

**Guidelines for the Working Relationship
between
Marquette Theology Faculty
and
Graduate Theology Teaching Assistants**

Faculty Responsibilities :

The teaching assistant program is designed primarily for the benefit not of the faculty, but of the graduate students: to provide them an opportunity to observe different methods and contents in undergraduate teaching, to learn methods of correcting and grading undergraduate student efforts, and to provide financial support in their graduate studies.

In paying for and taking courses from Marquette faculty undergraduate students have a right not only to expect them to teach all of the course sessions from beginning to end, but also to provide their expert assessment of student progress throughout the semester. Therefore, even if T.A.s grade and record daily work and do the initial grading for papers and exams, it is the responsibility of the faculty member to oversee T.A. work and make out grades at least for any major papers and mid-semester and final exams, but especially for computing and entering final course grades before submitting them to the college.

Providing T.A.s an opportunity to teach a session or two in an undergraduate course is an excellent form of preparing future faculty. However, since excessive class preparation would be a heavy burden on graduate students here primarily to study, faculty members may assign a T.A. to teach up to, but not exceeding, 3 class sessions a semester in any of their undergraduate classes, but they must allow the T.A. at least two weeks advanced notice and preparation in order to do so.

In requesting research help from T.A.s in the form of their doing bibliographies, retrieving books from the library, creating documents, etc., faculty members must provide adequate lead-time in making their requests, allowing the T.A. at least 48 hours before beginning the task so that their primary obligation of preparing for and attending their own classes be not compromised.

Confirm with the TA that you can communicate to students his/her email address and/or phone number via your syllabus.

Make sure the TA receives a copy of your syllabus as soon as it is available, and ask him/her to assist you in making sure all reserve materials are put in place at the library.

The key to successful TA relations is setting up and maintaining good lines of communication. Contact your TA and set up an orientation meeting during the week before classes start (their contract starts when ours does). At that meeting you can talk about how you see the job's contours, and inquire about the TA's special interests or expertise; his/her class schedule and any special needs/considerations of which you should be aware. You can figure out office hours, general duties, get to know each other a bit, and, very importantly, set up a regular weekly time for you to sit down and think together about what is coming up in the upcoming week and what needs to be done. Having a regular weekly time is very helpful to the communication issue. You will/should see him/her other times during the week (at class, e.g.) but this regularly-scheduled time really helps keep the bigger picture in view. It also provides a forum

for you to give him/her feedback, raise any issues that need airing, and so forth; and for him/her to do the same.

TA Duties and Responsibilities:

In order to attract high quality graduate students and allow them sufficient time in the week to prepare for and attend their own graduate courses, as well as do research for papers and publication, *full-time* T.A.s can be expected to do research and teaching related work for their assigned faculty member **no more than 12 to 15 hours** in any given week, including the hours they spend observing classes. *Part-time* T.A.s can be expected to do research and teaching related work for their assigned faculty member **no more than 7 to 10 hours** in any given week. T.A.s should not be expected to operate week after week at the upper limit of these hour ranges.

TA s can be expected to attend at least one section per week of each of the classes you are teaching, but the TA's own schedule takes precedence. TAs are expected to take notes and keep up with the readings so that he/she will be in a position to assist students with assignments, reviews, etc. If graduate classes taken by the TA clash with sections you are teaching, ask him/her to come and introduce him/herself early in the course.

The TA may set up 3 office hours per week to be available to meet with and assist students or can be available by appointment. If the TA meets with students somewhere other than your faculty office, ask him/her to set up the office hours at different times than your own. The TAs's office hours do not substitute for the professor's own office hours.

The TA will need to fill out a form enabling him to take out books at your request, and once they fill that out you can have them assist you in getting things out of the library. You can also have him or her do research work for you and bring you back lists of whatever is available.

Professors can also ask TAs to run test review sessions in evenings, show films or be on hand for other sorts of out-of-class time things like that.

With respect to research and professional matters, within the weekly hour allotment you can have the TA proofread and line edit work do research, help with preparations for presentations etc. Any of your professional duties that are germane to your work at MU can be assisted by the TA. You may not ask your TA to assist you in your home.