



**HARVARD UNIVERSITY**

*Department of Romance  
Languages & Literatures*

# TEACHING FELLOW AND ASSISTANT HANDBOOK

2016-2017

## Introduction

Welcome to the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures and to the teaching staff of the language program. Over the past few decades, applied linguists have dramatically raised awareness about language teaching and have defined and refined sound pedagogical practices. This research has informed TA training programs, both theoretically and practically. Lee (1989) explains the role of teaching assistants, who are often responsible for most or all basic language instruction in larger universities:

Being a TA (teaching assistant) means more than just working at a job in order to earn needed income. If you are a TA, you are an educator. Your function within the university is to educate the students who enroll in your courses. You aren't there to entertain them, coddle them, date them, or bore them. You are there to contribute uniquely to their general intellectual development. That's why in many, if not most, universities the study of foreign language is a general education requirement. By requiring a foreign language, the university is stating that such courses do indeed contribute to the overall education of the individuals enrolled in them. Have you ever considered yourself in that light? To do so requires you to think beyond how you have decided to finance your own education and to be concerned for someone else's education. Ask yourself, "Would I want to be a student in my course? Is my teaching like that of those who inspired me? Or does my teaching resemble that of professors whom I couldn't wait to leave behind?" Are you someone who your students will emulate or forget? How would you react if you had an instructor just like you?

We are interested in your current role as a teacher in our department, and we are cognizant of your professional development in general. The purpose of this handbook is to describe our program to you and to anticipate questions or concerns that you may have throughout the year and beyond. We encourage you to stop by and chat with the Director of Language Programs and the course heads, particularly if we have not addressed all your questions here.

Good luck to all of you. We look forward to working with you!

Elvira G. Di Fabio, Ph.D., Director of Language Programs  
Katherine Killough, Language Program Coordinator

### CLARIFICATION:

Throughout this handbook, a distinction is made between Teaching Assistants and Teaching Fellows. Teaching Fellows are graduate students in good standing in any M.A. or Ph.D. program at Harvard, as determined by the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, the Teaching Fellow's department, or the GSAS. All other part-time language teachers, including French, Italian, Mexican and Spanish exchange students, are called Teaching Assistants and are employees of the University.

Note: Some sections of this handbook are taken from the *Handbook for Teaching Fellows and Teaching Assistants* (Harvard University), by Kimberlee Campbell and Stacey Katz Bourns. Other sections are adapted from the *TA Handbook* (University of Utah), by Johanna Watzinger-Tharp, Randall Gess, Stacey Katz, and Fernando Rubio).

## I. Language Study at Harvard

The students in your classes have many different reasons for studying the language you are teaching. Some of them have a sincere interest in becoming more familiar with the language and its cultures. Others wish to improve their language skills for specific reasons, such as preparing for study in a target language country or communicating in the language in their professional or personal lives. Still others are working toward a Foreign Language Citation (see below) or fulfilling a requirement for their concentration. Finally, especially in first- or second-year language courses, students may be taking French, Italian, Portuguese, or Spanish for the sole purpose of fulfilling the language requirement, not because of a particular interest in foreign languages. The challenge facing TF/TAs is to satisfy the expectations of those who come to their courses by choice and to motivate requirement students to learn and enjoy the language and to pursue language study at a higher level.

This chapter explains the language requirement, placement, sectioning, foreign language citations, and concentrations, with the hope that understanding these aspects of language study at Harvard will help you anticipate your students' needs better and, consequently, provide a more satisfying teaching experience for both you and them.

### Language Requirement

During their four years of study leading to the AB (Bachelor of Arts degree), Harvard students must meet a foreign language requirement in a language with a written component that is taught at Harvard or for which an appropriate examination may be given. According to the 2014/2015 Handbook for Students, the requirement may be satisfied in one of the following ways:

- Earning a minimum score of 700 on a College Entrance Examination Board SAT II Test that includes a reading component;
- Earning a passing score as determined by the department on a placement examination administered by certain language departments;
- Passing with a letter grade one appropriate full-course or two half-courses in one language at Harvard, or the equivalent as determined by the appropriate language department. These courses may not include foreign literature courses conducted in English;
- Passing with a letter grade a language course or courses at the appropriate level taken in Harvard programs abroad, as approved by the appropriate language department. Study completed at other institutions may also fulfill the

requirement if approved by the appropriate language department whether through examination or on the basis of achieving a minimum grade;

- A student whose high school education was conducted in a language other than English may satisfy the language requirement with evidence of the official high school transcript.

These are the general policies set by the Office of Undergraduate Education for the entire College. However, our policies in RLL are more specific. For example, we do not allow students to use courses taken out of residence (at institutions either within the US or abroad) towards the language requirement. If your students have questions regarding the Language Requirement, please refer them to Katherine Killough, the Language Program Coordinator, who will direct them to the appropriate office.

### **Placement and Sectioning (Note: See Placement section of the Appendix)**

Many students needing to fulfill the language requirement choose to study a Romance language. Students are placed at the beginning, intermediate or advanced level, according to their scores on the Harvard Placement, SAT II, or Advanced Placement Tests, the number of years of previous study of the language, or the judgment of the Course Head if there are special circumstances. If they have never studied the language before, or if they have obtained a sufficiently low placement score, they enroll in French/Italian/Portuguese/Spanish 10. Students with scores that are higher, but not high enough to fulfill the language requirement, or students who have studied the language for three or four years in high school, are placed into French/Italian/Portuguese/Spanish 11 or 20\*. Students with scores above 600 are placed in higher-level courses (30 and above).

After placement, students "section" for their course by electing the course at their time preference. Using the course catalog ([my.harvard.edu](http://my.harvard.edu)), they locate the section time that best suits their schedule. You will work with your Course Head to organize the sections for the course you are teaching.

Note: Official enrollment occurs on Course Registration Day, at the end of the first week of classes. While students generally do not change language courses (since their enrollment in these classes is based on placement scores), they may change section times to correspond to changes in the rest of their schedule. This first week, when students may attend a number of different courses before making their final selection, is known as the "shopping period."

