

Student Teaching in the GDR

The Graduate Department of Religion offers robust pedagogical training in a four-stage process, which takes advantage of both departmental and university resources.

Stage 1: REL 8004. Practicum in the Teaching of Religion

- A two-semester (no credit) course for first year students in the GDR (MA and PhD). (*Students will not be assigned as teaching assistants until their second year.*)
- **In the Fall**, the course meets bi-weekly for 50 minutes.
 - Led by a GDR faculty member and includes various faculty members presenting on selected topics, as scheduled in the syllabus.
 - **Focus:**
 - Training in the basics of teaching in a university setting (with resources from the Center for Teaching). Topics include:
 - syllabus preparation and course design
 - inclusivity in the classroom
 - grading
 - lecturing
 - discussion leadership
 - technologies in teaching
 - teaching documentation (teaching statements, etc.)
 - grant design and writing
 - Discussion of mentoring in the GDR, using the [GDR mentoring policy](#) as a guide.
 - Plan a strategy for professional development training catered to each student's needs and expectations. This plan includes specific Center for Teaching certificates that the student is expected to complete, and other training offered in the CFT. There will be a road map and plan for each student moving forward in professional development, **recorded on the Professional Development Planning Form (below)**. This will be on file in the GDR office, and should be reviewed by the advisor each semester. Updates are part of the annual GDR report on each student.

- Forms:
 - **Professional Development Planning Form** – Completed by student and advisor, in consultation with Instructor of 8004.
- **In the Spring:** Students shadow a faculty member in one course, as approved by the GDR chair. In each case, they and their faculty mentor commit to a limited number of hours (approximately 12) to discuss course planning, syllabus writing, lecture preparation, classroom observation, grading, and other matters relevant to teaching.
 - **Forms:**
 - 8004: Course Shadowing Agreement Form

Stage 2: Teaching Assistant Orientation (TAO), led by the Center for Teaching

- Completed the summer before the beginning of the students' second year, prior to their first services as at teaching assistants. (MA and PhD)

Stage 3: Teaching Assistantship

- Designed as a mentoring activity, which begins with a written strategy mutually agreed to by the student and faculty member, outlining expectations and goals for the semester. (MA and PhD).
 - **Forms:**
 - **Teaching Assistant Agreement Form** – Completed and signed by the faculty member (IOR), the teaching assistant, the advisor, and the GDR chair. Filed in the GDR office.
- Student enrolls in a no-credit course (to be added), with the professor as Instructor of Record, graded S/U.
- Each TA has an opportunity to lecture (a maximum of two lectures, preferably spaced out within the semester). The professor takes notes when TAs lecture and writes a brief report to be given to the students. (This report may also be helpful in writing future letters of recommendation.) The professor may also request that a representative from the Center for Teaching comment on the lecture or a recording of the lecture.

Stage 4: Teaching Associateship

- Optional but recommended to PhD students, beginning in their fourth year, who have served at least one semester as a teaching assistant. (PhD only.)
- Forms:
 - **Teaching Associate Agreement Form** – Completed and signed by the faculty member (IOR), the teaching associate, the advisor, and the GDR chair. Filed in the GDR office.
- Graduate students will co-teach a course with a faculty member.
- Teaching Associates enroll in a no-credit course (to be added), with the professor as Instructor of Record, graded S/U.