

SOCA GTA Information

So you're going to be a Graduate Teaching Assistant for the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, now what?

The following includes a list of things to do and tips for being a successful GTA. If you should have any questions/comments/concerns please feel free to use repeat GTAs as a resource or contact Brittany at bmkowalski@mix.wvu.edu or (815)901-1665 (call or text).

Testing Center:

Make-up Shifts (Wednesdays 2:30-5:00)

- Grab the **black file folder** from the cabinet across from the printer in the main SOCA office
 - Only one of you needs to grab it so you can coordinate who does that but someone NEEDS to grab it
- **TIP:** I like only turning on the lights in the front half of the testing center for make-ups
 - It never fills up and it keeps all of the student near the front and easy to keep an eye on
- Students are told they can **arrive at 3:00** (some may come early) and **NO LATER than 4:30**
 - If you don't mind letting them in and everything is ready to go, there's no reason not to let them in
 - Students cannot arrive later than 4:30 because we as TAs are only scheduled until 5:00
 - Many times TAs have classes at 5:00 or 5:15 so we have to respect our schedules first and foremost
- When students arrive they **MUST have a PRINTED copy of the email** from their professor stating that they are allowed to take a make-up exam
 - The PRINTED email must contain:
 - Students name or email address in the "to" portion of the email
 - Faculty name or email address in the "from" portion of the email
 - Statement of the faculty member's permission for the student to makeup the exam
 - Most emails will contain the date that they are allowed to take the make-up
 - **NOTE:** students who are coming in for a **paper make-up quiz/test** may not have an email and that is OKAY
 - They are allowed to take the make-up if their quiz/test is printed with their name on it in the black file folder
 - If students **do not have a printed email or paper make-up** you turn them away
 - **TIP:** they will try to beg and plead with you to let you take the exam but you DO NOT give in. They can print their email in the Mountainlair or Library. If you don't have a paper quiz/exam for them have them email the faculty member alerting them to the problem.

- Put the printed student emails into the faculty member's slot in the black file folder
- When the make-up shift is done:
 - Turn the lights off and make sure the door is shut and locked behind you
 - Take the **black file folder back to Knapp**
 - ***It needs to be emptied into faculty mail boxes***
 - This includes all paper exams and printed emails from students
 - The main office may be closed when you get back from make-ups, prohibiting you from emptying the file folder
 - Put the black file folder in the GTA office
 - Either put a note on it (politely) asking a colleague to empty it the next morning or plan to empty it yourself the next morning
 - It is **CRUCIAL** that the black file folder is emptied, especially since there may be paper quizzes/exams in it

Non Make-up Shifts:

- Be sure to arrive on time
 - You are scheduled to arrive before the exams begin
 - Check the computers to make sure that they are on and that there don't appear to be any problems
- The faculty member whose exam it is is ultimately in charge BUT you have authority as well
- During the exam:
 - Walk around
 - You do not have to constantly move but make sure to make regular laps and that not all TAs/Faculty are stationary in the same spot of the room for too long
 - Answer/help with any questions about signing in or the technological side of test taking (i.e. where to find the exam, how to log out, etc.)
 - Any content questions should be directed to the faculty member (unless otherwise told by that faculty member)
 - Check for cell phones
 - Tell students to put them away (out of sight) or flip them over
 - You have the right to confiscate cell phones if they are being used to cheat
 - Have the student stop taking the exam and bring it to the attention of the professor who will decide how to handle it
 - Check for other types of cheating
 - Cheat sheets/notes under desks
 - Talking/whispering
 - Other methods
 - Provide any other assistance as requested by the faculty member

Other To-Do/Tips:

