

Important Contacts

- Police/Fire/Medical [\(301\) 405-3333](tel:3014053333) or 911 prepare.umd.edu
- Non-Emergency [\(301\) 405-3555](tel:3014053555)
- University Health Center [\(301\) 314-8184](tel:3013148184)
- Division of Information Technology: Phone: [\(301\) 314-8522](tel:3013148522), Website: it.umd.edu/classroom
- Ombuds Office: www.umd.edu/ombuds

Check List for First Day

- Syllabus
 - Is your contact information correct? Make it clear to students if you want them to contact you through ELMS or a separate email. It is suggested by UMD to use ELMS for contacting students, mainly for organizational reasons.
 - Add your office hours with your contact information and make it easy for students to find this information.
- Office Hours
 - Undergrad TAs use Room 1113 in LeFrak Hall.
 - Grad TA's may be given a room. Dr. Berndtson, is in charge of assigning rooms.
 - How to obtain a key;
 - Contact Shannon Bobbitt to check out a key and remember to return it at the end of the semester.
 - In the event that you forget your key, lock yourself out or do not have a key for whatever reason, Lorraine Makanyama at the front desk of the Geography Department has a master key for all rooms in LeFrak Hall. You may use it to unlock the office but you must return the key to her.
 - Always remember to take your key because many of the doors in LeFrak Hall lock automatically.
 - General guidelines for office hours:
 - TAs are to have at least 2 hours a week scheduled for office hours. These should be determined within the first week of classes and will remain consistent throughout the semester. If you need to cancel office hours one week be sure to let your students know and try to reschedule for that week.
 - Students may not be able to make it to your office hours so if they contact you about this then try to set up a separate appointment that works best for the both of you. You do not need to do this for all students, only the ones who reach out to you.
 - The following link is to the Computer Science Department's TA Handbook which gives some guidance for choosing office hours and why choosing a staggered schedule is best for your students. See section "OFFICE HOURS.": www.cs.udm.edu/grad/ta-handbook
 - Time can be utilized for grading assignments/exams, preparing for lectures/labs/discussions and addressing students concerns.
 - Be respectful to other TA's as most offices are shared spaces. I have found Mondays and mornings to be ideal times for office hours, in room 1113, because there are less TA's in the office during then.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Introduce yourself and be communicative with your students.
 - It is beneficial for them to have some knowledge of your credentials so that your students do not undermine you. This is mostly in regards to undergraduate TAs, it can be difficult to have your students view you as a TA but by explaining your background knowledge and experience with the class topics you will have a better chance at gaining respect from your students.
- You should have taken the course you are TAing or a similar course so highlight this to your students.
- It is imperative that you communicate with your students, in a proper manner, to inform them of important information and remind them to voice their concerns with you.
- Typically the head TA or professor will remind students of upcoming assignments and exams. You can send messages through ELMS to your specific sections (see page on ELMS) on extra information you would like to include. This could be weekly reminders of readings they need to accomplish or things to include in their next

assignments. Keeping consistent and open conversation among your students is key to having a successful semester.

- During a follow-up conversation, from a study on student perceptions of undergraduate TAs, a TA noted to the course professor that, “there were times during the semester that some students almost gave up, because they didn’t know if they could talk with the professor and receive some grace for missing assignment that were often due to some personal issue or lack of comprehension” (Crowe) TAs are viewed as an approachable peer among students.
- While your job as a TA is not to counsel students (see UMD services for certain issues) make it apparent that your students can talk with you about questions they have about the course and related material. In regards to late/missed assignments and missed exams be sure to talk with your professor and come to an agreement for how to handle special cases. The syllabus should highlight the course of action to be taken, however, there will be special cases such as the student was sick, there was a technical issue and etc.

Some questions to keep in mind when talking with your professor are:

- Where will makeup exams happen? How will they submit late assignments? Do you reopen the assignment on ELMS or do they send it to you through email? How long do they have to turn in the assignment?

In the Classroom

- General Duties
 - This will vary from class to class. It is best to meet with your professor before the semester begins to get an understanding of what will be expected of you. Some TAs may be required to take notes in class, prompt exams, help with lecture and some may not need to be present at all.
- Classroom technical help. Use the following link to report any problems ranging from technical equipment to the classroom environment. Such things would be speakers not working, room is missing desks and chairs or the room is too hot/cold. Be sure to check in with them if you do report a problem. I have found that two weeks is not enough of a notice to get some issues resolved.
 - Phone: [\(301\) 314-8522](tel:3013148522)
 - Website: it.umd.edu/classrooms
- Visit the classroom before your first class or discussion section to get a feel for the technology, building, and set up. Contact the IT classroom support for help with the computer and projector.

