Course Objectives

I argue that the sociologist is particularly schizzy... In our research we celebrate reason. But in teaching, we act persistently on faith... -- Everett K. Wilson

Excellence is a strong word to associate with something so weakly done as teaching. This is a shame. A discipline that diminishes what it knows through shoddy teaching does not deserve the respect of educated people. --Hubert M. Blalock, Jr.

The intent of this course is to enable you to create and to cultivate a role for yourself as "teacher." Most of your coursework focuses on the aspect of the professorial role that involves creating knowledge through research. Yet during most of your professional life, you will spend a great deal of time teaching. Thus, this course prepares you for another aspect of the professorial role: disseminating research knowledge through teaching. Here we focus on the context of teaching, the development of teaching goals, and pedagogical strategies and methods to achieve those goals. Specifically, this course will help to prepare you for your first (or next) teaching assignment, enhance your effectiveness as a teacher, and provide a basis for developing your own pedagogical philosophy. To achieve these general and specific goals, you will: read literature on teaching and learning, observe classroom processes; practice teaching; participate in seminar sessions; and prepare materials for your own course (e.g., sample text selections, lecture, discussion, exercises, exam question, and syllabus).

Undoubtedly, we are likely to have differences in our views about education as well as teaching styles and preferences. Yet what unites us is the common goal of purposeful and effective teaching. Thus, you will be encouraged to think through many aspects of teaching and critically reflect about your teaching in order to strive for improvement.

The consequences of this course extend beyond training of pedagogical skills to ensure that our undergraduates are competently taught. The course also contributes to the meaning of an advanced degree in our department and improves your marketability for both academic and nonacademic appointments. Even if you do not take a teaching position, the course aids in developing skills critical to communicating ideas and research results in any arena.
Course Requirements

1. **Active Participation.** There are two types of participation for this course. First, each class session will involve a discussion of some problem or question. Thus to ensure a lively seminar, it is imperative that students make comments and offer critiques. I will take note of individual participation levels (e.g., frequency of and the extent to which comments reflect knowledge of the background readings and a thoughtful consideration of the issues being discussed). I will inform you if your participation is not up to par.

The second form of participation involves developing your own teaching skills! One or two people each week will put together a mini-lecture or exercise to respond to one of the guiding questions for the next week’s seminar. The intent of this form of participation is two-fold: 1) to allow you to apply what you are learning in the course; and 2) to ease you into the mini-lectures that you will do later in the course. You will need to consult with me on setting up your portion of a class session.

2. **Readings.** The course outline lists required (and *optional*) readings. Complete readings prior to each class session. The book is from the LGS TATTO program.


Readings are on ReservesDirect and soon, the course BlackBoard site.

In addition, you might skim some of the following sources to get an idea of additional materials that are available on teaching in general and on teaching sociology in particular. Some of these are in the Teaching Sociology Library in the graduate student lounge.

ASA Course Syllabi and Teaching Resources (http://www.asanet.org/teaching/resources.cfm)
The journals: *Teaching Sociology, Teaching Political Science, Teaching Psychology, The Teaching Professor, Chronicle of Higher Education, College Teaching* and *New Directions for Teaching and Learning.*

External links to teaching websites noted on the course BlackBoard site.

3. **Preparation of Class Materials.** During the seminar you will complete a number of tasks that will provide the basis for a course you plan to teach in the future. Thus, **all of these materials should be directed at that substantive course.** The activities to produce these materials are summarized below and described in more detail in the course outline.

a. stating substantive and non-substantive goals for the class;
b. selecting text(s) and/or readings;
c. developing sample lecture and discussion (ungraded) (see 6 below);
d. devising sample class exercises;
e. composing sample exam questions and writing assignment;
f. creating a mid-semester course evaluation
g. putting together a complete course syllabus.

The extent to which your assignments reflect and creatively apply to your course the readings and materials discussed in class provides the basis for the evaluation of your work. **Post each assignment by 9 a.m. on Tuesday before class** (unless otherwise noted below) **to the designated BlackBoard discussion board.** Thus all work is shared with other students. Students should review others’ work prior to class and bring hard copies of their own work to distribute in class. (See me if you do not have access to printing.)

