Teaching Assistantship Portfolio
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Assistantship in SOCI 367 The Sociology of Sexuality
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PORTFOLIO PURPOSE:

The work you do as a teaching assistant will be relevant for many aspects of your life and career, including the possibility of earning graduate school funding by winning a teaching assistantship. When applying for jobs, schools, grants, and awards, it is useful to have a full account of your skills and experiences. This portfolio serves to document much of that for use at a future date. In a couple of places, I ask for reflections from you that can serve us both as you demonstrate your ability to think about course design, and I get and expert course evaluation.

GOALS AND NATURE OF COURSE CONTENT:

Catalog Description: Course assistantships provide students with a sense of what it is like to teach a sociology course by allowing them to work closely with faculty members through different phases of course preparation, presentation and evaluation. Assistantships also allow for a deeper understanding of course material by providing opportunities for student assistants to lead discussion and potentially to help their peers learn reading and study skills.

Goals include the acquisition and practice of skills related to the teaching and practice of sociology.

Specific course objectives may include recognizing the narrative structure of a syllabus and the relationship among its various elements (lectures, readings, assignments, etc.); acquiring and practicing course management skills possibly including some Canvas functions; developing technological skills such as managing discussion boards; honing communication skills in the form of liaison work answering student questions. The course content is discussed in greater detail below.

BASIC FEATURES OF THE COURSE AND INSTRUCTORSHIP:
- This course met entirely online.
- This course had 37 students and 1 teaching assistant.

SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES AND REFLECTIONS:
Liaison Work:
- I served as a silent audience plant in this course. Students did not recognize me as a teaching assistant, but my job was to help them get as much out of the class discussion as possible.
- Reflect on your experience working with your peers in this class.

- o I enjoyed working with the other students in the class. I learned a great deal from their perspectives and opinions. Additionally, I added to my knowledge of the course topics by being able to ask my peers to dig deeper and apply their knowledge from the texts or videos to real world experiences by asking thought provoking questions.
- Now that you've experienced this course from both sides of the digital lectern, are there things you would change about the design of this class? What are your favorite things, never to change?
  - o The only thing I would change in this course design is to change the distribution of points to not so heavily rely on multiple choice exams. For example, in the Fall of 2019 course, there were essays that helped divvy up the point distribution. I understand that grading the essays are more work on the instructors end, however, there are some students who understand the material but are not good test takers. On the flip side, I would never get rid of the discussions boards. I believe they encourage the application of concepts to real world situations and experiences. I also like the inclusion of a space to talk openly about the overview and events going on in the world. The last component seemed to allow students to connect and provide an in-person classroom feel in a virtual setting.

Canvas work:

- In Canvas, I confirmed that upcoming assignments were available one week in advance, and reported on errors as necessary. Quantify by counting and clicking on docs/links on the overview and module pages.
- At least one week in advance, I confirmed that each calendar entry was available in its matching module. I did this for 14 modules, including those that contained exams, in which case, I confirmed that exam descriptions ("info pages") matched the information associated with each exam, including dates, number of questions, points, etc. Note that each exam has two extra questions that are just honor statement, an exam with 20 questions on the "Exam Info" page shows 22 questions in the Canvas description of that exam.
- I also read each announcement from the professor when it posted to confirm that dates and references in that post matched available course material.

Discussion Management: - Accuracy, Timeliness, Grammar and Professionalism

- I read a hundreds of posts and flagged correct answers using the thumbs-up icon.
- I made a total of 1,351 posts to the discussion boards to steer discussion toward correct answers for exam study.
- Being a peer leader is different from being a participant in the following ways: By knowing the answers in advance from previously taking the course, I was able to help my peers think deeper by forming questions that linked previous topics of the material to various discussion questions each week.
- The discussion rubric was helpful because it just stated three total posts must be made by Friday. Taking away the Tuesday initial due date followed by Friday due date was beneficial during this unprecedented time. I do not believe any part of the discussion rubric needs to be adjusted.

Other comments accomplishments of skills acquired/applied:

1. I acquired the skill of formulating a question that enhances my peers learning experience.
2. My attention to detail allowed me to spot links that were not working in the modules and miscommunications in announcements.
3. I acquired the skill of being able to communicate with the professor about the intricacies of a course.
4. I really enjoyed working as a teaching assistant and being able to learn from my peers and their perspectives and experiences.