Outside of the Classroom

- Scantrons: email Lorraine Makanyama to ensure she has scantrons for you to retrieve from the front office. Do this at least two weeks in advance of the exam, should Lorraine need to order more.
- **Processing scantrons:**
 - 1.Fill out one scantron with the correct answers.
 - 2.Fill out a scantron processing request form: http://www.dbs.umd.edu/copy/scantron_form.pdf using the KFS # 1115950.
 - 3.Follow instructions here to drop off form, scantron key, and scantron exams from students: <http://www.dbs.umd.edu/copy/scantron.php>.
- **Picking up scantrons:**
 - 1.Pick up hard copy of exams, scoring sheet, and key from copy center.
 - 2.Ask the copy center to put receipt in Copy Center GEOG folder when you pick up processed scantrons. You should not take the receipt with you.
 - Fill out a procurement form:
 - 1.<https://geog.umd.edu>
 - 2.log in at the bottom of the page.
 - 3."procurement form" link on righthand yellow panel. username = local, password = geog.

- 4. Fill out procurement form. PI = instructor's name, approver = Shannon Bobbitt; account # = 1115950, account type = department fund, order type = regular; fed ID = 123456789; expense type = 3718. Enter total cost listed on the copy center receipt.
- 5. Submit procurement form. You will receive an approval email from Shannon Bobbitt when approved.
- **Printing exams, assignments: complete at least 1 week before exam/assignment date:**
 - **1. Submit a green form on the Department's Intranet:**
 - –<https://geog.umd.edu>
 - –log in at the bottom of the page.
 - –"procurement form" link on righthand yellow panel. username = local, password = geog.
 - –Fill out procurement form. PI = instructor's name, approver = Shannon Bobbitt; account # = 1115950, account type = department fund, order type = regular; fed ID = 123456789; expense type = 3718. Calculate total estimated cost using prices here: <http://www.dbs.umd.edu/copy/prices.php>. Most exams are black and white, 8.5 x 11, single or double sided departmental print. Enter your best estimate of cost on procurement form. In notes section, list name of class and professor.
 - –Submit procurement form. You will receive an approval email from Shannon Bobbitt when the order has been approved.
 - **2. Fill out a Copy Center Service Request form:**
 - –<http://www.cars.umd.edu/cgi-bin/cars/carsforms2.pl?form=Media%20Express%20Service%20Request> OR pick up a hardcopy Copy Services Service Request form from Lorraine's desk.
 - –Fill out form. KFS Chart = 01; Account # = 1115950. Check "pick up" option for submission of originals and retrieval of completed job.
 - –Review and submit order.
 - **3. Pick up order and return receipt to Department.**
 - –You will be notified by email when your order is ready for pick up.
 - Ask the copy center to put receipt in Copy Center GEOG folder when you pick up the copies. You should not take the receipt with you.
- Disability Support Service (DSS):
 - Students with DSS accommodations are required to submit paperwork within the first couple weeks of school. They should provide you with all necessary forms.
 - Main office - 0106 Shoemaker Building
 - Testing office – 0118 Shoemaker Building
 - Exam Hours Monday – Friday 9am to 4pm
 - Forms: <http://www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS/forms.php>
 - DSS website: <http://www.counseling.umd.edu/DSS/>

ELMS:

- Used for accessing lectures, quizzes, discussion boards, syllabus, assignments, course gradebook (this is NOT the official university gradebook).
- Ask your instructor for your role in uploading and updating information on ELMS.
- On elms.umd.edu click instructor support. There are links with helpful information to help you set up ELMS. Two are highlighted below.
- This link has videos for setting up ELMS: <http://guides.instructure.com/m/4210>
- This link has documents and guides for working with ELMS: <http://elms.umd.edu/page/docs-guides-page>
- Library Media Services: <http://www.lib.umd.edu/lms/services/elms-request-page>,
<http://www.lib.umd.edu/lms/services/home>

UMEG

- Used for course rosters, roster pictures, and officially entering course grades to the University for the transcript.
- In the link below you are able to access your class roster(s). There is some valuable information here such as student pictures, to help you learn their names and the average number of courses the class is taking as a whole and what different colleges the students are in. If you do not have access to the roster or the wrong class shows up email your professor because something probably went wrong on the back end of things: umeg.umd.edu

