Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering
Teaching Assistants (TAs) Workshop
August 30, 2017

Agenda
11:15AM   ECE department staff introduction
11:40AM   Review of TA responsibilities by Dr. Godrich
12:00PM   TA address from the department chair by Dr. Mandayam
12:10AM   Introduction by Dr. Zoran Gajic
12:20PM   TA Committee address by Dr. Anand Sarwate
1:00PM    LUNCH
1:30PM    TA quick guide to Sakai by Dr. Godrich
2:00PM    Q&A
2:15PM    Lab training (Mr. Steve Orbine @ EE Labs)
ECE Department Staff

- Ms. Arletta Hosciulowicz, Department Administrator (arletta.hos@rutgers.edu)
- Ms. Christy Lafferty, Graduate Assistant (ecegradinfo@gmail.com)
- Ms. Tea Akins, Business Assistant (tea.akins@rutgers.edu)
- Ms. Ora Titus, Department & Undergraduate Administrative Assistant (ora.titus@rutgers.edu)
- Ms. Evelyn Gora-Evens, (eg522@soe.rutgers.edu)
- Mr. Steve Orbine, Electronics Analyst/Undergrad Lab Supervisor (orbine@rutgers.edu)
- Mr. John Scafidi, Systems Administrator (scafidi@rutgers.edu)

Quick Overview of TAs Responsibilities and Undergraduate Courses Issues
Why being a great TA is good for you

- Keeps you on the job
- Students are rating TAs and so do instructors. This is a great line on your resume especially if you plan for an academic career.
- Being successful in any job you are taking is important. It could also gratifying when you are taking part in teaching younger students and contribute to their professional growth...

Getting ready: Course assignment

- You will be assigned as a course TA for fall or/spring semester.
- Course numbers format is 14:332:XXX:XX (UNIT:SUB:CRSE: SECT), where CRSE represents the course number and SECT represent a section number unique to each lab/recitation
- TAs support courses with grading, instructor support material, exam proctoring, management of course site, grades posting, students support, and labs
- TAs should reach to the course instructor for specific course responsibilities and instructor expectations.
TA responsibilities

• TA are required to work 15hr per week which includes:
  – Office hours 2hour per week
  – Preparation time and grading 4hours
  – In class time per course section (3hours) 6hours – 9hours
• At the end of semester, bring 3 lab reports/final exams (with highest, average and lowest grade for each assigned to you section)
• Use required ECE Cover Page for Lab Reports

• Office Hours:
  – Extend office hours when needed
  – Have office hours twice a week
  – Have special office hours before project deadlines / final exams
  – Do not hold office hours on Wednesdays during Colloquia (10am-12pm)
• Your TA Office is shared with other TAs, room will be assigned by Arletta once you provide your schedule (Arletta will send a Google Doc on September 1)

TA responsibilities

• When attending conference:
  – you must discuss this with course faculty
  – find TA replacement for the lab, and
  – inform students
• If you are teaching lab that is not in your expertise:
  – inform Dr. Gajic and TA Oversight Committee
  – talk to faculty who’s teaching the course
  – contact TA who have strong expertise in that area and ask for help and materials
• Inform Dr. Godrich, Steve Orbine, and course faculty if you are having problem with over-crowded labs or lab equipment issues (ex. not enough equipment, malfunctioning equipment)
TA responsibilities

- Attend TAP trainings and workshops provided by the Graduate School [http://tap.rutgers.edu](http://tap.rutgers.edu)
- Attend mandatory semi-annual ECE TA meetings with TA Oversight Committee (September 13 at 10am in CORE-AUD)
- Contact the TA Committee Members if you are having difficulties as a TA:
  - Dr. Zoran Gajic: zgajic@soe.rutgers.edu
  - Dr. Yicheng Lu: ylu@soe.rutgers.edu
  - Dr. Anand Sarwate: anand.sarwate@rutgers.edu
  - Dr. John McGarvey: johnmcg@soe.rutgers.edu
  - Or UG Director, Dr. Hana Godrich: godrich@soe.rutgers.edu
  - Or ECE Graduate Program Coordinator, Christy Lafferty: ecegradinfo@gmail.com (room EE 134)