4. **Observation of Undergraduate Classes.** A major way to learn is through observing role models. Thus, you are to observe classes taught by **two** different faculty members (**one** in the same area as the class you are designing). Obtain permission from each and review their syllabi and text/readings before making the observation. Develop an outline of things to look for. Discuss your observations with the faculty member if he or she so desires. **Write up** and turn your observations in to me by **Wednesday, April 17.**

5. **Guest Lecture.** You are to present a full-class lecture and/or discussion in one of the undergraduate courses in this department. (See me if you are unable to arrange such a presentation on your own.) Schedule your lecture for some time after March 20 (the mini lecture day). The class lecture will be **videotaped.** (Section IX of *Tools of Teaching* may be helpful.) I will attend the lecture/discussion and will urge other class members to do likewise. Please inform the class of your presentation date no later than March 6.

6. **Micro-Teaching Exercises.** To enhance the "how to" sessions for lecturing, we will observe and videotape class members offering mini lectures on a topic relevant to the course they are designing. Individuals will create 10 minute lectures (e.g., how you would present one concept or one set of research findings). The presentations will be taped in the regularly scheduled seminar session on lecturing **March 20.** We will discuss and evaluate these mini-lectures as a group. The intention of the exercise is to help develop lecturing skills as well as skills for evaluating the work of others.

During class on **March 27,** each student will conduct a 10 minute discussion on a topic relevant to the course being designed. Each discussion will be based on a newspaper or magazine article of the presenter's choosing, which all members of the class will read. (The discussion leader will highlight the sociological content.)

**Grading**

The only grades valid for this course are **satisfactory/unsatisfactory.** The cumulative nature of the class assignments requires that you complete all requirements outlined above. I assess each assignment; if it is unsatisfactory, I will ask you to re-do it. **Each exercise is due by 9 a.m. on Tuesday** before the seminar in which it will be discussed. Failure to hand-in three of these assignments in a timely fashion will automatically result in an UNSATISFACTORY course grade. (Note: a **satisfactory** grade is the equivalent of a "B".)
Course Outline

0. Introduction: Course Goals and the Means to Achieve Them (16 January)


In-class Exercise: Talking about the courses class members intend to design.

I. The Ecology of Teaching

A. What makes a good teacher? Characteristics of the focal actor (23 January)


In-class Exercise: List characteristics of a good teacher. You may base your list on great teachers that you have had or on your own teacher “ideals.” Which characteristics, if any, are akin to personality characteristics? Which can be developed through training? How are ethics relevant to various characteristics?

B. Where are we teaching? The discipline, university, department (30 January)

Sociology at Emory: the Undergraduate Program
http://www.sociology.emory.edu/pid/5/19/

HANDOUT: “What Happened to Studying” (Boston Globe, July 4, 2010)
Exercise: Describe the context of your undergraduate education (what type of school [size, public/private], department). Compose a list of what struck you about the context of your undergraduate education and your major in particular. We will discuss characteristics of different contexts and your perceptions of them as a means to illustrate differences in teaching environments.

C. Who are we teaching? Diversity in the audience

Diversity in the audience (6 February)

Davis, Chapters 5-8

Exercise: Identify an issue relevant to the course you are designing that might be interpreted differently by members of various ethnic groups or by men and women. Attempt to anticipate what arguments each side might make. Discuss one or two strategies to elicit arguments should the class approach the issue with a ten-foot pole! (We may attempt a "role-play" [using one student as an instructor and others taking the role of members of various groups] of handling diversity and its implications in the classroom.)

Demonstration: From the horses’ mouths: undergraduate panel.