Problem students and professors

- There are a number of people that can assist you in the event that conflict rises between you and the professor or students you TA for. These people should be approached if the conflict requires outside assistance. Department - contact Ronald Luna and then Rachel Berndtson
- Office of Ombuds: <http://www.umd.edu/ombuds/>

Academic Dishonesty

- Academic dishonesty is a corrosive force in the academic life of a university. It jeopardizes the quality of education and depreciates the genuine achievements of others. Apathy or acquiescence in the presence of academic dishonesty is not a neutral act. All members of the University Community -- students, faculty, and staff -- share the responsibility to challenge and make known acts of apparent academic dishonesty. Any of the following acts, when committed by a student, is an act of academic dishonesty.
- Cheating: Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information or study aids in any academic exercise.
- Students completing any examination should assume that external assistance (e.g., books, notes, calculators, conversation with others) is prohibited unless specifically authorized by the instructor.
- Students must not allow others to conduct research or prepare any work for them without advance authorization from the instructor. This comment includes, but is not limited to, the services of commercial term paper companies.
- Substantial portions of the same academic work may not be submitted for credit or honors more than once without authorization.
- Fabrication: Intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.
- "Invented" information may not be used in any laboratory experiment or other academic exercise without notice to and authorization from the instructor.
- One should acknowledge reliance upon the actual source from which cited information was obtained.
- Students who attempt to alter and resubmit returned academic work without notice to the instructor would be in violation of the Code of Student Conduct.
- Facilitating Academic Dishonesty: Intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic dishonesty.
- Plagiarism: Intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise.
- Direct Quotation: Every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or by
- Paraphrase: Prompt acknowledgment is required when material from another source is paraphrased or summarized in whole or in part in your own words.
- Borrowed Facts or Information: Information that is obtained in one's reading or research; which is not common knowledge among students in the course, must be acknowledged. Materials which contribute only to one's general understanding of the subject may be acknowledged in the bibliography and need not be immediately footnoted.
- Academic dishonesty is a serious offense which may result in suspension or expulsion from the University. The normal sanction for academic dishonesty is a grade of "XF", denoting "failure due to academic dishonesty." That grade will normally be recorded on the transcripts of students found responsible for acts of academic dishonesty in addition to any other action taken (e.g., suspension or expulsion). A forty member Student Honor Council has the responsibility to investigate allegations of academic dishonesty and to convene Honor Boards to adjudicate charges. In specified circumstances, the Student Honor Council will accept petitions to remove the grade of "XF" from a transcript and replace it with the grade of "F".

Fall 2016 TA Guidebook: Assembled by Alycia Roberson, Class of 2016.

- The Code of Academic Integrity is reprinted in full in the Undergraduate catalog for further information, to report Academic Dishonesty or to inquire about serving on the Honor Council call [301-314-8204](tel:301-314-8204).
- Source: www.testudo.umd.edu/soc/dishonesty.html

Advice from past TA's

- In general, this is a job that requires a lot of patience.
- I would recommend dedicating lab time to reviewing lecture material in addition to working on lab/homework assignments.
- Remember you are in charge, don't let hurt feelings get to you; be firm when you make a decision, don't allow for bending the rules or decisions easily. Remember, you were picked to do this for a reason!
- Be prepared and ready to admit if you don't know the answer to something.
- They have to learn and to know well the material. Also to interact with the students.
- For undergraduate TAs it is very important to create a separation between your friends in the department and your role as their teacher in discussion.
- Don't put grading assignments off to the last minute because it can pile up fast.
- Be prepared.
- Be patient with students, try to prepare well for each session, and communicate with your Professor.
- Be confident. In this class, you are in the expert.
- The first semester of leading a discussion section is difficult but it gets easier as semesters go on. I also recommend taking Keith's TA course.
- Thoroughly explain the reasons for grades. Students will often get confused about why you gave them a particular grade for an assignment.
- Don't rely too much on other TA's. This can cause your discussion to be less robust.
- When you met some problems that you cannot solve yourself, just turn to the professor. Also if some students require too many office hours, learn to decline them or talk to the professor for advice.
- Try to contact someone that has TA'd the course or for that professor before.
- Communicate with the instructor as much as possible but don't be afraid to take ownership of your lab/discussion.