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\* N.B. As of Fall 2016, lettered courses are now numbered, e.g., AA → 10; AB → 11; ACD → 15; C → 20, etc.

## Citations in Foreign Language

A number of years ago, the Harvard Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS) initiated a foreign language citation program to encourage students to pursue foreign language study. Students earn a citation by taking four courses (16 credits) in the same language beyond the first-year level. The courses must be taught in the target language, and two of the courses must be at the third-year level or beyond. Students must complete all courses for a citation with letter grades of B- or better. Regardless of the level at which a student enters a language program at Harvard, all citations require the completion of four courses (16 credits) taken at Harvard or counted for Harvard degree credit. At graduation, the award of a foreign language citation will be noted on the student's transcript and will be included in the commencement program. Students will also receive printed citations along with their diplomas.

## Concentrations

All Harvard students must fulfill the requirements of one of the recognized fields of concentration, an approved joint concentration, or an approved special concentration. A student's concentration, often known as a "major" in other colleges and universities, reflects his or her commitment to a particular discipline, field, or specialization. The language instructor can play an important role in helping students select a concentration. TFs/TAs know their students' abilities and interests as well and can sometimes identify potential concentrators. Although it is not common, it is possible for students who start their Harvard language study at the beginning (10/11) or intermediate (20) level to decide to concentrate in that area, as they often find their language courses the most enjoyable and rewarding experience during their freshman year. If you think that you have potential concentrators in your class, contact RLL's Undergraduate Program Coordinator, Cathy Downey ([cdowney@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:cdowney@fas.harvard.edu)) or RLL'S Director of Undergraduate Studies, Dr. Kathy Richman ([richman@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:richman@fas.harvard.edu)).

## II. Learning to Teach in the Department of Romance languages and Literatures

The Department of Romance Languages and Literatures offers language instruction of the highest quality. Our approach is eclectic, incorporating those features of a variety of methods that we have found most effective in promoting successful language acquisition by our students. Although Course Heads at all levels in all languages have their own way of organizing their courses and balancing pedagogical techniques and materials, we all share a belief in the importance of interaction, communication and the centrality of the student. In the context of our department, we are engaged in offering a holistic language program, combining language, culture, and literature, therefore going beyond language instruction as mere exposure to grammar, vocabulary and stock phrases.

There is a tendency among new teachers to wish to teach as they were taught. However, even if you have had excellent teachers, following those models will not guarantee your success in the

classroom. Training and instruction are necessary to help you understand the various aspects of foreign language learning and to adapt techniques and approaches to the specific environment in which you will be teaching. Consequently the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures offers a comprehensive training program for all Teaching Fellows and Teaching Assistants during their first semester of teaching at Harvard. The components of this program are outlined below:

**Pre-Service orientation:** late August–early September. The general pre-service orientation, held this year on Thursday, August 25 and the morning of Friday, August 26, is required only of new TAs and TFs. The general program is followed by sessions designed for, and required of, all TAs and TFs, which this year will be held the afternoon of Friday, August 26 and the morning of Monday, August 29. All TAs and TFs must also attend course orientation meetings for the courses they will be teaching. For details, please see the program schedule, available from Katherine Killough.

**Methodology Course and Practicum: New TFs must take and new TAs must audit Linguistics 200, Second Language Acquisition,** unless they have previously taken either RL200 or Linguistics 200 at Harvard. If you have taken a similar course elsewhere, you may petition to be excused by presenting the course description and syllabus to the Director of Language Programs. You must audit Linguistics 200 even if you are NOT a student at Harvard University; this course represents ongoing training for the teaching you will do at Harvard and is a part of your professional responsibilities.

**Weekly Meetings:** All TAs and TFs are required to attend the weekly meetings held by their course head(s).

**Classroom Visits:** The Director of Language Programs and your Course Heads may visit your class at any time. These visits may be unannounced. The classroom visits are an essential component of the RLL teacher-training program, allowing the DLP and Course Heads to provide TF/TAs with valuable feedback about their teaching performance. After each visit, each TF/TA should arrange to see the DLP or Course Head as soon as possible to discuss the class.

### III. Your Teaching and Administrative Responsibilities

As a Teaching Fellow/Teaching Assistant for a language course in the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures you are in a unique position. You are the "director" or manager of the classroom, a figure of authority and the source of knowledge for your students, who look to you for direction, understanding and appreciation. At the same time, you are a member of a teaching team supervised by a Course Head who determines the orientation of the course, including the course materials and the pedagogical approach, and who decides on details of organization. This section of the Teaching Fellow Handbook will discuss your responsibilities as a

TF/TA in the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures.

**Follow your Course Head's instructions**, both because of her vast experience and because of the necessity for maintaining consistency across sections in multi-sectioned courses. Regardless of your previous teaching experience, you are expected to use the approach chosen by your Course Head.

**Your Course Head must sign all official documents.** Remember that your Course Head is the official contact with the FAS administration, and she must sign all documents for students. Do not contact any FAS administrative personnel (Freshman Advisor, Freshman Dean, or Senior Tutor) without prior discussion with your Course Head.

**Only the Course Head can authorize a make-up quiz or exam.** Students will be allowed to make up work and exams missed because of religious holidays, but these make-ups must be processed through the Course Head. For the calendar of religious holidays, see: <http://hds.harvard.edu/life-at-hds/religious-and-spiritual-life/multifaith-calendar>.

If work is missed for ANY other reason, the Course Head will decide the action to be taken on a case-by-case basis.

**You are required to attend all meetings called by your Course Head.** For most courses that you teach, you will be expected to attend weekly staff meetings, which are essential to ensure that all sections cover the same material in the same way.

**You will be required to make reasonable contributions to course planning, materials development, and the creation of quizzes or exams.** This is part of your training. Course Heads will make an effort to distribute all assignments equitably, although not everyone will have exactly the same assignments.

**You may not cancel classes for any reason.** If you are ill, you are required to find a substitute to replace you.\* You must also contact your Course Head. The same applies for absences for professional meetings and job interviews.

