**Department of Religious Studies’ Best Practices Guide**

**for Teaching Assistants and Faculty\***

BEST PRACTICES FOR FACULTY

1. Maintain professionalism in all interactions with students and TAs. Recent elaboration on the meaning of professionalism can be found at the following two places: <https://www.aaup.org/report/statement-professional-ethics> and https://www.ucop.edu/academic-personnel-programs/\_files/apm/apm-015.pdf
2. Meet with TAs on a weekly basis to discuss assignments, lectures, readings, and any issues that may arise.
3. Provide TAs with sufficient guidance on how they ought to conduct sections: e.g. for each individual section faculty ought to provide guidance on the readings they should cover and/or what topics and themes they should emphasize
4. Allow TAs the opportunity to provide feedback on course objectives and delivery
5. Provide clear directions for assignments and the way they ought to be evaluated by TAs, especially with respect to how grades ought to be normalized; ensure that individual assignment grades and final course grades are consistent and fair
6. Actively support and guide TAs when managing challenging or difficult students
7. Abide by UCD’s principles of community, found here: https://occr.ucdavis.edu/poc/

BEST PRACTICES FOR TEACHING ASSISTANTS

1. Maintain professionalism in all interactions with students and faculty.
2. Strive to be the best student in the class. This requires doing all the readings and attending all of the lectures.
3. Any exceptions to doing the course work, attending lectures, holding discussions, or grading assignments need the explicit permission of the faculty member in charge of the course.
4. Avoid physical contact with students and keep office doors open during meetings. One may find UCD specific resources on this issue here: <https://hdapp.ucdavis.edu/>.
5. Abide by UCD’s principles of community, found here: https://occr.ucdavis.edu/poc/

BEST PRACTICES FOR THE TA SUPERVISOR

1. In cases where communication between TAs and the faculty member breaks down, with the help of the chair of the department, the TA supervisor will facilitate effective communication for the purpose of having a successful course.
2. Provide confidential feedback to TAs on their teaching, if TAs request it.
3. Organize TA discussion on effective pedagogical strategies, if TAs request it.
4. On a shared drive, host and organize a repository of documents that facilitate teaching.
5. Abide by UCD’s principles of community, found here: https://occr.ucdavis.edu/poc/