

# New CA Training



Aleksandra Korolova  
[korolova@cs.stanford.edu](mailto:korolova@cs.stanford.edu)

Please sign in,  
pick up the CTL booklet and handout  
and help yourself to pizza

## Agenda

- University Policies
- Your duties as a CA
- Resources
- Effective Teaching
- Q&A

## Honor Code

- Agreed to by all students and faculty
- Applies to all academic work
- Example Violations
  - Copying and plagiarism
    - Renaming variables in source code
  - Unpermitted collaboration
    - Take home exams
  - Modifying material for a re-grade without instructor's knowledge
  - Unpermitted aid
  - Representing another's work as your own

## Honor Code

- Don't put students in a position to violate the code
- State the type of aid and collaboration permitted on the syllabus and each assignment
- Create a learning environment that reduces the temptation to cheat
  - Don't reuse old assignments
  - Provide plenty of practice material
  - Set intermediate milestones for big projects
- Honor code violations happen
  - If you suspect an Honor Code violation, talk to the professor not the student
  - The Honor Code prohibits penalty grading

## Students with Disabilities

- Student must initiate request for special aid with the Disability Resource Center (not with the CA)
- Typically, students receive extended time on exams, and/or take them in a different place
- Handouts and writing on the board
  - Read what is written on board while you are writing
  - Handouts in electronic format are easier to read
- Lectures
  - Speak to class, not board
  - Lip reading issues – face the class

<http://www.stanford.edu/group/DRC>

## Sexual Harassment

- Unwelcome sexual advances, ..., or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:
  - Implicit or explicit suggestion that submission to or rejection of conduct will factor into academic evaluation
  - Conduct unreasonably interferes with individual's academic environment
- In relationships between individuals in inherently unequal positions (teacher-student, coach-athlete, etc.), the person in the position of greater power bears the primary burden of accountability.

This person is required to notify his/her supervisor so that alternative evaluative arrangements can be made if necessary.

Failure to do so is a violation of the policy.

<http://harass.stanford.edu>

## Questions about University Policies?

- Honor Code
- Students with disabilities
- Sexual Harassment

## Your duties

- 25% CA → 10hr/wk, 2hr/wk office hours
- 50% CA → 20hr/wk, 4hr/wk office hours
  - Students on 50% appointments may register for max 10 units per quarter without prior approval from their adviser, departmental chair, and the dean's office
- Time commitment is an average: some weeks more work/hours, some weeks less
- If you are consistently working more than specified, talk to your professor, Meredith Hutchin (hutchin@cs) or me (korolova@cs)
  - CA - course assistant
  - TA - teaching assistant
  - Same compensation, same time commitment. TA title for those who will teach new material. CA title for others

## Professor's Aid

- Administrivia and course communication
- Homeworks, Exams, Solution Sets
- Grading, grade-tracking
- Office Hours, Sections, Reviews
- Feedback and Suggestions

## Starting the Quarter

- Meet with the professor
  - Goals, duties and expectations
- Set up Communication Means (by 1<sup>st</sup> day of quarter)
  - Website, mailing list, newsgroup
- Course Information
  - Meeting times and location
    - <http://ucomm.stanford.edu/cgi-bin/map/>
  - Teaching Staff (Professor and TAs)
    - Office location, office hours, contact info
  - Course Description
    - Prerequisites, textbooks
  - Policies
    - Late policy, honor code, collaboration policy, grading policy
  - Schedule of exams, major projects, assignments

## Communication With Students

- Many different flavors
  - Web page
  - Class email list
  - Newsgroup
  - CourseWork
  - In class announcements
- Method not as important as establishing a consistent means of communication
  - Your professor might already have a preferred method
- Someone has to maintain it
- For setting up, go to <http://courses.stanford.edu>

## Email Communication

- Students will email you a lot
- Respond in a timely manner
- But manage the load
  - Divide the work among the course staff
  - Set expectations for email turnaround time
  - Suggest for students to come to office hours, if the question is difficult to answer by email
  - Compile and make available answers to FAQs