TA Checklist:

- If your I-20, passport expired, bring new one
- Complete RT-100 and bring to Arletta for signature (final deadline is September 15)
- Update your address, direct deposit and W-4 at [https://my.rutgers.edu](https://my.rutgers.edu) Employee Self-Service
- Attend UHR Benefit Orientation on Thursday, August 31 at 12:15pm at Scott Hall, room 123, College Ave Campus
- Submit health insurance paperwork to UHR by September 15
TAs responsibilities: General guidelines

• TAs specific course responsibilities will be determined by the course instructor and may include:
  – Assignment and exams grading
  – Developing course support material
  – Exam proctoring
  – Management of course site
  – Posting grades posting
  – Students support (office hours, assignment solutions, exams solutions)
  – TAs might be assigned to recitation classes
  – TAs might be responsible for running labs

TAs responsibilities: General guidelines

• While each TA assignment might be different there are some general responsibilities that apply to all TAs
TAs responsibilities: General guidelines

- **Protecting students privacy:** You are accountable for handling student records in accordance with the law and University policy (https://uec.rutgers.edu/programs/ferpa-student-privacy/for-faculty-and-staff/).
  - **Posting Grades:** grades cannot be published publicly, either by the student’s name, student identification number or social security number.
  - **Returning Assignments:** Do not leaving personally identifiable, graded papers unattended for students to view. Any graded papers (exams, quizzes, and homework) should be handed only after student identity is properly identified (with student ID or other official ID).
  - **Student Correspondence:** instructors/TAs may notify students of their individual grades via email, provided the email is sent from a University email account, to a University email account. Notification of grades may also be made via the use of a course management website.
  - **Access to Other Student Records:** Instructors may not access other student academic records without demonstrating a “legitimate educational interest” in such information.

TAs responsibilities: General guidelines

- **Students are your customers - treat them with respect.**

- **Students support and grades appeal:** Students should be given an opportunity for appeal for a grade on any assignment and final grade. Please make sure you are available during office hours to address any appeal within a week or two.

- **Posting grades:** grade posting deadlines will be determined by the course instructors but generally they should be posted no later than two weeks after due date.
TAs responsibilities: General guidelines

– **Grading**: Grade assignment/exams fairly and communicate with students clarify on the reason for final grade

– **Get to class or office hours on time**: Make sure to be in the lab 10 minutes before lab starts; make sure you get to recitation on time; make sure to be in your office during office hours. In case you cannot make it – please communicated with your students to let them know

TAs responsibilities: General guidelines

– **Communication with students**: make sure you communicate clearly with the students and important information on grading, grading criteria, due dates for assignment, assignment submission requirements,

– **Communicate with the course instructor and the department**: make sure to let the instructor and department know of any travel plans, issues you might have with your assignments, issues with students etc.
TAs responsibilities: Labs and more

- **Lab assignments and grading policies:** should be clearly explained to the students in the first lab and given in writing. Updated information should be posted on any course management platform used for the course, such as Sakai.

- **Lab schedule:** please communicate with students as for at the beginning of the semester via email. Class roster includes students’ emails. Access to the class Roster is available through: [https://sims.rutgers.edu/rosters/](https://sims.rutgers.edu/rosters/). You can access the roster using your RUID and password. If you cannot see your course please contact Mr. John Scafidi (scafidi@rutgers.edu).

TAs responsibilities: Labs and more

- Make sure to open a Sakai site for the lab. Mr. John Scafidi (scafidi@rutgers.edu) could assist with it, if needed. Please provide the instructor and Ms. Arletta Hosclilowicz (ah860@soe.rutgers.edu) access to the site.

- Be in the lab 10 minutes prior to the starting time. You will need to get a key to the lab from Mr. Steve Orbine (orbine@rutgers.edu). Please make sure to make all arrangements in advance. Students will not have access to the lab without the TAs present.
TAs responsibilities: Labs and more

• Make sure all required equipment for the experiment is available and in working conditions.

• All equipment should be securely stored and locked at the end of each lab. It is the TA’s responsibility to make sure that no equipment is missing at the end of the lab.

• In any case of missing or damaged equipment please contact Mr. Steve Orbine (orbine@rutgers.edu).