**You must be on campus throughout the semester, including during reading period and finals.** Your Course Head will tell you when you are free to leave at the end of the semester; you will need to be present at the final exam for the course you are teaching, for corrections of that exam, and for any grading meetings. In the fall, you must be on campus one week before the start of the semester. In the spring, your Course Head will let you know when you need to be back on campus.

**Students at Harvard will expect you to answer their e-mail messages within 24 hours, except**

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\* You should have a "teaching buddy," who you know is free when you teach and whose cell phone number you have handy.

**during vacations.** As a Teaching Fellow or Teaching Assistant, you will have access to a free e-mail account for which you can register at any networked computer in the Science Center, once you have your ID number. Please note that you should use your Harvard email account for all communication with students and for all University business. We will assume that you are checking this account, and will use it for all official communication. Your Course Head will let you know whether s/he prefers to be contacted by e-mail or phone.

**Students at Harvard will expect you to be in your office for two "office hours" each week.** These hours are part of your professional commitment, and may not be canceled without consulting your Course Head about make-up times. You will be assigned to an office on campus. As offices are shared by as many as ten or twelve TF/TAs, you and your office mates will need to work out a schedule specifying office hours and other times you will need to be present.

**Report any difficulty in your classroom** (e.g., excessive noise, burned-out lights, defective equipment) to your Course Head and to Katherine Killough (killough@fas), who will transmit your complaint to the appropriate department. Any temporary change of class location must be reported to your Course Head and to Katherine Killough so that your section can be found if necessary or in case of emergency.

**US copyright law is very strict.** You may not distribute photocopied materials at will in class. Your Course Head will explain the policy to you in greater detail. Should there be legal proceedings for copyright violations, you, and not the University or the Department, will be held financially responsible.

**Computers and video equipment.** If you teach in Sever Hall, requests for audio-visual and computer equipment to be used in class should be made in Sever 301 (5-9470). For other buildings, you must contact the main Instructional Media Services office in Science Center B-02 (5-9460). Note that there are also CD players that you may borrow in Boylston 403. Please clear all media activities you wish to use with your Course Head if these are not part of the syllabus given to you for your class.

**Students with disabilities.** An explanation of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences' policies regarding students with disabilities can be found on the Accessible Education Office's web site:  
<http://www.aeo.fas.harvard.edu>

**Sexual harassment.** The FAS guidelines for what constitutes sexual harassment and unprofessional conduct in the Harvard community can be found at the following web site:  
<http://www.fas.harvard.edu/pages/faculty>

The Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning is also a valuable resource for advice on a variety of topics of interest to Teaching Fellows and Teaching Assistants, including professional conduct: <http://www.bokcenter.harvard.edu>



## PROFESSIONALISM

Professional behavior is expected of each teacher. Here are a few items worth emphasizing:

- Teachers should always show students a positive attitude about their job, the department, and the program in which they work. You should never criticize the book, your Course Head, or the Department in front of your students.
- If a teacher is unhappy about a particular aspect of the language curriculum or has a suggestion about how something might be done differently, s/he should discuss this matter with the Course Head or the DLP.
- Teachers should maintain a positive attitude among other teachers and contribute to a collegial and supportive atmosphere within their teaching community.
- Neatness in all aspects of your classroom conduct is essential. This includes materials that you distribute, grade reporting, and personal appearance. Feel free to consult your Course Head for advice and assistance.
- Teachers should always seek to continue their education in teaching and learning.
- Teachers should always have the students' best interests and education in mind.

## IV. Practical Considerations for Your Students

**Attendance is essential**, given the cumulative nature of language learning. Your Course Head will inform you about the specific attendance rules for the course you are teaching. You must keep an accurate record of student attendance.

**No auditors** are permitted in language courses (Numbered 10-60's).

**No Pass/Fail.** Pass/Fail is a grading option available in the College but not in language courses in the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures. **Sat/Unsat** is a grading option available to GSAS students enrolled in some language courses. Your Course Head will let you know whether students in the course you are teaching can elect the Sat/Unsat status.

**Add-Drop:** Students who are having difficulty with a course may elect to drop or withdraw from a course. Always consult with your Course Head and the Director of Language Programs before advising a student to drop or withdraw. Students may drop a course from their record until the fifth Monday of the term. Please check with your Course Head before agreeing to allow any

students to join your class after Course Registration Day.

**Classes begin at seven minutes past the hour** and end at three minutes before the hour at Harvard.

**Formal final exams and projects must be taken/submitted on the date and at the time scheduled by the Registrar.** No extensions can be provided, nor can the date/time be changed, even by the Course Head or Director of Language Programs. Only the Harvard College Administrative Board may grant make-up final exams or give students extensions past the last day of exam period; notify your Course Head, however, about any such requests.

**If a student is having difficulty,** inform your Course Head. While poor performance is commonly associated with lack of study, it can also be an indication of language learning difficulties or personal problems. Find out what you can from the student, and then consult your Course Head.

**Students can get extra help:** from you, during your office hours, or by making an appointment at the Tutoring Center of the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures (Boylston Hall, Room G07). Students sign up for Tutoring Center sessions at: <http://isites.harvard.edu/rlltutor>. If you have any questions, contact Katherine Killough at [killough@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:killough@fas.harvard.edu).

**You do not have the authority to supervise independent studies** for Harvard undergraduates. Just say no to any such requests you may receive.

## V. Classroom Management

### SYLLABUS AND LESSON PLANNING

The syllabus (which is part of the longer course description) contains specific information about a given course. It includes a plan of the instructional activities over the course of the semester (e.g., which themes/chapters will be discussed on which days) and a thorough description of how students will be evaluated (e.g., a grading scale and percentages of graded activities). The syllabus, created by the course head, should be considered a contract between the instructor and the students: the requirements are defined according to course objectives and accepted by the students, if they choose to stay in the class. A lesson plan is an outline of a day's activities in a class. (See the outline for "Lesson Planning" in the Attachments section of the handbook.) Teachers make their own lesson plan in advance of each day's class so that they can manage time more effectively in the classroom. A lesson plan also allows instructors to keep a record of activities so that they can ensure a variety of activities, while still achieving instructional goals. A lesson plan should minimally include the activities to be done on a given day, the order in which they are to be done, and the amount of time to be spent on each activity. It is best to begin a class session with an easy and fun *warm-up* that "gets students going"; similarly one

should end the class with a *cool-down* activity that allows students to leave the class on a positive note. If a new activity is planned, i.e., one that the teacher has not used in the classroom before, a familiar back-up activity should be included. By planning in advance, teachers can also check for coherence across the activities, for meaningfulness, and for purposefulness of the activities. Lesson plans should be saved for future use, and comments should be added as to the success of the activities and their sequencing. Instructors are encouraged to exchange ideas for activities with colleagues and to share useful handouts they have created or found.

