

## Graduate Student Instructor Orientation Session Descriptions

### **1. Creating a Welcoming and Supportive Climate from Day One**

Audience: Instructors of record, TAs who facilitate recitation/lab/discussion/studio sections

Description: Whether you have taught before or this is your first time teaching, this session will help you create an inclusive classroom climate from the start of your course. You will explore strategies for: (1) getting to know your students; (2) calibrating your instruction to CMU students; (3) creating a classroom climate that welcomes and supports learning for all students; (4) setting appropriate expectations; and (5) motivating and engaging students with course content from day one.

Learning Objectives for Seminar:

- Recognize diversity of student backgrounds and cultural norms for teaching at CMU
- Acquire strategies for getting to know your students
- Develop strategies for establishing credibility, authority, and expectations, while balancing approachability
- Explain connections among student learning, motivation, and classroom climate
- Identify and implement strategies for creating an inclusive classroom environment that supports learning for all students

### **2. Grading and Delivering Feedback (two versions offered simultaneously)**

- a. ...on Quantitative Assignments (Problem Sets, Code, etc.)***
- b. ...on Writing Assignments (Papers, Lab Reports, etc.)***

Audience: Graders, Instructors of record, TAs who facilitate recitation/lab/discussion/studio sections

Description: How can you grade efficiently, effectively, and fairly? How can you simultaneously give your students feedback that will maximize their learning? These sessions will focus on evidence-based strategies for grading and providing feedback on: (a) quantitative work, such as problem sets and code OR (b) writing assignments or short-answer exam questions. In both sessions, participants will discuss the relationship between grading and feedback, strategies for grading efficiently and fairly, the characteristics of effective feedback, and research on the impacts of different types of feedback on student learning. Through hands-on exercises, participants will practice analyzing and improving examples of feedback on student work. Participants will also practice grading and providing feedback using rubrics.

Learning Objectives for seminar:

- Identify characteristics of effective feedback
- Use a rubric to grade student work and provide feedback to improve student learning

- Describe strategies for grading effectively, efficiently, and fairly
- Practice providing effective and efficient feedback

### **3. Working Well One-on-One with Students (offered simultaneously with Session 4)**

Audience: TAs who hold office hours, Graders, Instructors of record, TAs who facilitate recitation/lab/discussion/studio sections

Description: This session will focus on strategies for working effectively with students one-on-one in a variety of teaching contexts. What strategies can you employ to best support and advance student learning when interacting with students individually during studio, lab, recitation, and/or office hours sessions? How can you handle the difficult interactions that may arise during office hours or other one-on-one interactions? We will discuss effective approaches and campus resources to support you and your students. Then you will have an opportunity to practice putting these strategies to use.

Learning Objectives for Seminar:

- Identify challenges and benefits of working with students one-on-one
- Practice strategies for interacting effectively with students one-on-one to advance their learning.
- Describe appropriate responses to problematic or difficult interactions arising during office hours or other one-on-one interactions with students.

### **4. Conducting Productive and Engaging Discussions (offered simultaneously with Session 3)**

Audience: Instructors of record, TAs who facilitate recitation/lab/discussion/studio sections

Description: How can you design effective discussion activities for your students? What facilitation strategies maximize student participation, engagement, and learning outcomes? Participants will learn about the factors that influence student learning and engagement during discussions and acquire a toolkit of active learning methods for structuring productive discussions. Through hands-on activities, participants will practice strategies for both designing and facilitating effective discussion activities, such as designing discussion questions, selecting discussion activities aligned with learning objectives, and identifying facilitation strategies to address common concerns about student participation and teaching inclusively.

Learning Objectives for Seminar:

- Acquire a toolkit of active learning techniques for structuring discussion activities
- Describe effective strategies for preparing for and facilitating discussions
- Practice designing effective discussion questions
- Identify teaching strategies for overcoming challenges associated with conducting discussions, such as fostering student participation and teaching inclusively.