TAs responsibilities: Labs and more

• TAs need to get to the lab well prepared and support questions from the students. Please use the first few weeks of the semester to do all labs.

• Mr. Steve Orbine (orbine@rutgers.edu) will hold training sessions. Please make sure to register to one of them.

• All lab TAs have to go through lab safety training. Please contact Mr. Steve Orbine (orbine@rutgers.edu) for details on how to register for a safety training session. You will not be able to teach the lab without passing the training session.
TAs responsibilities: Labs and more

• All reports handed in by students should include a standard cover page. Please contact Ms. Arletta Hoscilowicz (room EE124; email: ah860@soe.rutgers.edu) to get the template for the cover page.

• Individual grades for labs should be posted promptly. Please coordinate with the course instructor the grading policy and grade submission requirements. In any case, grades should not be posted later than two weeks after lab report due date.

TAs responsibilities: Labs and more

• Ms. Arletta Hoscilowicz will post periodic surveys for students on the lab site for anonymous feedback.

• Rutgers ECE program is ABET accredited. There are some steps needed to document that the course objectives are being met. Please save sample reports for each lab that demonstrate low, medium and high performance. Please email digital copies of these lab reports to Ms. Ora Titus (ora.titus@rutgers.edu).
TAs responsibilities: Labs and more

- In case of TA planned absence (due to participation in conference or other reasons, known in advance) please make sure to let the course instructor and the Graduate Program Director, Prof. Zoran Gajic (gajic@ece.rutgers.edu) know as early as possible.

- You will need to coordinate with other TAs in your course to replace you on the day of absence. If you cannot make it to class in short notice please make sure to notify the students, the instructor, and the department by emailing Ms. Ora Titus (ora.titus@rutgers.edu) and Ms. Arletta Hoscilowicz (ah860@soe.rutgers.edu)

Grading

- It is important that grading policies are clearly explained to the students at the beginning of the semester and posted on the course management site (Sakai or other).

- Please make sure due dates are stated clearly and policy for late submission is well known.

- Please make sure that a fair grading strategy is applied. The grading strategy should be coordinated and approved by the course instructor. It should be detailed in the syllabus and reviewed with students frequently during the course.
Grading

• In a multiple section course please make sure to coordinate the grading policy with all other TAs. Grading should be consistent across all sections.

• Please provide students with feedback for their work.

Grading: Policies on absence and missed assignments

– Course policy should detail make-up policies for assignments. If a student has a verified excused absence, he/she should be allowed to make up for an assignment.

– Students should inform you within the first two week of any absences and reason for absence. You should refer them to Dean of Student office @ B100 (http://deanofstudents.rutgers.edu/) for an Absence Verification letter.
Grading: Policies on absence and missed assignments

- If the absence of a student is repeated, or lengthy such that the student cannot make up missed work in a timely manner, the student should see a dean in the SOE Office of Academic Services @ EN B100; [http://soe.rutgers.edu/oas/contactus](http://soe.rutgers.edu/oas/contactus) to discuss options of withdrawing from one or more classes.

- Absences longer than 2 weeks or for chronic health conditions, students should be referred to the ECE department Undergraduate Program Director, Prof. Hana Godrich (godrich@soe.rutgers.edu) for advising on available options

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Reporting Grades

- All TAs are expected to submit assignment, quizzes and exams grades no later than two weeks after due dates.

- **Final grades:** finals grades submission due date in the fall semester is around the beginning of January and for the spring semester it around mid-May. Please check with Ms. Arletta Hoscilowicz (ah860@soe.rutgers.edu) for grade submission deadline. Grades can be submitted electronically either through the Roster or Sakai. **After the grades due dates you will not be able to submit grades electronically**
Students Issues

• Any issue with students in class should be reported to the Instructor, the Undergraduate Program Director and the Graduate Program Director. Please email all with details about the issue before confronting a student.

• Students’ Academic Integrity Issues:
  – If you believe that an undergraduate student has committed a violation of academic integrity, please follow the instruction available on: http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/resources-for-instructors/. More information can be found at: AIPolicy.