## **FIRST DAY/WEEK OF CLASSES**

The following is a partial list of the items that should be discussed during the first day or two of classes. This list may vary according to language program but is considered to be the minimum that should be done:

- Check and adjust physical aspects of the classroom: chair and table set-up; audio-visual equipment; board/chalk; overhead projector;
- Distribute and discuss course description, syllabus, course policies and requirements;
- Discuss the textbook requirements;
- Plan an activity for students and teacher to introduce each other in the L2; learn each other's names; let them know how they should address you;
- Check student attendance against the roster; if necessary, start a waiting list;
- Get students' information such as their major/minor, interests, email, etc.;
- Have students fill out the Language Background Information form.

In addition, it is a good idea for teachers to locate their classroom before the first day of classes, in order to see how long it will take to get there, and whether all the equipment is available and working.

## **PROBLEM PREVENTION AND PROBLEM SOLVING**

Being a teacher sometimes means more than being an educator, and particularly so when your students are bored or are not challenged sufficiently. Minor problems that arise in the classroom can sometimes grow into major problems, disrupting the class, distracting attention, and generally making the job more difficult and less enjoyable. To minimize problems and to maximize the learning opportunity for students, instructors should keep the following points in mind. (A large portion of this discussion is from Brown, 1994 and Good & Brophy, 1987):

### Classroom

It is crucial that the physical set-up of the classroom be conducive to the kind of learning we promote. Language classes should be interactive and engaging, which often involves putting

students in pairs or groups. Therefore, during scheduling, we make every attempt to secure classrooms that are suitable for language courses. Most classrooms are appropriately sized for the number of students expected and are equipped with moveable chairs/desks, one or more chalkboards, an overhead projector, internet connection and projection and a TV/DVD player. Your classroom may or may not have an installed computer. If this presents a problem, consult with your Course Head.

Language classes are very much dependent on students' ability to listen to and interact with each other. Arranging the classroom in a semi-circle or U-shape allows students to face each other easily. It also brings every student to the center of the classroom, keeping the less motivated ones from "hiding" in the back and avoiding participation, or worse yet, disrupting the class by talking while others are contributing to a class discussion. Establish a pattern from the beginning, and your students will get used to it, even if the rearrangements cost you a few minutes of class time.

### Voice and Body Language

Good voice projection is essential. All students should be able to hear you. Clear articulation is included with good projection. In beginning classes, you may speak a bit more slowly, but only slightly so. Students also notice non-verbal communication. Brown (1994, pg. 414) suggests the following:

- Let your body posture exhibit an air of confidence;
- Do not bury yourself in your notes and plans by sitting down behind the desk; stand up;
- Do not plant your feet firmly in one place for the whole hour;
- Move around the classroom, but not to distraction;
- Use facial and hand gestures to enhance meanings of words and sentences that might otherwise be unclear;
- Make frequent eye contact with ALL students in the class.
- Dress appropriately, taking into consideration the expectations of your students and the culture in which you are teaching; generally speaking, dress comfortably, yet professionally. It is always a good idea to dress a little more formally than your students and to avoid wearing revealing clothing.

### Activities

Activities done in the classroom should be *intrinsically motivating* in order for the learner to avoid boredom. Ask yourself the following questions about the activity (from Brown, 1994, p. 43):

- Does the technique appeal to the genuine interests of your students? Is it relevant to their lives?
- Do you present the technique in a positive, enthusiastic manner?

- Are students clearly aware of the purpose or goals of the technique/activity?
- Do students have some choice in determining how they fulfill the goals of the activity?
- Does the technique encourage students to discover for themselves certain principles or rules (rather than simply being told)?
- Does it encourage students to develop or use effective strategies of learning and communication?
- Does it contribute, at least to some extent, to students' ultimate autonomy and independence?
- Does the activity/technique present a 'reasonable challenge'?
- Do students receive sufficient feedback (either from you or from each other)?

### Supportive Environment

Make your students feel that they and their contributions to the class are valuable and interesting. Be sure not to humiliate students for giving a wrong answer. Do not allow other students to make fun of or criticize another's contributions. In fact, get students to focus and comment on the positive aspects about the content of each other's contributions.

### Classroom Policies and Teacher-Learner Roles

Be sure to state clearly your expectations of the students and all policies on late work, make-up work, and participation grades during the first week of classes. Then adhere to those policies. This information must also be given to students in writing on their course description. Your students will respect you for having stated the expectations and policies and, more important, for holding each and every student to them.

At any given time, you may face a question in class that you are unable to answer, or about which you are not quite sure. When this occurs, simply let the students know that you are not sure, that you will check on the item after class, and then return with an answer to the next class session. Students will respect you more for being honest, and less for making up an answer that you have to correct later on. And they already know that nobody is perfect!

### Student Complaints

Here are some suggestions for dealing with a student's complaint:

- Discuss the complaint privately; if a student introduces the complaint in class, say that you will be happy to speak with him/her after class; however, you may briefly follow up on it in class, especially if the complaint affects other students;
- Listen carefully and take the complaint seriously;
- Let students "tell their own story;" in other words, do not put words in their mouths;
- Ask the student for specific information; you may wish to take notes;

- Report any complaint immediately to your course head; if necessary, involve course heads as third party mediators.

### Cheating

Minimize the possibilities for your students to cheat during exams; be sure to spread them out as much as possible. Every class has someone with 'wandering eyes'. If you observe such behavior, stop it immediately in a tactful and discreet manner. Make sure to proctor exams actively; circulate throughout the classroom, and do not sit at your desk working.