II. Goals and Outcomes: Pedagogical and Behavioral

A. What is worth teaching? Substantive and non-substantive goals (13 February)

Davis, Chapter 1

*Exercise:* This exercise has two parts: (see handout for more details)
Keep in mind our undergraduate program assessment goals:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Goal 1. Written Communication:</strong></th>
<th>Students should be able to display effective writing and editing using conventions and formats appropriate to social science fields.</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 2. Social Research:</strong></td>
<td>Students should be able to formulate empirical research questions, identify the major methods for collecting data to answer questions and the major advantages and disadvantages of each method, and demonstrate a basic understanding of the principles to employ in analyzing data.</td>
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<td><strong>Goal 3. Sociological Theory:</strong></td>
<td>Students should understand and be able to apply major perspectives in sociology, including those dealing with the structure and functioning of social groups, the relations between groups and individuals, and the importance of social location in affecting life outcomes. In particular, students should be able to apply these perspectives to the analysis of historical and/or current events and conditions.</td>
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1. Determine the **major** substantive goals that you would like to achieve in your course and write them up as if you are creating the introduction to your syllabus. You may do this in a number of ways: identify major questions you'll answer in the course; list key major concepts, theories, methodologies, research findings, etc; note the skills that you would like to see the students develop. For example, in my *Individual and Society* class, general question are "How does the real, imagined, or implied presence of others affect the individual?" "How do we go about studying the effects of groups on the individual?" (pertains to assessment goal 2) "What mechanisms (behavioral, cognitive, affective, symbolic) influence individual behaviors or attitudes?" In answering the last question, we address theories (e.g., behaviorism, symbolic interactionism, exchange theory, attribution, status processes) and thus meet assessment goal 3. You may divide the course into various sections and identify goals for each.

2. Identify the **nonsubstantive** goals you would like to achieve for your class and write them up as you would include them in your syllabus. In addition, select one goal from your list and discuss: a) one means by which you would achieve this goal in your course, and b) how you would know if you achieved this goal.
B. What things should I do and not do? General guidelines (20 February)

Davis, Chapters 4, 29-31, 55-57


Exercise: First, think about two classes that you have taken in the past: one in which you learned a great deal and another in which you learned little. Try to determine what in these two courses promoted or hindered your learning (include consideration of problems in the classroom). Second, try to integrate the above readings by developing a list of "reminders" for you to use when you teach a class (i.e., things that you should and should not do when teaching).

Demonstration: Panels of “experts” within the university: 1) student issues and resources; and 2) college administrative rules.

C. What are the students going to read? Text/reading selections (27 February)

Davis, Chapters 1 (again!)

Exercise: Keeping your goals in mind, scan textbooks and readings for your course. Pick the text(s) that you would use for the first major section of your course; evaluate it using those criteria you feel are important. If you are using readings, pick those that you will use for the first major section of your course, and evaluate them. In your 1-2 page evaluation, be sure to identify strengths and weaknesses of your text/readings and the criteria you used.
Guidelines for determining amount of reading: 1) assume undergraduates read about 20 pages an hour, and that they should do about two hours of work for every contact hour in class; for a four credit class, that translates to about 100 pages a week (2.5 hours in class x 2 x 20); or 2) read the material yourself and assume that it will take undergraduates twice as long. Of course, consider the difficulty of the material -- it will take them longer to read harder materials!

III. Instructional Techniques for Achieving Goals

A. How do I get the "word" across? Putting together and doing a lecture

Davis, Chapters 14-18, 51

HANDOUTS: “Coping with Teaching Anxiety,” “Changing Complaints about Lectures into Compliments,” “Ways and Means of Communicating Structure,” “How Do You Teach,” “More on Those First Five Minutes,” “Commandments for PowerPoint”

Exercise: Make a list of potential sources of materials that could provide the basis for lecture materials for the course you are developing.

Demonstration: Better uses for PowerPoint in teaching.

Demonstration: Graduate student panel “How I put together lectures.”

Spring Break March 11-15

B. How do I deliver a lecture?

Ungraded Exercise: Members of the class will prepare 10 minute lecture on a topic relevant to the course they are designing (you may focus on one issue, one concept, one point that you would make in a 50-75 minute lecture). These mini lectures will be videotaped during class. Then we will review the videotapes and offer constructive comments.
C. How can technology assist teaching?  