• Students’ Academic Integrity Issues:
  – Please make sure to contact the course instructor and the Undergraduate Program Director, Prof. Hana Godrich (godrich@soe.rutgers.edu) with the details and CC Dean Ilene Rosen (ilrosen@soe.rutgers.edu). We will guide you through the process. Please do so before you speak with the student.
  – Additional information on Academic integrity and detecting plagiarism can be found at: http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/resources-for-instructors/.
Students with Disabilities

- The Office of students with Disabilities (ODS) handles any special accommodations needed for students with disabilities. Federal legislation mandates that the University provide reasonable accommodations that afford equal opportunity for all students.

  - **Verification of Disability**: confirmation of the student’s disability will be given by ODS. The office will provide the student with a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) verifying his or her disability, and detailing options for accommodations needed in class and/or in testing situations. The student may then share this letter with the TA during office hours and discuss how accommodations will be implemented.

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Students with Disabilities

- **Confidentiality**: It is essential that disability information be kept confidential. At no time should the class be informed that a student has a disability, except at the student’s request. All information that shared with a TA is to be used specifically for arranging reasonable accommodations for the course of study. At that time, arrangement of accommodations can be discussed in private.
Students with Disabilities

- **Receiving a Request for Accommodations**: The LOA will be signed by the student’s coordinator in the ODS and detail the required arrangement for the student. Although a student may request an academic adjustment at any time, the student should request this as early as possible. Some academic adjustments may take more time to provide than others. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the LOA, please contact the student’s coordinator.

- Additional info can be found at: [https://ods.rutgers.edu/faculty/ways](https://ods.rutgers.edu/faculty/ways).

Tips from other TAs

- **Getting Feedback from Students**
  - The best evaluation I ever gave was 2 weeks into the class. I made it a mid-session activity so the students couldn’t leave. I asked them to identify 1-3 things that the instructor does that succeed in helping you and 1-3 things that hinder or interfere with your learning. And I asked them to make practical suggestions for the instructor to improve his/her way of teaching.
  - I always tell students I need constructive input, and just putting ‘Bob sucks’ is not constructive input! If there’s something they don’t like, they need to explain on the form what they would like to see done differently.
  - Get feedback from the students on the quality of teaching. Make time to hear your students’ concerns about the course/lab and talk about that with the Professor/experienced TAs.
Tips from other TAs

• **Grading Tips**
  - Don’t give in to pushy students who think they deserve a higher grade—be prepared to fully explain why a grade was given and what type of work would have earned a higher grade.
  - Be consistent! Generate a rubric before you start and USE IT! For longer papers etc., I often duplicate the rubric, make comments right on it, and staple it to their assignment.
  - Make your grading criteria clear in the first lecture and post it on Sakai.
  - Fairness in the classroom and grading is a key.

• **Teaching Tips**
  - Have a couple of teaching strategies.
  - Make a write-up including your rules for recitation/lab/review about anything that matters to you. Sharing a document of rules and what to do with the students at the beginning of the semester will make your job much, much easier.
  - Talk to other TAs who have taught the course before (or someone you know from the department who was a TA before stepping into the classroom) if this is your first time teaching.
  - Get prepared before you give a lecture/recitation or lab. You definitely want to practice before you come to the podium.
  - Be approachable and organized
  - Be prepared, sincere and friendly
Tips from other TAs

• **Other**
  - Have a good relation with the Professor you are working with
  - Do not hesitate to contact the Professor for clear guidance regarding policies
  - Make sure come to the room or your TA office 10 minutes before it starts
  - Take the advantage of Sakai

Introduction to Sakai
Use of Sakai in Courses

- Sakai may be used for course management.
- Link to Sakai: https://sakai.rutgers.edu/portal
- You may take a one hour tour online “Managing Your Sakai Site” tomorrow at 2PM at: SakaiTutorial
- You need your RUID or email to login

Use of Sakai in Courses

- START: at “My Workspace” set a new course by going to “worksite setup” and clicking on ”New"
- You would normally make a new course but we will use it today for a new project…
- Chose the tools (all choices can me modified later so you do not need to worry about missing any tools)
Use of Sakai in Courses

• Go through:
  – Site creation
  – Site editing
  – Announcements
  – Resources
  – Gradebook
  – Assignment
  – Tests & quizzes