

Teaching Lessons: What I Have Learned Teaching and Administrating Classes

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Preparing for Class

- Teaching a new course Takes lots of time
 - Amortize prep time
 - Teach the same class a few times
 - Add a new course every 1-2 years to repertoire
 - Ask Colleagues for their notes
 - Read them and adapt them
 - Never use them directly!
- Syllabus
 - What to include
 - Grade weights for exams, assignments, etc.
 - Reminder about academic honesty
 - Explicitly mention of copying code
 - Stick with what you promised
 - Number of Assignments, weight, etc.

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Consistency

- **Make a plan and stick to it**
 - Plan Schedule In Advance (before term starts)
 - Set exams and projects dates
 - Establish policies
 - Attendance – do you care if they are there?
 - Lateness – no need to take late assignments
 - Regrades – lets students cool off
- **Your reputation is your word**
 - Keep any promises you make to students
 - Relaxing an announced policy is as much of a problem as making it tougher

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Graded Materials

- **Exams**
 - Start with a relatively easy question
 - Have a TA or a colleague take it before you give it
 - Make old exams available – they will get out
- **Assignments/Projects**
 - Stick to your schedule
- **Return graded material promptly**
 - One week is a long time to wait

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Class

- **Powerpoint is**
 - Great for organizing your ideas
 - Useless for presenting them to students
- **Silence is a useful didactic technique**
 - Class is not radio, dead air is a useful feature
 - Lets students minds catch up
 - Allows students time to formulate responses
- **If you don't know something, admit it**
 - Promise to find the answer
 - Follow through on your promise

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Be Professional in Handling Business

- **Office hours**
 - Schedule several different times during week
 - Often good: right after class
 - Another time that doesn't conflict with the first one
 - Make sure you show up on time
 - Post a notice if you will miss a time
- **Questions**
 - Don't tell students a question is dumb!
 - Students are still learning the jargon
 - The question they ask may not be the one they were trying to ask
- **Email**
 - Use it when appropriate
 - Remember limits of the media
 - Don't reply too fast, students will use it as a crutch

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Possible Discussion Questions

- Why are you at (considering) a teaching institution?
- What are your biggest fears about teaching?
- Describe a great teacher you have had and what made them great?
- What do you think is the hardest thing about teaching?

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