to develop a mentor/mentee agreement
- Examine theories of learning relevant to instruction in agricultural and life sciences
- Analyze and determine differences in student learning styles
- Observe and analyze teaching strategies demonstrated by the faculty in college of agricultural and life science courses
- Construct a complete lesson plan for a fifty-minute class session
- Demonstrate a planned lesson of instruction for a course within a college of agricultural and life sciences department

Instructor

Dr. Donna Westfall-Rudd

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Office Hours: by appointment

Virginia Tech Principles of Community

Virginia Tech is a public land-grant university committed to teaching and learning, research, and outreach to the Commonwealth of Virginia, the nation, and the world community. Learning from the experiences that shape Virginia Tech as an institution, we acknowledge those aspects of our legacy that reflected bias and exclusion. Therefore, we adopt and practice the following principles as fundamental to our on-going efforts to increase access and inclusion and to create a community that nurtures learning and growth for all of its members:

- We affirm the inherent dignity and value of every person and strive to maintain a climate for work and learning based on mutual respect and understanding.
- We affirm the right of each person to express thoughts and opinions freely. We encourage open expression within a climate of civility, sensitivity, and mutual respect.
- We affirm the value of human diversity because it enriches our lives and the University. We acknowledge and respect our differences while affirming our common humanity.
- We reject all forms of prejudice and discrimination, including those based on age, color, disability, gender, national origin, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation,



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and veteran status. We take individual and collective responsibility for helping to eliminate bias and discrimination and for increasing our own understanding of these issues through education, training, and interaction with others.

- We pledge our collective commitment to these principles in the spirit of the Virginia Tech motto of Ut Prosim (That I May Serve).

Course Resources

Palmer, P. (2017). *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life, 10th Anniversary Edition*. Jossey-Bass: San Francisco, CA.

Quinn, R.E., Heynoski, K., Thomas, M., & Spreitzer, G. M. (2014). *The Best Teacher in You: How to Accelerate Learning and Change Lives*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers: San Francisco: CA. Pp. vii, 226.

Additional materials will be provided on the course Canvas website.

“Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn.”
— Benjamin Franklin

Modes of communication:

1. Students may contact the instructor via email or cell phone/text messaging with questions or concerns of a personal nature. You can expect a response within 24 hours.
2. Office hours will be available by appointment.

Advice from Others:

Graduate Teaching Scholars have been very successful in this course and have especially enjoyed the observations of faculty teaching. When asked on the end-of-semester evaluation what they could have done to be even more successful, a number of them stated that they could have more thoroughly read the weekly assignments and should have worked harder to keep up with the readings.

Weekly Discussion Topics

Date	Topic
Week 1	Introduction to the GTS program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans for weekly meetings • Observing teaching faculty • Working with your faculty mentor • Review of the syllabus
Week 2	Class Observations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose and strategies • Discuss first observations
	Learning Theories



Week 3	Blooms Taxonomy
Week 4	Using Inquiry Based Instruction as a teaching method
Week 5	Consideration of student learning styles when planning to teach
Week 6	Bringing Together Learning Theories and Critical Thinking in What We Teach – Critical Thinking Dispositions and their application within teaching practices Student centered teaching practices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are they? • How can they be integrated into postsecondary classrooms?
Week 7	Digging into Parker Palmer
Week 8	Palmer Interesting observations from your classroom visits
Week 9	Palmer Designing useful lesson plans
Week 10	Developing a productive mentoring relationship to strengthen teaching practice
Week 11	Assessing Student Learning – development of assessment tools With consideration to student learning styles with consideration of student centered teaching practices
Week 12	Planning & teaching strategies to minimize negative student behavior Establishing positive student expectations
Week 13	Integrating Innovative Teaching Strategies using Technology



Week 14	Practice Teaching Mini Lesson from their Syllabus or Research – 3 presentations
Week 15	Practice Teaching Mini Lesson from their Syllabus or Research – 3 presentations

**“I am not a teacher, but an awakener.”
— Robert Frost**

Course Activities & Grading

Course Observations: **12 weeks x 4 pts/wk 48 points**

Complete weekly course observations as individually agreed upon with the instructor. Submit to the Observations Folder in the Resources section of Canvas a weekly, one-page summary and reflection of the course and teaching you observed using the observation template provided on Canvas. The template includes a final reflective question: What connection could you make between this week’s readings and the class you observed? If hand writing observations, please scan them into a PDF to upload into the folder. You need to complete 12 during weeks 3 – 15. You select the weeks and for those you opt out, put a note in the assignment on Canvas.

Participation in Weekly Sessions: **30 points**

Each Graduate Teaching Scholar is expected to take advantage of this opportunity to talk with their peers and experienced faculty about teaching and learning in a focused context. Engaging in group discussion will help Scholars examine their understandings of teaching and learning while considering the perspectives and insights of others in the group. Students are expected to have completed the assigned readings and be prepared to engage in the class discussion/facilitated activity.

Facilitate one Teaching Session: **10 points**

Plan and facilitate a 20 – 30 lesson in your content specialty area during a seminar session. Students are expected to incorporate one student centered learning activity in this lesson.

Complete an End-of-Semester Reflection: **12 points**

You will prepare a reflection in which you examine your personal reactions and assessment of the course observations, instructional experiences, and other professional teaching experiences experienced during the semester.

Total **100 points**

Passing – 85 – 100 points

Failing – 0 – 85 points



I (incomplete) = I's will only be granted in the case of documented, long-term, serious illness. Students requesting an Incomplete must bring their situation to the instructor's attention as soon as possible. I's must be completed within one semester. If you are making up an Incomplete, you must schedule a meeting with the instructor during the first two weeks of class.

"Education is the kindling of a flame, not the filling of a vessel."

— Socrates

Formats & Expectations

Course activities include a combination of reading, reflection on experience, writing, and in-class discussions. Class activities will be varied but one principle will underlie all we do: The best learning occurs from active engagement. Please try to be an active participant in this class.

It is an important course expectation that you come to the sessions with sufficient command of the readings to discuss them in depth.

Honor Code Statement

The Graduate Honor Code will be strictly enforced in this course. All assignments submitted shall be considered graded work, unless otherwise noted. All aspects of your coursework are covered by the Graduate Honor System. Any suspected violations of the Graduate Honor Code will be promptly reported to the Graduate Honor System. According to the Constitution of the Graduate Honor System at Virginia Tech, "The fundamental beliefs of the Graduate Honor Code are: (1) To trust in a person is a positive force in making that person worthy of trust, (2) To study, perform research and teach in an environment that is free from the inconveniences and injustices caused by any form of intellectual dishonesty is the right of every graduate student, and (3) To live by and Honor System, which places a positive emphasis on honesty as a means of protecting this right, is consistent with, and a contribution to, the University's quest for truth." (see <http://ghs.graduateschool.vt.edu>)

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

Reasonable accommodations are available for students who have a disability. Students should contact the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD), 150 Henderson Hall, 231-3788 (V), 231-1740 (TTY); Susan P. Angle, spangle@vt.edu, www.ssd.vt.edu. "Students with disabilities are responsible for self-identification. To be eligible for services, documentation of the disability from a qualified professional must be presented to SSD upon request. Academic adjustments may include, but are not limited to: priority registration, auxiliary aids, program and course adjustment, exam modifications, oral or sign language interpreters, cassette taping of text/materials, notetakers/readers, or assistive technology."

"The authority of those who teach is often an obstacle to those who want to learn."

— Marcus Tullius Cicero