### Problem Solving

All minor distractions and problems, such as students chatting while others are talking or students sleeping or reading their electronic devices when they should be participating in the class, should be addressed immediately. When a disruption occurs, you may use eye contact or physical proximity to let the student know you are disturbed by his/her behavior. Calling on the student to make a response is also helpful. If a verbal reprimand is necessary, then do your best to avoid humiliating the student in front of the class.

Some problems need to be resolved outside of class. Simply ask the student to see you after the class and tell him/her of your observation/concern. Let the student respond to this concern. Again, it is important to avoid humiliating the student. Try to find the source of the problem and deal with that, rather than focusing on the symptoms. It is also helpful to ask other teachers in the department how they have dealt with similar problems and what the outcomes were.

If a particular student continues to be a problem, then you should discuss the situation with your course head. In any case, it is best to act quickly in dealing with problems in the classroom so that others are not distracted and you can focus your energy on maximizing learning opportunities.

### Electronic Devices

Cell phones and laptops are to remain in the off position or sleep mode during class. Do not allow your students to use these devices except during activities in which they may be needed.

### **Helpful Tips**

#### **VARIETY IS THE SPICE OF LIFE**

Consider the following conversation:

Student A: Did we do anything yesterday? (Student A had been absent the day before.)

Student B: Oh, same old, same old.

Basically, Student A questioned the value of the class time, while Student B told A that she had

not missed a thing. It is our responsibility to make sure that students are not bored and feeling as if they are only passing time to fulfill a requirement. There are a couple strategies that help avoid wasted class time: most important, the activities in which students engage during class should be those that they could not do on their own. It is also crucial to vary the types of activities that students do, and to bring in your own, creative materials (without going overboard in class preparation time).

## TEXTBOOKS AND SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

Textbooks provide ideas and a guide to classroom activities. However, remember that the students can and should have read the assignment in their textbook before coming to class. Class time should include new (of course, related) challenges that supplement the textbook with other types of materials, ones which students have not seen before or cannot read at home. This method should make the class more interesting to the students, should force them to do their homework, and should reduce their absenteeism or tardiness.

## INDIVIDUAL LEARNERS AND LEARNER VARIABILITY

Learning styles vary from student to student. Some students are more extroverted and will enjoy certain types of activities, such as role-playing. Others prefer other methods and activities. What is important is that you recognize individual variation; understand how your students learn best; and coordinate their preferred learning patterns with the way their learning is to be tested.

## VI. Fractional Values, Remuneration, Pay Scale

**Fractional Values:** For purposes of calculating teaching loads and salaries, each type of course in FAS is assigned a fractional value. In the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, the equivalencies per semester for courses that TF/TAs teach are as follows:

First section of a language course	2/5 (per semester)
Second section of same language course	1/5 (per semester)
Intensive language course (e.g., Fre 15)	3/5 (per semester)
Discussion section of Literature/General Education course	1/5 (per semester)
Tutorial	1/10 (per student per semester)

Teaching Fellows G-3 or above and Teaching Assistants with a Master's degree in a related discipline (or two years of graduate study or two years of teaching experience at the college level) are paid at the senior rate. If you do not meet these requirements, you will be

compensated at the junior rate. Salaries are subject to federal and state withholding taxes.

Note: TAs on J-1 visas may be exempt from paying social security taxes, but must register with the Tax Office in order to sign up. They may be exempt from paying federal and state taxes as well if their country of tax residency maintains a tax treaty with the US. For more information, contact Nonresident Alien Tax Compliance by email, [Nrtax\\_ufs@harvard.edu](mailto:Nrtax_ufs@harvard.edu), or telephone, 617/495-8500 (option 5).

For pay rates for the current year, please see Katherine Killough in Boylston 436.

### **Payment Procedures**

Both Teaching Fellows and Teaching Assistants appointed on the regular 10-month schedule receive one salary check per month, August through December for the fall semester and January through May for the spring semester.

Teaching Fellows are paid on the fifteenth of every month, and Teaching Assistants are paid on the last business day of every month. If the fifteenth or the last day of the month falls on a weekend or University holiday, the preceding business day is payday. It is advisable to have your paycheck deposited directly in your bank account by logging on to PeopleSoft, Harvard's web-based Human Resource Management System for employees. Access PeopleSoft by first logging into HARVie (the intranet for Harvard employees) at <http://harvie.harvard.edu>. Click on "PeopleSoft" in the upper right-hand corner of the screen. Once you have logged in to PS, click on "Employee Self-Service," "Paycheck and Compensation," and then "Direct Deposit."

## **VII. Regulations Governing Teaching, Reappointment, Other Teaching Opportunities**

Graduate students in the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures are eligible to apply for Teaching Fellowships if they:

- have completed two full years of graduate work in the general field of Romance Languages and Literatures at Harvard.
- are graduate students in good standing. Note that more than two incompletes or insufficient progress toward your degree may disqualify you from teaching.
- are qualified to teach one of the languages offered by the Department, to tutor in the appropriate literature, or to assist in courses given by senior members of the Department.

### **Teaching Loads of Teaching Fellows**

First-year Teaching Fellows usually teach no more than 2/5 per semester, unless they have passed the Departmental Ph.D. exams. Graduate students who have successfully passed the



examinations are eligible to have a 3/5 course load through year, should additional courses be available. In accordance with IRS regulations governing student status, the University allows graduate students only 3/5 through year teaching, including any teaching elsewhere within Harvard University. Individual appointments will depend on the teaching needs of the Department. Note that it is possible for TFs who are US Citizens or Permanent Residents to teach 2/5 one semester and 4/5 the other semester of the same academic year for an average course load of 3/5. International TFs on F-1 student visas are limited to teaching no more than the equivalent of 20 hours per week at any given time.

