Policy Handbook for Non-Tenure Track Faculty and Graduate Teaching Assistants

Department of English

UTSA

Revised: November 2011
Non-Tenure Track (NTT) Lecturers and Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTA) have the same responsibilities in the classroom as full-time professors: they must be professional and courteous to their students, scrupulously honest and objective, as well as prompt, timely, and prepared.

Each instructor must:

- Develop a syllabus for each course taught that is distributed to students on the first day of class and submitted to the Department Chair by the last day of the first week of classes each semester. Email as a WORD or PDF attachment to: peggy.garner@utsa.edu. All instructors must post course syllabi on Blackboard.
- Always be in class on time with a planned activity for the duration of each class period.
- Inform students of their grades and progress throughout the semester. Grade often with short turn-around times, especially for freshman and sophomore classes.
- Deal with instructional and student issues as they arise; keep notes with names, dates and times regarding any situations that arise with students each semester.
- Be familiar with the Department and University requirements relevant to employment, instructional, and student issues outlined in this handbook.

Graduate Teaching Assistants

Requirements for appointment as Graduate Teaching Assistant (Instructor of Record):

- Must have completed a minimum of 18 hours of graduate level coursework and completed ENG 5183 with a B or better
- Must be enrolled full-time (at least 6 hours for each long semester)

As instructors of record, Graduate Teaching Assistants are responsible for all aspects of the courses they are assigned to teach. Regular duties include developing a syllabus, developing course projects and assignments, writing and delivering classroom lectures, grading, holding office hours, and dealing with student issues.

If questions or problems arise, GTAs should immediately consult with the Department Chair and/or the Undergraduate Advisor of Record. They are also encouraged to discuss any teaching issues with their other professors and the Ph.D. and M.A. Graduate Advisors of Record.

Mandatory Orientation for All Graduate Teaching Assistants

All new and aspiring GTAs are required by the University to attend the Teaching Assistant Orientation conducted by the UTSA Teaching and Learning Center during the week prior to the start of each Fall semester. In addition, GTAs are required to complete the Online Self-Paced Instruction and the Follow-up Session. Attendance and participation for all GTAs has been mandated by the Provost as a condition of hire. Failure to attend or successfully complete the sessions and instruction will result in cancellation of your teaching appointment. For more information, see the Teaching Assistants link at the UTSA Teaching & Learning Center website <http://www.utsa.edu/tlc/TA/index.html>.
Lecturers

NTT Lecturers who have an M.A. or Ph.D. degree in English may be appointed to teach undergraduate courses at the 1604 campus or downtown campus. These appointments are made by the Department Chair with the approval of the Dean of the College of Liberal and Fine Arts. Lecturers report to the Department Chair and are encouraged to seek advice from full-time professors in their area.

Course Syllabus Requirements

Per University policy, all syllabi must be posted on Blackboard, on Bluebook (PDF), and uploaded to the Department website before the first day of classes each semester.

Blackboard: [https://bb.utsa.edu/webct/entryPageIns.dowebct](https://bb.utsa.edu/webct/entryPageIns.dowebct)
Bluebook: [http://bluebook.utsa.edu/](http://bluebook.utsa.edu/)

The Department copy must be emailed to Peggy Garner either as a WORD or PDF attachment: peggy.garner@utsa.edu.

UTSA considers your syllabus to be a contract with your students. Please use the Provost’s checklist when preparing your course materials. It is available on the English Department website at the “Resources” page (see “Syllabi Memo”). Also, please follow the “Checklist” at the back of this handbook.

