To Teaching Fellows.

Hi everyone,

Welcome to the course!

There are some things you should be prepared for when teaching this course:

1. (a) Your teaching assignment is paid by the Boston university Summer Term (not by the department) and that means your teaching assignment comes first, i.e. before all other of your activities!

Please manage your plans correctly (i.e. plan your activities in accordance with the schedule – if you had already made plans which might interfere with your teaching assignment we will discuss it on the first meeting; of course, the department makes an effort to accommodate your other activities, but when the schedule is set any deviations can be done *only* after consultation with the lecturer).

BTW: an ability to plan ahead is #1 on the list of HRs when they hire new personal.

(b) Since this is a paid position, all responsibilities and activities related to this job (see below) are mandatory. If some of you does not need a financial support, please inform the Department Chair as soon as possible; there are other students who are searching for this kind of a support.

(c) Working as a TF means that you are signing up for the responsibilities described below – starting from our first meeting.

(d) **Your mission is helping students to master physics (and to demonstrate the best example of a professional behavior).**

The details will be discussed on the first meeting (follow to the next page for the general description of your duties).

2. (a) I understand that you may have taking some summer classes and want to do some research, and it is absolutely fine as long as id does not affect your teaching responsibilities.

(b) There are no lab TFs or discussion TFs; all TFs are equal and everyone is responsible for closely the same amount of work which includes:

* teaching a lab section, entering the grades as soon as it is done

(depending on the funding - together with another TF, or LA, or both).

- if you have a strong preference which section to teach, we will discuss it on our first meeting

* proctoring exams (see the syllabus)

* grading exams (on the day of an exam, right after the exam)

* entering the exam grades, alphabetizing the exams (done by proctors of the day)

* holding office hours (3 hours a week)

* managing online communication with the students in your section (using Piazza; usually during the office hours, but also when students send you an email)

* entering the grades for your students on BlackBoard

* getting ready for teaching your section by practicing the labs exercises BEFORE each meeting and discussing the possible issues at a meeting (the time we spend on preparation is a part of the time we are paid for – be ready for a job is an important feature of professional ethics); basically, every TF needs to do each lab before the day of the lab to anticipate issues students may have during the lab.

* attending weekly meetings (usually every Friday 12 pm to 1 pm - you should not plan office hours or other activities for the time of the meeting, occasionally a meeting might be held on a different day).

For the first meeting

As soon as everyone has the access to Blackboard, webassign and piazza (learn.bu.edu webassihn.net piazza.com), everyone can start online communication with students (most of the TFs may have the access already but sometimes it might take up to 2 days to process the request).

Please read the syllabus and the manuals for the first two labs.

Please search for the typos and unclear sentences and let me know as soon as you find it.

Please feel free to comment make suggestions ask questions.

Our teaching strategy

1. Our goal is to provide students with the best learning experience, helping then to get the deepest understanding of the material, and highest possible grade. We will not give away a good grade, we will be helping to get it, the rest is up to students.

2. In the classroom a TF becomes a tutor working with 24 students. Normally, students should work in small groups no more than 3 students in a group. Your goal is to help them to navigate through the assignment. Every assignment has steps, so you have to make sure all the steps are done, and done correctly, and done with the full understanding. In the end of a lab, ideally, all students have the work done, and every mistake has been corrected, so everyone automatically gets a 100 for the lab, and your grading is done (you just have to enter the grade in blackboard). I recommend to have a checklist for each student, so during the class you can check all the work and in the end you have the whole picture.

3. It is your responsibility to make sure all students are involved. If you see a person doing nothing, try to activate the student by asking questions relevant to the task at the hand. If you see the group just finished a part of the assignment and it is correct, you can ask a question to check that the students got the understanding of what they did. If you see a group struggling with the work, you should help.

4. Help may come in different forms, it is on you to choose the most efficient (comes with practice). The best way usually is to start from a question about definitions or laws involved. Then you can ask a question about what students tried, what they achieved, what was difficult, what question they may have, what can be tried to do now. You can point at a specific mistake and tell that that is a mistake, and why that is a mistake. You can even tell what exactly they should do – as a last resort to make them move ahead. Remember, you are a tutor, not a grader.

5. If you see many students struggle with the same issue, you can stop individual work, and provide a short presentation to the whole class and then let them work individually again.

6. If students finished all the work and there is some time left, you should offer students an option to stay and to use the remaining time as an office hour (to work on homework assignment).