G1: No teaching

G2: No teaching

G3: 2/5 maximum before completion of Ph.D. comprehensive exam; otherwise 3/5 maximum

G3+: 3/5 maximum

No graduate student may hold a Teaching Fellowship for more than four academic years, regardless of whether the appointment is for one or two terms within the same year. However, graduate students who have taught fewer than 16 semester fifths during four years may be permitted to teach a fifth year up to the total of 16 semester fifths if their services are needed. Graduate students who do the maximum amount of teaching for four years may exceed 16 semester fifths, which would rule out the possibility of a fifth year of teaching.

In general, these limits of time apply to all teaching employment at Harvard, including the University Extension. Please keep the Director of Language Programs informed of any teaching commitments within the department, but outside of the language courses, or in any other department so that we can maintain accurate files on your cumulative total of fractions.

### **Non-teaching Fellowships and Teaching**

Graduate students who hold a non-teaching fellowship or scholarship (other than a tuition grant) may be limited by the Graduate School as to the amount of teaching they may do. Consult the Financial Aid Officer for the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures, Lisa Simpson (495-5396, [msimpson@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:msimpson@fas.harvard.edu)) with regard to your individual situation.

### **Teaching Assistant and Exchange Student Teaching Limits**

In contrast to Teaching Fellows, who have priority as section leaders but are limited to a 3/5 teaching load, it is possible for Teaching Assistants to teach full-time (or 5/5). Note, however, that they may not teach more than 5/5 in any one semester regardless of their willingness to do so or their financial need. Depending on their visa status, Teaching Assistants – including those

who originally come to the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures as exchange students from France, Italy, Mexico or Spain – may be re-appointed a maximum of five times, depending upon the needs of the Department. That is, it is not possible to hold a Teaching Assistant appointment for more than six academic years total (with the fifth and sixth years requiring an exception from FAS Academic Affairs, which is not guaranteed).

### **Teaching in the University Extension**

All questions regarding teaching in the University Extension should be addressed to Mary Higgins, Associate Dean of Continuing Education for Academic Administration, (617) 998-8490, mary\_higgins@harvard.edu.

Appointments of Teaching Fellows and Teaching Assistants to Extension Courses will be made after consultation between Dean Higgins and RLL's Director of Language Programs.

### **Teaching in Summer School**

In early Fall, applications for teaching in the 2017 Harvard Summer School will be distributed by email. Deadlines for Summer School application are quite strict, so remember to return your completed application immediately. Please note that if you wish to teach in the Harvard Summer School, you must plan to be present throughout the entire summer session. Although you may be assigned to team-teach, summer courses may not be “split” between instructors: both instructors must teach everyday.

### **Other Teaching Opportunities**

General Education, Literature Concentration, History and Literature, and other non-departmental assignment are sometimes available. Students must find these assignments themselves and are requested to draw the attention of those with whom they are negotiating to the Romance Languages and Literatures departmental deadline. The responsibility for meeting the above deadlines remains with the applicant for the Teaching Fellowship or Assistantship.

### **Applying for Teaching Fellow and Teaching Assistant Positions for the Following Year**

Application forms for Teaching Fellowships and Assistantships will be available in early January. If you are already employed by the department, a form will be placed in your mailbox; if not, or if you cannot find or have misplaced your form, it is your responsibility to request one from the office of the Director of Language Programs, Boylston 436. Applications must be returned by January 31 to the Office of the Director of Language Programs, Boylston 436. Teaching Assistants should return the application form with an updated copy of their résumés. Note that late applicants will have low priority for assignments and may have to wait until vacancies appear in the original teaching assignment list to be assured of a position for next year.

Please remember that official offers of Teaching Fellow or Teaching Assistant positions in the Department of Romance Languages and Literatures come from the Office of the Director of Language Programs and that any discussions that you may have with anyone else about

future teaching will be considered tentative until you receive an offer in writing.

Because of financial aid decisions, scholarships, Ph.D. exams, study abroad decisions, and other determining factors, Offers of Contract for teaching assignments cannot be issued until the end of April. TF/TAs must return written acceptances or rejections of teaching assignments to the Director of Language Programs by the date specified in the letter of offer. This written acceptance, which may be sent by e-mail, will be considered binding. It is absolutely essential to notify the Director of Language Programs of any subsequent changes in your plans for teaching assignments. This must be done IN WRITING (hard copy or e-mail). A student who withdraws acceptance of an offer of Contract after the departmental deadline, except for extreme personal hardship (e.g. inability to return to Harvard the following year) or medical reasons, will be assigned low priority for appointment within the Department in succeeding years.

Note that contract fractions are guaranteed, but actual assignments may have to be modified for a variety of reasons.

### **How Teaching Assignments Are Allotted**

The Harvard Language Teaching Program in the Romance Languages exists primarily for Harvard College students as part of their education, not for graduate student support. Consequently, the first consideration of the Director of Language Programs and Course Heads must be to maintain the standard of excellence of the program in course design, content, and quality of teaching. From a practical point of view, if the quality of the program declines, enrollments will decline also, with a resulting decrease in teaching opportunities (and financial support!) for graduate students.

First-year Teaching Fellows (G3 and above) usually teach a first-year course (10 or 11), where their experiences in teaching are shared and their progress carefully monitored, with guidance provided as needed.

The Director of Language Programs and Course Heads reserve the right to deny Teaching Fellow status to graduate students whose control of the target language to be taught is weak to a degree unacceptable for language teaching. Graduate students with weak language skills should take steps to improve their language level during the year preceding their application for teaching. They should make every effort to spend a year or a summer abroad perfecting their use of the language before teaching. (Exchange positions are available in French, Italian, and Spanish.)

Although every effort is made to adapt assignments to expressed preferences, several factors influence course assignments, and it is not always possible to fulfill all requests by TFs to teach specific courses. Please be aware that:

- The large number of post-first-year TFs/TAs and the preponderance of sections available in beginning courses requires us to call on some experienced TFs/TAs to help with beginning

courses.