## Office Hours

- Gates TA office area (B24, B26)
  - Two offices per room
  - Xenon 'taoffice' - reserve room for entire quarter (or email Meredith)
  - If you don't have a key to the CS Department, ask your instructor to e-mail key@cs
  - Exterior basement doors locked after 5:30pm and on weekends. Remind students to carry Stanford ID cards
- Meyer library, computer clusters
- When to hold them?
  - Your convenience?
  - Students' convenience?
- Take Office Hours seriously
  - Don't cancel last-minute, or change the time every week
  - Be on-time
  - Adjust hours according to students needs

## Office Hours

- Inform students of times/locations
  - Through website and mailing list, by 2nd week of class
- Encourage Attendance
  - May write a note on a struggling student's problem set
- Preparation is key
  - Attend lectures to know what's going on
  - Read and know how to do the assignment for that week
  - Prepare hints or milestones for completing assignments
- Be open to suggestions and feedback

## Leading Sections

- Pick a time that makes sense
  - Same time as class
  - Multiple section times for a large class
- Preparation is key
  - Attend lectures to know what's going on
  - Read and know how to do the assignment for that week
  - Make useful handouts
  - Announce in advance what you are presenting
- What to present varies by class
  - Present new material or go into more detail than covered in lecture
  - Workout through problems similar to those in lecture/homework
  - Go over homework solutions and common mistakes
  - Be a resource for each other when preparing material
- Do what's most beneficial for students' learning

## Grading

- Should be done in a timely manner
  - Aim to return the graded problem set before the next one is due
  - Pick a weekly time when you grade together
- Should be consistent and fair
  - The same person grades a question across all students
  - Agree on grading criteria beforehand, after some pre-grading
- Point distribution
  - 0, +1, +2, not 75.25, 75.5
  - Provide grade statistics to students
- Provide solution sets and list common mistakes
  - If professor hesitant to post them on the website, then provide hard copies, email, or password-protect

## Re-grading

- Permissive
  - Point-monger paradise - TA nightmare
- Risky Game
  - Reserve the right to re-grade *everything*
- Bureaucratic Nightmare
  - Written justification for re-grade
- Risky-bureaucratic-nightmare-game
  - The best of all worlds?
- Don't re-grade with the student looking over your shoulder (unless it's an addition mistake)
  - Listen to their explanation, then ask to leave the graded work with you

## Grade-tracking

- Excel
- CourseWork
- Google Docs and Spreadsheets
- Nick Parlante's Marge tool  
<http://www.stanford.edu/~nick/marge/Readme.html>

## Professor-CA Relationship

- Meet together often
  - Open, honest, and respectful dialogue makes life easier
  - Discuss who is doing what and when
  - Never assume something unassigned will get done
- Seek and communicate student feedback
  - Students tend to be more candid with a CA than with a professor
  - Solicit feedback early -- ask at Office Hours
  - Communicate any feedback tactfully

## Evaluations

- No official department evaluation
  - but plans for it in discussion
- Ask for feedback and suggestions
  - In office hours or through a short feedback form
  - Ask fellow CAs to attend your section and give feedback
- CTL evaluations
  - <http://ctl.stanford.edu/TA/>
  - Small Group Evaluations
  - Online Mid-quarter evaluations
  - DVD recording of a section, with subsequent one-on-one discussion

## SCPD Courses

- Dress appropriately for video-taped sections
- Give a phone number at which you are reachable during office hours
  - Might prefer giving office number over a personal cell phone number
- Send handouts, graded work and exams promptly via the courier boxes
  - One box is in Gates 169
- Watch yourself on video to see how you can improve

