

*First days of class are not just a day to read over the course syllabus. An effectively run first day of class will set the tone for several classes to come. In addition to “icebreakers”, discussions of aims and goals of the course, setting **expectations** on the first day of class is one of the most crucial things you will do with your students.*

Below are three types of expectations to think about and discuss with students.

1. What are some things that you expect from your students?
Things to think about:
 - Before they come into your tutorial?
 - During tutorial?
 - In their assigned work?
 - Interactions (in class, e-mails, group work, etc)

2. What can your students expect from you as the instructor or TA?
Things to think about:
 - Professionalism?
 - In discussion sections?
 - In their assigned work?
 - Interactions (in class, e-mails, group work, etc)

3. Turn it over to them! Ask your students what they expect from you, (and what they expect of their peers).

This third point is very important. By allowing the students to help create classroom rules, you provide them with an opportunity to feel more invested and have a sense of ownership of the class. It also allows for the instructor to discuss with students what kinds of expectations are realistic.

On the following two pages you will find a list of expectations that was generated by Western University Philosophy GTAs in the September 5th and 6th, 2013 “Crash Course in TAing for Philosophy at Western” workshops. Please feel free to select expectations from this list in establishing your own classroom rules and expectations.

What can your students expect from you?

Logistics/Administrative

- I will be on time to tutorial.
- I will come to tutorial prepared.
- I will engage the material in an effective manner.
- I will grade their work in a timely manner.
- I will be available to meet and discuss their work with them (within reason).
- I will be available for consultation.
- I will respond to their e-mails/questions within 24 hours.
- What are reasonable hours to get consultation on work (e.g., email within 48 hrs of an assignment's due date, when office hours are).
- I will practice fair anonymous grading procedures.
- Adaptability.
- Competent and prepared knower of things. If I don't know things, I'll let you know, but I will find the answer for you.
- Guidance and clear expectations for graded works (e.g., rubric given ahead of time).

Tutorial Environment

- I will create a safe environment for everyone.
- I will create a positive, respectful environment with them to facilitate their learning.
- I will facilitate discussion (not dictate information like in a lecture).
- I will not carry the discussion for them. (I'm there to facilitate their discussion).
- I will be respectful.
- I will respect various viewpoints.
- I won't make them feel stupid, since there is no such thing as a stupid question.
- I will have ground rules for the tutorial that will apply to you, as well as to me.

Learning

- You can expect me to be available and committed to their learning and improvement.
- I want each of you to succeed.
- I will cater to different learning styles and different abilities.
- I will learn from them as well / (in addition to them learning from me).
- I will help them consolidate class material.
- I will take into account how comfortable they participating are since they will be marked on participation. (Reflective learners are less likely to participate).
- I will be a resource for them, and help them find additional/secondary resources.
- When grading, I will provide them with detailed constructive feedback so that they can improve their work.
- I will give them advice on tackling assignments and on how to approach their readings, since this may be their first time reading these sorts of texts.
- You can expect me to help you see the relevance of our material outside of the philosophical context.

What do you expect from your students?

Logistics/Administrative

- Do your readings before tutorial (or at least most of the time).
- Be prepared to discuss the material. Come to class with questions.
- Arrive to tutorials on time. If you are late, don't be disruptive when entering.
- If you're eating in class, you need to clean up after yourself.
 - When eating, try not to be disruptive.
- Be attentive in class.
- Don't use your cell phones or Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, etc in class.
- Hand in your work on time.
- Be comfortable asking me (the TA) for help.
- Follow directions.
- I expect you to read the emails I send to you.
- Be reachable on the university's email address.
- Fulfill the minimal course requirements.
- Be aware of grading policy and procedure.
- Do not plagiarize; know how to properly cite work.

Tutorial Environment

- Be respectful of one another and each other's viewpoints and opinions.
- To participate in discussion to the extent that you feel comfortable.
 - For those who don't like to participate, try to challenge yourself to participate.
 - For those who really like to participate I expect you to monitor how much you are talking. Be sure you allow others a turn to speak.
- Respectful during discussion of others and their opportunities to speak.
- Don't interrupt people.
- To engage in respectful discourse with one another.
- Be mindful of others and the academic context.
- Be respectful of me (the TA) and the other students.

Learning

- I expect you to monitor your learning. If you're not performing where you like, you need to ask me for help.
- Tutorial is the place to get things wrong. I expect you will ask questions in tutorial if you're unsure about something. It's better to get something wrong or be confused in tutorial, rather than on a homework assignment or exam.
- Practice critical thinking outside of the classroom.
- Come to me if you need any help or advice on your work.
- Go over the comments they receive on assignments or exams.
- Be aware of what has already been covered in class, and is to be covered in tutorial.
- Understand that philosophy is not purely subjective, or just giving your opinions.