- The large number of sections available in the Fall Term in comparison with the Spring Term may make it difficult to give graduate students the fractions of support that they request, especially if these requests come late (after the deadline at the end of January), or when plans change.
- Some TFs/TAs may do such an excellent job in first-year courses that they will be requested by the Course Head as a model for new TF/TAs. Other TFs may take longer to acquire confidence and an effective teaching style and consequently may be asked to teach a beginning level course a second year in order to hone their skills.
- Some courses require TF/TAs with a particular profile, such as: 1) specialized knowledge (business, bilingual variation, film, theater, culture and civilization of another country); 2) a special dynamism and ability to develop material on the spot while maintaining a high level of oral involvement; 3) reading and preparation in a particular literary area.
- Course Heads may find it difficult at times to maintain strong, attractive, and constantly-evolving courses with ever-changing and inexperienced teaching teams. Some continuity of appointment must be maintained, so that more experienced TF/TAs can help incoming TF/TAs, as well as the Course Heads. Course Heads also retain the right, as courses advance in linguistic and content sophistication, to decide whether TFs applying to teach with them are sufficiently qualified to do so. To ascertain that instructors have the required level, Course Heads interview candidates from among those proposed to them by the Director of Language Programs.
- It is difficult to make tenths and fifths add up to the permitted fractions of 2/5 (pre-generals) and the possible 3/5 maximum permitted. There is also the challenge of balancing the workload and financial remuneration across two semesters. Consequently, TFs may occasionally have unbalanced assignments (e.g., 4/5Fall + 2/5Spr).
- Language sections (2/5) must be juggled with GenEd or literature sections (1/5) and Tutorials (1/10), according to the needs of our GenEd professors and some outside the Department and also of our concentrators (for Tutorials). FOR LITERATURE SECTIONS, faculty will select section leaders first from the pool of available Ph.D. candidates in the department. Qualifications in a particular field will be important. Faculty members will consider course work and other relevant preparation in making their selection for these sections. While available literature sections will be announced as early as possible, many literature sections are formed only after Course Registration Day, when enrollments have been verified. Students interested in literature sections will therefore need to be vigilant about checking e-mail during the first two weeks of classes so that they can respond to calls for available sections in timely fashion, preferably within twenty-four hours.

- TF/TAs interested in teaching sections of GenEd or literature courses should personally contact the professor teaching the course. This applies also to opportunities in RLL, History and Literature, the Literature Concentration and other departments. Any change in teaching assignments as a result should be reported to Katherine Killough.
- If students do not pass their Generals in May, their maximum teaching load for the following year is 2/5. Students must inform the Office of the Director of Language Programs of changes in plans for Generals as well as of their success or failure.

The Department, acting through the Director of Language Programs, retains the right of final decision in all teaching assignments, after consideration of all the relevant factors stated above, as well as the graduate student's progress toward completion of the Ph.D. degree.

## **VIII. Awards and Prizes for Teaching**

### **Certificate for Distinction in Teaching**

Toward the end of each semester students fill out online questionnaires ranking their instructors and the courses they are taking on a scale of 1 to 5. They also provide comments about the course content, the instructor, the course materials, and the ways in which student progress is assessed. The results of this survey are aggregated into the Q Guide, available on the Q Evaluations site (<http://q.fas.harvard.edu>). The Certificate for Distinction in Teaching is awarded by the Council for Undergraduate Education and the Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning for excellent teaching of undergraduates, based on the Q evaluations. This award should be cited on your curriculum vitae, as it is valuable when you go on the job market.

## **IX. About the Department**

The department web site is useful for learning who everyone is and what people do. The web site also has information about departmental programs, courses, events, and resources related to Romance languages. <http://rll.fas.harvard.edu>.

### **Common Areas - Computer Room, Lounge, Kitchen, Reading Area**

The Department of Romance Languages and Literatures is located on the third, fourth and fifth floors of Boylston Hall. We also have offices on the ground floor of Boylston and our Tutoring Center the third floor of One Bow Street, at the corner of Bow Street and Massachusetts Avenue, opposite Lamont Library.

The fourth-floor atrium lounge provides a space for talking quietly with friends and colleagues, reading, etc. Adjacent to the lounge is a small galley kitchen available for use by all department members, but you must bring your own food and wash any dishes you may have used. Note that although we have offices on the third floor, the third-floor lounge and kitchen area are for members of the Linguistics Department only.

Room 414 (known as the “computer room”) has networked computers, printers, and a scanner for use by department members only. Please be considerate of others using the room by keeping noise to a minimum.

The fifth floor has a quiet study area.

There are two small meeting rooms (Boylston 433 and 434) that can be scheduled by TF/TAs if they have not been reserved for other purposes (check with Kathy Coviello or Katherine Killough to sign up). When not reserved for special events, Ticknor Lounge on the first floor of Boylston Hall offers extensive space for reading and quiet conversation. It is usually open from 8 a.m. until 9 p.m.

## **Mail**

There are mailboxes for Teaching Fellows, Teaching Assistants, Concentrators and research affiliates in the lounge area on the fourth floor of Boylston Hall. Please check your mailbox at least once a day, especially during the first month of classes when messages tend to be more urgent. Faculty mailboxes are located on the fourth floor of Boylston Hall opposite rooms 432 and 436. Mail and messages for the Chair should be given to Andréa Kupski-Keane in room 432 and for the Director of Language Programs to Katherine Killough in room 436. Mail for other FAS departments, for other divisions of the University and for on-campus student residences may be put in the University Mail mailbox near the kitchen. University and stamped US Mail may be mailed from the department, but please note that the department does not provide stamps for outgoing personal mail.

For budgetary reasons, we are forced to limit the number of photocopies that we make in the department. As a teaching member of the department, you are encouraged to use the photocopying services on the mezzanine level of Boylston for the production of course materials and handouts for your students. Please keep in mind that these services receive heavy use, especially in the morning, and that there may be a line; it is therefore a bit risky to wait until a few minutes before your class to request photocopying. You may also email your materials as PDF attachments to [hfs@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:hfs@fas.harvard.edu).

There is free and unlimited scanning available using the fourth floor photocopier opposite Boylston 421.