In order to assist students with the process of choosing courses at registration time, please provide an expanded course description, draft syllabi, or past syllabi (in the event a new one is not yet available) on the Bluebook prior to the registration period. Included should be:

- a. the course number and name
- b. the instructor’s name and contact information
- c. a grading scheme and anticipated assignments
- d. the anticipated textbooks, reading assignments, and/or reading list

Department Staff

Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. M-F

Maureen Carroll, Senior Administrative Associate  maureen.carroll@utsa.edu  458-4376
Reina Vargas, Administrative Associate II  reina.vargas@utsa.edu  458-5368
Peggy Garner, Administrative Associate I  peggy.garner@utsa.edu  458-4374

Department Administration

Bridget Drinka, Department Chair  bridget.drinka@utsa.edu  458-5130
Jeanne Reesman, Ph.D. Program Advisor of Record  jeanne.reesman@utsa.edu  458-5133
Bernadette Andrea, M.A. Program Advisor of Record  bernadette.andrea@utsa.edu  458-5339
Mark Allen, Undergraduate Advisor of Record  mark.allen@utsa.edu  458-5358
College of Liberal and Fine Arts Advisors

Lapetra Bowman, Academic Advisor  
lapetra.bowman@utsa.edu  458-4900
David Kessler, Academic Advisor  
michael.kessler@utsa.edu  458-4900

Banner and ASAP

Banner is UTSA’s electronic administrative system accessed by faculty online through ASAP at https://asap.utsa.edu/. Access to class rosters and grading is entirely electronic. The schedule of courses is available online. All faculty must have a Banner ID and PIN to access and print out rosters and submit end-of-semester grades. The system will guide you in setting up a PIN the first time you access it. Peggy Garner can help the NTT Lecturers with questions or problems related to Banner and ASAP; TAs can seek help from Reina Vargas. All faculty should access and print out their class rosters prior to the first class meeting and again on census day. You should also check your online rosters throughout the semester to track any changes.

Course Descriptions and Monitoring Enrollments

Each instructor should familiarize themselves with the official description of their course(s) as listed in the University Catalog and include that description on their course syllabus. Course content should be consistent with the catalog course description.

Instructors should continually monitor their upcoming courses on ASAP (through Class Schedules) to ensure that class enrollment maximums, course meeting times, etc. are correctly listed. Peggy Garner (NTTs) and Reina Vargas (TAs) can give you the correct information on your course.

UTSA ID Card

You should get a UTSA Card, available on the first floor of the MS Building, MS 1.01.52. This card displays your personal Banner number (@000XXXXX) and is required to access locked classrooms. It is also your library card and may be used as a sort of prepaid credit card for campus dining and photocopying in the library.

University Email

Please set up a UTSA email address for the semester during which you are employed and inform your students of this address. Important departmental communications utilize your @utsa.edu email address, so check it frequently. In addition, please encourage your students to use their UTSA email in their communications with you. Students may also use Blackboard to contact you.

Employee ID (EID)

The UT EID is an electronic identifier (similar to but not the same as your Banner ID number) that allows you to use secure services to check account transactions, view your W-2, update personal information, purchase parking and register for classes using TXCLASS. For help in activating your UT EID, call Management Reporting and Administrative Systems at 458-4346. To register for an EID training class
University Compliance Training

You must complete the mandatory University Compliance Training online. This must be completed within two weeks of your notification that the online modules are available. Please contact the English office staff if you need assistance in completing this task.

Handbook of Operating Procedures (HOP)

Official University policies and procedures are outlined in the HOP at http://www.utsa.edu/hop/. Please consult this very useful guide for questions about student and faculty conduct, ranks, regulations, grievances, etc.

Evaluating Students’ Work

Per University policy, students are to be provided with the evaluation methods employed for assessing their course work prior instructor evaluation of that work. Please read the following statement from the 2009-2010 Information Bulletin, http://www.utsa.edu/infoguide/appendices/a.html:

Academic Procedures: Students have the right to be informed about the evaluation methods which will be employed by the instructor and the right to review tests and other written work after the instructor has evaluated it. A student with an academic grievance should first seek to resolve the problem directly with the instructor of the course. If the matter cannot be resolved at that level, the grievance should be submitted in writing to the department chair/division director or other designated administrator. The student may appeal the decision to the Dean of the College and then to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies for an undergraduate or the Dean of the Graduate School for a graduate student. The decision of the Dean of Undergraduate Studies or the Dean of the Graduate School is final.