- The **Scantron machine** may be intimidating but trust me it is your friend, learn to love it
 - Make sure you have a **key filled out and the “key” bubble is filled in**
 - Faculty will give you a Scantron sheet that is the key or a copy of the exam with the answers circled on it and you can make a key
 - If you need more Scantron sheets, ask Barb in the main office
 - Turn on the machine, push the “key” through first followed by exams
 - If it is more than 50 questions you have to flip each sheet to run both sides before running the next exam
 - Most faculty will also want a breakdown of the questions. These forms are located by the Scantron machine—they have a space for each question as well as averages for the exam and they get run through the same way as an exam sheet. Follow the arrows for the various sides until you have all the questions accounted for. If you need more of these sheets, ask Barb.
- If you know that you have a **conflict with a duty** (for the faculty you work for or a testing center shift) **contact all other GTAs via email IMMEDIATELY** so that a switch/coverage can be coordinated well before the date
 - The sooner you contact people, the more likely/willing to help out people will be
 - If you cannot find someone to cover, contact Dr. Stein
 - If you have a systemic conflict, talk to Dr. Stein or Dr. Steele if it is related to the testing center **as soon as possible** so that a more permanent solution can be found
- Check your email regularly
 - Faculty, fellow GTAs, the department, etc. may need last minute help or have a last minute task for you
 - **Be flexible**
 - Things come up faculty/colleagues get sick and may need a hand last minute—do what you can to help out
 - *NOTE: If the DGS (Dr. Stein) or the associate chair (Dr. Steele) email you asking for help and you do not have a legitimate conflict (i.e. class, TA duties) **you are expected to help** with whatever the task may be*
- **Don't be LATE**
 - Buy a planner, use your phone, whatever you need to do to make sure that you know your schedule and don't forget any TA responsibilities
 - Faculty and other TAs (in the case of the testing center) are counting on you to be there and to be on time
- Don't let TA duties get in the way of your academic responsibilities but don't ignore them either
 - It's about **balance**, make sure that you are doing what you need to do to be a successful graduate student but also make sure that you are completing your TA duties to the best of your abilities

- If you find yourself getting overwhelmed, talk to the faculty members you work for, most faculty will do what they can to help
- When it comes to cellphones and cheating—be authoritative and consistent but **fair**
 - It shouldn't be your goal to catch people cheating but if you do fairness and communicating with the faculty and the student is crucial
 - **TIP:** Standing behind/near students you suspect are cheating is a *very effective* way to get students to stop doing whatever it is that made you suspicious
 - The ultimate decision of how to handle the situation is up to the faculty member
- If you're in the TA office and the **phone rings, answer it**, it's usually someone from the main office with a question or small task for someone to do
- Don't be afraid to **ask questions or for help**, some of us have a year or more of experience that we would be more than happy to share with others

SB17 To-Do:

General

Even if it is the middle of the day, if the office is being left empty please be sure to lock the door. Student exams/assignments, keys, textbooks, etc. will be in the office as well as colleagues personal possessions (including laptops, hard-drives, books, etc.) may be in the office at any given moment so for everyone's sake, please keep the door locked. If you are leaving the office and other people are there, confirm that someone will be there when you return or take your keys with you when you do.

If you are the only person in the office and are leaving please be sure that:

- The door is locked
- Both windows and curtains are shut
- The coffee pot is off
- The lights are off

You're welcome to keep things in the fridge, but please be sure to eat or dispose of items in a timely manner so that they don't cause odors in the office.

Common curtesy goes a long way: don't touch other people's stuff without permission, clean up any mess you may make, etc.

If you are done using the shared computer (login with your MIX credentials) or are leaving for an extended period of time please be sure to log off of it. It is attached to the printer and everyone is welcome to print at it but please be mindful of paper/ink usage. If you run out ask Barb for ink and get paper from by the copier in the main office.

Coffee

We have a coffee pot that everyone is welcome to use. Please do what you are able to **either bring in coffee or donate to the coffee stocking fund**. If everyone who drinks coffee contributes the burden will be lessened for everyone and everyone will be able to enjoy their

{highly necessary} caffeine. When you bring something in, please make note of it on the chart that is hanging above the coffee pot.

At the end of the day make sure that:

- Coffee **pot is off** (switch to the left—the light does not always work)
- Used coffee **filters have been thrown away**