## **RLL E-mail Lists**

**rll-list:** For events and announcements directly related to Romance Languages. This list is for messages that have a direct relation to Romance Languages and Literatures, including but not limited to: guest lectures, colloquia, graduate student and faculty forums, calls for papers, cultural events, etc. Everyone in RLL – faculty, staff, graduate students, concentrators, teaching assistants, exchange students, and visiting scholars – will automatically be subscribed to this list. You can add yourself to the list by going to: <http://lists.fas.harvard.edu/mailman/listinfo/rll-list>

**rllgrads-list:** For graduate students in the Department of Romance Languages at Harvard. TAs, Post-docs, graduate students in related departments such as Comparative Literature. Former graduate students are also welcome to join. This list was created for two purposes: 1) as an official vehicle of communication from faculty, administrators and staff to graduate students; 2) to allow graduate students and TAs to communicate with one another. Topics may include: calls for papers for graduate student conferences, short and long term job opportunities, scholarship opportunities, sublet and roommate notices, updates on departmental policies affecting any of the constituencies on the list, etc. All graduate students in RLL, both in and out of residence, should be subscribed to this list: <http://lists.fas.harvard.edu/mailman/listinfo/rllgrads-list>

**rll-kiosk:** The departmental bulletin board. For announcements about housing, calls for volunteers, announcements about outside events (and please, if you are in a chorus, dance recital, or a dramatic production, let us know!). You may also use this list to post interesting articles, essays, etc., even those not relating directly to the Department. Just keep in mind that this is a "bulletin board" and not a discussion forum; so if you wish to reply to the content of someone's message, please reply directly to that individual, offline. Subscription to this list is optional, but please consider joining: <http://lists.fas.harvard.edu/mailman/listinfo/rl-kiosk>

## **Job Placement**

The department keeps a file of vacancies of which we have been notified, subscribes to the MLA Job Lists, and has the MLA Guide to Candidates (which gives detailed information on preparing applications and on how to approach interviews). These sources may be consulted in Boylston 404, but may not be removed from that office.

## **Graduate Exchange Programs**

Graduate students interested in spending a year in Colombia, France, Spain or Mexico by participating in our exchange programs should contact Katherine Killough during the fall semester.

## X. About the University

The Department of Romance Languages and Literatures is part of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS), one of the nine faculties of Harvard University. On the web, you will find a number of Harvard sites that will help you to understand and take advantage of the opportunities offered by this vast institution. The URLs below will present factual information and explain the organization of the university and its constituent parts:

The Faculty of Arts and Sciences      <http://www.fas.harvard.edu>

Harvard College      <http://www.college.harvard.edu/>

Here are a few details about the resources available to you as a Teaching Assistant or Teaching Fellow of Harvard University:

### **Athletic Program**

You may purchase an individual membership to the Harvard athletic facilities either online at <http://www.gocrimson.com> (under the “Recreation” tab, click on “Purchase Membership” and you will be prompted to enter your HUID and pin and credit card information) or in person at the Harvard Ticket Office (5-2211) which is located on the first floor of the Murr Center at 5 North Harvard Street (next to Harvard Stadium and Blodgett Pool) open Monday through Friday from 9am to 5pm.

### **Computer Access**

As soon as you have your Harvard ID number, found on your Harvard ID card, you will be able to activate your Harvard e-mail account by going to the FAS information technology website (<http://www.fas-it.fas.harvard.edu/newToFas/faculty>).

If you have any difficulty or are interested in finding out about dial-in access to your account, call Faculty and Staff Computer Services at 6-2727 (Teaching Assistants) or Student and Account Services at 617-495-9000 (Teaching Fellows) for more information.

### **ID Cards**

New Teaching Assistants should note that depending on their date of arrival, there may be a delay in receiving their Harvard ID card. You must allow approximately 10-15 business days for the payroll department to process your teaching appointment from the day that you fill out the employment authorization (I-9) form. As soon as you are in the payroll system, you can obtain the ID card from Campus Services on the eighth floor of Smith Campus Center (formerly Holyoke Center). Present a valid picture ID (passport or drivers license), and your ID card will be issued while you wait.



If you are a returning Teaching Assistant with a current, non-expired I9 on file, your new ID card will be reactivated automatically (unless it has expired, in which case the ID office will mail a new card to your departmental mailbox.) Note that an ID card is needed to enter Widener Library and to get into Boylston Hall before 8 a.m., late at night, and on weekends. If you receive a new ID card, send your ID number (exactly as it appears on your card) to Matt Constanti by email ([constanti@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:constanti@fas.harvard.edu)), and he will ask the building manager to program your ID card for access to Boylston Hall.

### **Library Privileges**

As a Teaching Fellow or Teaching Assistant, you are entitled to check out books from Widener for one semester and for a shorter period of time from the other libraries, returning them no later than certain fixed dates (the due date is stamped in the book in the usual way). After ten days any book is subject to recall (by someone else who may need to use it), but you may, on returning it, place your own recall and get it back at the end of ten more days, to keep for the semester or until again recalled. Anyone failing to return a due book within a reasonable time may be held liable for the cost of the book. To claim privileges, show your Officer's Card, which is sent to you with your October salary check; before then you can get a borrowing card at the Library Privileges Office (1st floor, to left of Main Entrance, Widener Library) by showing a letter from the Department stating that you have been appointed.

### **Teaching Assistant Health Benefits**

Call University Health Services (5-5711) for first aid, which is always available. If you are a Harvard graduate student, your Student Plan covers other services, as well as emergency dental care. Health benefits on a co-payment basis are available to Teaching Assistants earning at least 2/5 per semester. Teaching Assistants eligible for health benefits should go to the site below to obtain information on the different plans offered by the University:

<http://hr.harvard.edu/health-benefits>

Note that Teaching Assistants are contracted from August through May. Consequently insurance coverage is terminated as of June 1, and eligible employees are given the option of continued coverage under the COBRA plan. You must sign up for this through the Benefits Office. In some cases, coverage can be extended throughout the summer for returning Teaching Assistants. If you have any questions about your particular case, see Katherine Killough in Boylston 436. Teaching Assistants who are not eligible for health insurance benefits (because they are teaching less than 2/5) may purchase the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plan for Harvard students and affiliates. For information about this plan, go to the Health Benefits web site above.