Grading and General Procedures

Grades are submitted online. The University requires that official midterm grades be submitted online for freshmen. You may also submit midterm grades with comments for students at any level who are receiving a “D” or “F.”

Instructors are encouraged to inform all students of their progress in the course no later than midterm. As of Fall 2011, plusses and minuses may be used in the University’s grading system. Course syllabi must provide an explanation of the instructor’s grading system and a clear indication of what factors will be used in determining grades.

Grades of Incomplete

GTAs and NTT Lecturers should avoid giving grades of “Incomplete” (IN) unless absolutely necessary. A grade of Incomplete must be initiated by a student request to the instructor. The student must have completed three-fourths (75%) of the semester’s work with a satisfactory grade (C) or better in order to receive an Incomplete. The request for an incomplete must be due to unforeseen extenuating circumstances.

A grade of IN on the final grade roster must be accompanied by an online form that describes the work to be completed in order to change the Incomplete to a letter grade. To change an Incomplete to a
letter grade the instructor must complete and submit an online Change of Grade form. Incomplete coursework must be completed and a Change of Grade form submitted within one year (an instructor may establish a shorter timetable; do so in writing). After this deadline, the grade becomes an “F” in undergraduate courses while graduate students must re-enroll in and complete the course prior to graduation to remove the “IN” from their record.

**Dropping Courses and Non-Attendance**

The University publishes a deadline each semester (see “Academic Calendar” under “Calendars” on the UTSA website) by which a student can drop an individual course to assign a grade of “W.” It is helpful to your student to learn his/her midterm grade prior to this deadline. Faculty may not drop students; drops are initiated by students or by the registrar (typically for non-payment of tuition). Check your roster throughout the semester to make sure all students who are attending are still registered. A student whose name appears on your roster but has not attended or has stopped attending class must be given a final grade of “F.”

**Resolving Student Issues**

**Questions about Grades**

University policy states: “Individual faculty members retain primary responsibility for assigning grades and evaluations. The faculty member’s judgment is final unless compelling evidence shows discrimination, differential treatment, factual mistake, or violation of a relevant University policy. The student must first meet with the instructor in an honest attempt to resolve the issue. If the matter is not resolved, the student may file a formal grade grievance with the Department Chair. The student must file the grievance with the Department Chair within 90 calendar days from the end of the term in which the grade was assigned. The Department Chair will communicate his or her decision to the student and forward a copy to the Dean of the College. The student may appeal the decision to the Dean and then to the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs. The Provost’s decision is final. IN NO CIRCUMSTANCES WILL GRADES BE CHANGED AFTER ONE CALENDAR YEAR.”

Other issues such as scholastic dishonesty must also be dealt with according to University regulations and are not simply left up to the discretion of the instructor. (For information on grievances or misconduct, see [www.utsa.edu/infoguide/appendices/e.html](http://www.utsa.edu/infoguide/appendices/e.html).) UTSA stresses the importance of following the “chain of command” when problems arise. If direct attempts to resolve any faculty-student problems are unsuccessful, the instructor should seek the counsel of the Department Chair. The instructor may then be directed to the Office of the Dean or another office such as Student Affairs. If the issue is not informally resolved, the Department Chair will ask the student to submit a written complaint or grievance; the instructor will also be asked to write a response. Then the Chair will respond to the student (with a copy to the instructor and Associate Dean) in writing.

**Student Records and Grades**

Student records, information, and grades are considered confidential and may not be posted publicly. Hence, student work should be returned to directly to the student (and not to a friend, classmate, or family member). Student work cannot be placed in a box outside the office or in any publicly accessible place, including the Department office or mailroom. Any unreturned student work must be saved for a
calendar year. Departing GTAs may make arrangements with Reina Vargas to store unreturned student work. Please read the University policy from the current Information Bulletin.