Davis, Chapters 46 -50  

*Exercise:* Present one way in which you would incorporate technology into your course. Indicate how the technique will help fulfill your goals.  

*Demonstration:* Emory Center for Interactive Teaching (ECIT), instructions for iPods, clickers, some Blackboard features, and more!!

D. But what do the students think? Guiding discussions  

Davis, Chapters 9-13  

**HANDOUTS: “The Silent Ones We Wish Would Speak”**

*Ungraded Exercise:* Students will distribute a short newspaper or magazine article on an issue or idea relevant to the course being designed that will provide the basis for a 10 minute discussion. These readings should be delivered to class members (via mailboxes or electronic means) by noon, Monday, April 5. The discussion leader should formulate questions that draw attention to Sociological concepts and facilitate the discussion and analysis of the article by other students.

E. What other ways can I communicate? Alternative methods and graduate seminars  

Davis, Chapters 20-28  
Brent, Rebecca and Richard M. Felder. 1992. "Writing Assignments: Pathways to
Connections, Clarity, and Creativity." *College Teaching* 40(2):43-47.
Woodberry, Robert D. and Howard E. Aldrich. 2000. “Planning and Running
Experiential Learning in Undergraduate Sociology Courses.” *Teaching

Steen, Sara, Chris Bader, and Charis Kubrin. 1999. “Rethinking the Graduate
Responses to Steen et al.:

Graduate Seminar…” *Teaching Sociology* 27:180-86.
Eisenberg, Anne F. 1999. “Forms of Socialization: Graduate Education

Exercise: Develop and describe two alternative teaching techniques for the
presentation of a particular concept or issue that you will address in the course
that you are developing. You may obtain ideas for this from readings or resource
materials in the Teaching Sociology Library (e.g., "Innovative Techniques for
Teaching Sociological Concepts," "Writing in the Undergraduate Sociology
Curriculum," or "Alternative Teaching Techniques"). You might develop an in-
class or out-of-class project, a field trip, a role-play exercise, or some other
activity. Describe in detail how these techniques will help you to achieve the
substantive and nonsubstantive goals of your course.

Demonstration: More on how technology may serve these exercises and/or guest
speaker on service learning.

IV. Evaluating Goal Achievement

How do we know if students are "getting it"? Did we “do it?”
Grading “them” and getting “ourselves” evaluated

(17 April)

Davis, Chapters 35, 36, 39-44

that Clue Testwise Students.” *Journal of Excellence in College Teaching* 9:93-
117.


“Plagiarism Prevention.”

HANDOUTS: “Fixing Writing Problems,” “Term-Paper Checklist,” “How we Grade: A
Process Always in Need of Review,”

Exercise: This exercise is multifaceted. First decide how many exams and writing
assignments you will give for your course. Second, develop **five** multiple choice questions, **two** short answer questions, and **two** essay questions for a portion of your course. Third, describe a writing assignment that you intend to give, complete with instructions to the student.

*Demonstration:* Using BlackBoard for giving exams and tracking grades.

Davis, Chapters 52-54

*Exercise:* Develop a short evaluation form to use early in the semester for your class.

*Demonstration:* Generating and distributing anonymous evaluation surveys online using BlackBoard.

*In-Class Exercise:* To prepare for doing your own syllabus, I will hand out two syllabi for us to critique in class.

**VI.** Putting it Together: Constructing a Good Syllabus  

Davis, Chapter 2

*Exercise:* Put together a tentative syllabus for your own course and circulate to class members. The syllabus should contain all elements completed in previous exercises (e.g., goals, organization, requirements, some readings) plus contact information, class rules, etc. It should outline the entire course, if possible, and provide complete information (e.g., topic, activities, and readings) for at least two weeks. For the remainder of the class, the outline may be more general. (You can choose whether to organize your class for MWF 50 minute sessions or MW/TuTh for 75 minute sessions. Know, however, that graduate students teaching for the first time are more likely to get a MWF schedule than a two day schedule).