## Counseling Students

- At times, students may come to you seeking help in matters beyond the scope of your academic duties
- Offer support
  - By listening, expressing concern, understanding and empathy
- Know your limits -- your responsibilities are academic
  - Make issues known to the professor
  - Suggest tutoring and academic support resources
    - <http://ual.stanford.edu/ARS/index.html>
  - Suggest Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
    - <http://vaden.stanford.edu/caps/index.html>
  - Suggest The Bridge Peer Counseling Center
    - <http://www.stanford.edu/group/bridge/>

## Questions about your duties?

- Administrivia and course communication
- Homeworks, Exams, Solution Sets
- Grading, grade-tracking
- Office Hours, Sections, Reviews
- Feedback and Suggestions
- SCPD, Struggling students

## Resources: CS department

- Nikkie Salgado [nikkie@cs](mailto:nikkie@cs) (Gates 187)
  - Copy Code
  - Classroom reservations
  - Borrowing Equipment
    - 2-days notice
    - TV, VCR, Projector, Computer, etc.
- Claire Stager [stager@cs](mailto:stager@cs) (Gates 182)
  - TA Textbook Library
    - Quarterly loans
  - Food and drinks for midterm and final grading

## Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL)

<http://ctl.stanford.edu>

- Teaching handbook
- Classroom evaluations and videotaping
- Focused training sessions
- Teaching tips and handouts
- Lunchtime lectures and workshops

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## CTL Workshops

### Writing a Compelling Teaching Statement

Friday, October 2, noon-1:30pm. Sweet Hall, room 303

Writing effectively about your teaching is an important skill that you will need for the academic job application process, grant submissions, and your future academic position. In this workshop, we will first discuss a range of conceptual and organizational principles that will help you organize your reflections and thoughts about teaching. In the second part, we will analyze concrete examples of teaching statements and outline an action plan that will help you assemble the materials needed for your teaching statement, teaching portfolio, or job interviews. Space is limited. [Register here.](#)

### Getting Feedback

Tuesday, October 6, 3:15-4:45pm. Sweet Hall, room 029

You know what you are teaching, but what are your students learning? Beyond the traditional homework, exam, and end-of-quarter evaluation, there are a number of simple tools you can use to fine-tune your teaching and determine what your students are actually learning. The results will improve the experience of your students in the classroom as well as your end-of-quarter evaluations. Registration required. [Register here.](#)

For more information, contact [marcelo@stanford.edu](mailto:marcelo@stanford.edu).

### Teaching Statement Clinic Session

Friday, October 16, noon-1pm. Sweet Hall, room 303

This hands-on feedback session is open to any graduate student who has already written a draft teaching statement either for a course, another workshop, or on her/his own. Bring three copies of your draft and receive feedback from CTL staff and your colleagues. Space is limited. For more information and to register, contact [Marijtte Denman](#).

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## SUTACS

<http://sutacs.stanford.edu>

Repository of useful CA information

- New CA information
- Course Assistant info sheet
- Mass grading tips
- Links to policies and guidelines
  
- CS Educational Affairs  
Meredith Hutchin  
[hutchin@cs.stanford.edu](mailto:hutchin@cs.stanford.edu)
  
- CA mentor  
Aleksandra Korolova  
[korolova@cs.stanford.edu](mailto:korolova@cs.stanford.edu)

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## Other Opportunities

- Seminar on Teaching Introductory CS (CS 198)
- Centennial and Forsythe Teaching Awards
- Ph.D. with distinction in teaching

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## Questions about Resources?

- CS department
- CTL
- SUTACS
- Fellow CAs

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## Effective Teaching

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## What Makes a Great CA?

- Preparation
- Knowledge of material
- Communication skills
- Accessibility and availability
- Concern for students' learning
- A good relationship with the professor
- Organization

## What Makes a Great CA?

- **Passive Assistant**
  - Less work
- **Active Partner**
  - Much more enjoyable and rewarding
  - Establish good relationships
  - Students prefer CAs that care
  - Doesn't imply a major time sink
- Be an active partner, and enjoy your time CA'ing!