**Student Records:** The educational records of students are considered to be confidential under both state and federal law. The University’s procedures regarding access to student records, including academic, health center, counseling, financial aid, and discipline records shall be in accordance with the applicable provisions of the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA) and the Texas Public Information Act.

**Absence from Classes**

When research-related travel requires that you miss a class meeting, you must complete and submit a Request for Travel Authorization (RTA) form **12 working days** before your travel. Arrangements or substitutes for covering the missed class(es) must be specified on the form. Please see the Department staff for assistance with this form.

In the case of an unexpected absence due to illness, car trouble, etc., the instructor should notify the Department office staff, who will post an official notice of cancellation on the classroom door. See the Department staff for assistance.

**College of Liberal and Fine Arts Policy on Instructor Absence**

“When an instructor plans to be absent and is unable to fulfill regular teaching duties, it is expected that the instructor will make acceptable arrangements for classes to meet. Acceptable arrangements include asking a qualified instructor in the Department to substitute, inviting a qualified instructor from a department in a related discipline to hold a guest lecture, or arranging in-class activities (e.g. viewing a video, interactive activity, examination, student presentations) to be supervised by a qualified instructor. It may be appropriate for an instructor to assign out-of-class activities during planned absence. However, it is not acceptable for Department or college staff to be asked to supervise a class. Before submitting a Request for Travel Authorization (RTA), the instructor must obtain approval from the Department Chair as to how classes are to be covered during a planned absence.”

Please note that “qualified instructor” means a tenure track faculty member, a non-tenure track lecturer or a Graduate Teaching Assistant who is currently appointed to teach classes as instructor-of-record.

**Instructional Resources**

**UTSA Library**

A form requesting books and other materials to be placed on reserve is available online and at the circulation desk in the library and should be submitted before the beginning of the semester. Videos checked out from the Multimedia Center should also be reserved in advance. Books not in the collection may occasionally be ordered for library acquisition through the Department library liaison. The library also offers instructors and students an excellent Interlibrary Loan service, which is available on the library’s website under “Services.”

Tara Schmidt is the Reference Librarian assigned to our Department. Tara is happy to conduct sessions in the library on research tools for individual classes and answer questions regarding the library’s holdings in English. She may be contacted at 458-4894 or tara.schmidt@utsa.edu.
**Bookstore**
Textbooks should be ordered from the UTSA bookstore at least three months before the beginning of the semester. You will be asked for the author, title, publisher, and ISBN number when ordering texts. Depending on enrollments, complimentary desk copies of textbooks may be obtained from the publisher. Peggy Garner will assist with textbook orders. You are responsible for making sure the books are available to your students and you should check with the bookstore in person before the semester starts.

**Blackboard**

Blackboard is UTSA’s Web-based learning Management System, with capacities for electronic distribution of syllabi, course materials, Chat discussions, etc. **College policy requires that all course section syllabi be posted on Blackboard.** Blackboard may also be used for posting other course materials such as assignments and readings, recording grades and communicating with students. For questions about Blackboard, please contact Diana Amis at blackboard@utsa.edu.

**Department of English Policy on Classroom Behavior**

As instructors, you are committed to maintaining a classroom environment that is respectful to all students and conducive to serious, rigorous, academic learning. Diverse and contrasting viewpoints, lively discussion, and questioning are encouraged and valued within the boundaries of civil behavior that respects the educational objectives of the course, the Department, and the University.

Students are expected to assist in maintaining this environment both through their attitude towards their own work and through their behavior towards the course instructor and other students. To assure all students have the opportunity to benefit from time spent in class, students may not engage in any behavior that distracts from or disrupts course activities. Inappropriate behavior in the classroom shall result, minimally, in a private conference with the instructor and possibly a request to leave the class.

Distracting or inappropriate behavior includes but is not limited to:
- Repeated disregard for policies spelled out on the course syllabus, such as prohibition of mobile phones, PDAs, iPods, etc.
- Excessive, continual chatting with other students, unrelated to course activities, while class is in session.
- Continual interruption of other students during class discussions or lectures.
- Disruption of other students' work time or disruption of lectures.
- Continual challenges to instructor's authority (interrupting, arguing, ongoing disregard for project requirements or course material).
- Insulting, intimidating, or offensive remarks to or physical behavior towards other students or instructor.
- Intentional or repeated damage to equipment and furniture.

**Resolution Procedure:**
1. The instructor will first address the behavior and follow up with a private meeting with the student. Violations of the University's Student Code of Conduct may be immediately referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs. Please also keep the Department Chair informed.
2. If the behavior continues, the instructor will file a written report with the Department Chair and help the student schedule a meeting with the Department Chair or the Associate Dean of the College of Liberal and Fine Arts, preferably before the next class meeting, if possible. The Chair/Dean may inform the student that subsequent deviations from expected classroom behavior shall result in an immediate referral to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs for disciplinary action. Disciplinary action may be pursued in accordance with the Student Code of Conduct as set out in the UTSA Information Bulletin. All students are responsible for knowing the information in the Bulletin. It may be found online at www.utsa.edu/osja/. Copies are also available in the Office of Student Judicial Affairs (UC 2.02.18).

University Policy Concerning Last Week of Classes and Student Study Days

The following paragraph appears in the UTSA Information Bulletin:

Student Study Days

At the end of each Fall and Spring Semester, two days prior to the beginning of the final examination period are designated as Student Study Days. Classes do not meet during Student Study Days. Furthermore, Student Study Days are not to be used as dates on which papers are to be turned in, examinations are to be given, quizzes are to be scheduled, review sessions are to be held, or for any other class-related activities, other than office hours. There are no Student Study Days during the summer semester.

Please note: The University requires that all faculty meet with their students during final exam week at the date and time corresponding to the University's final examination schedule published on ASAP. Please inform your students well ahead of time, preferably at the beginning of the semester, of the date and time of this meeting during finals week. Please include the final exam time and date on your syllabus.

Disabilities Statement in Syllabus

Students requesting accommodation must be registered with Disability Services (http://www.utsa.edu/disability/) and provide the instructor with an official accommodation letter.

Class Attendance

Instructors Note: Please read the following. You do not have to include this information on your syllabus but make sure your course attendance policy is consistent with it. Related information is available at http://www.utsa.edu/hop/chapter5/5-9.html.

Handbook of Operating Procedures - University Regulations - Publication Date: June 16, 2010

Chapter 5 - Students - 5.09 Class Attendance

A. Class Attendance

1. It is the instructor’s responsibility to set forth and communicate to students the course attendance policy in the course syllabus. Unless otherwise stated in the instructor’s course attendance policy or an absence is excused in accordance with this policy, regular attendance at and participation in all meetings of a course for which a student is registered are expected.
2. A student who enrolls for a course and then does not attend is considered absent from class until he or she officially drops the course or until he or she has accumulated an excessive number of absences and is dropped from the class with a grade of "F."

3. When, in the judgment of the instructor, a student has been absent excessively, the instructor may report the absences to the dean of the college in which the course is offered and recommend that the student be dropped from the course with a grade of "F." If the dean approves the recommendation, he or she advises the registrar, who in turn advises the instructor and student of the action taken.

B. Excused Absences

1. An absence may be excused for the following: religious holy days, including travel for that purpose (required by Texas Education Code, Section 51.911), active military service (required by Texas Education Code, Section 51.9111), official university functions, illness or other extenuating circumstances.

2. A student is responsible for requesting an excused absence in writing, providing satisfactory evidence to the instructor to substantiate the excused absence and delivering the request personally to the instructor of each class. Notification must take place no later than five school days before the absence unless such advance notice is not possible, in which case the student must provide notice by the end of the third school day after the absence along with an explanation of why notice could not be sent prior to the absence.

3. When an absence is excused, the instructor shall provide a reasonable time (normally 20 school days) after the absence for the student to complete the assignment or examination. Each instructor should inform the student, at the time the student requests the excused absence from the instructor, of the deadline for completion of the missed assignment or examination. If the absence occurs during final examinations the student may receive an incomplete for up to a year, until the exam is taken, per the Office of the Registrar's "General Academic Regulations."

4. An instructor may appropriately respond if the student who has been granted an excused absence fails to satisfactorily complete the assignment or examination by the deadline provided by the instructor.

C. Student Absences for Official University Functions

1. Faculty or the university employee in charge of university functions or activities for which students will request excused absences shall file a list of students and the dates they request the students to be excused from class with the Office of the Provost. Deans, department chairs and faculty may check any names against the list by contacting the Office of the Provost.

D. Student Absences Due to Military Service

1. A student who is absent from classes due to a call to active military service must provide a copy of his or her military orders to each instructor.

2. A student who has chosen not to withdraw from the university as allowed by Section 54.006 (f) of the Texas Education Code shall be excused. However, as defined by the Texas Administrative Code, Title 19, Part 1, Chapter 4, Subchapter A, Rule 4.9 (d), "the maximum period for which a student may be excused shall be no more than 25% (twenty-five percent) of the total number of class meetings or the contact hour equivalent (not including the final examination period) for the specific course or courses in which the student is currently enrolled at the beginning of the period of active military service."

E. Reporting Illness or Other Extenuating Circumstances

1. The degree to which classroom participation is required and whether or not work missed by a student during an absence may be made up is at the discretion of the instructor. See Section A.1 for additional information.

2. The instructor should adjust attendance/make-up policies in the event the UT System and/or University issues guidelines to cover extraordinary events (e.g. dangerous conditions due to weather or a widespread threat to general health).

F. Disputes may be resolved using the formal appeals process stated in UTSA Information Bulletin, Graduate Catalog, and HOP Chapter 2.40 Administrative Grade Change/Assignment

Useful Numbers

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<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department of English</td>
<td>458-4374</td>
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<tr>
<td>College of Liberal and Fine Arts (Dean's Office)</td>
<td>458-4350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Circulation</td>
<td>458-4574</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library Reserves (Melissa Cadena)</td>
<td>458-6655</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UTSA Bookstore</td>
<td>458-4220</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic Technology</td>
<td>458-4520</td>
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<tr>
<td>University Police</td>
<td>458-4242</td>
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Campus Closure Information
(458-SNOW)
(weather-related emergencies, other disasters)

Personal and Property Safety

Campus Police Emergencies
To report illness, injury, or crime from a mobile phone dial 458-4911 (dialing 911 from your mobile phone will call San Antonio police, who will take much longer to reach you). From a campus phone, dial 911.

Non-Emergencies
For non-emergency issues such as locking your keys and access ID in a classroom, dial 458-4242 from a mobile phone or 4242 from a campus phone.

Students and faculty should keep all valuables (such as purses and cameras) in a secure, preferably locked location. Do not leave valuables in plain sight even behind locked classroom doors.

Students working in classrooms at night and on weekends should practice safe habits, keeping the classroom doors locked and not letting anyone into the classrooms who does not have class access.

Syllabus checklist:

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- Course number and name.
- Instructor’s name and contact information (including email address).
- Instructor’s official office hours and location.
- Requirements that the course fulfills, e.g. core curriculum.
- Brief description of the course’s learning objectives.
- Course prerequisites, if any.
- Detailed grading scheme, including types of exams/assignments and their weight in determining the final grade.
- Schedule of assignments and exams, including the final exam.
- Textbook, reading assignments and/or reading list.
- Course policies the instructor wishes to impose, such as attendance policies, class participation “civility” expectations, late assignment, extra credit, and make up policies.
- UTSA policies and services regarding disabilities and academic dishonesty.
- Upload syllabus for all course sections to Blackboard and to Bluebook
- Send syllabus as WORD or PDF to peggy.garner@utsa.edu.
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