

# PREPARING TO TEACH

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## Course Background Probe

- Is there a course information file available (e.g., former syllabi, old exams and assignments, information about entering students, contact information for former instructors/teaching assistants, topics/concepts that have been traditionally difficult to teach, etc.)?
  - Where does this course fit into the curriculum of the program for which it is intended? What will other instructors expect students to know coming out of this course (especially important if your course is a prerequisite for another course)?
  - Are you teaching an elective, restricted elective, or program requirement? (The status of a course often influences how motivated or interested students are to learn. Knowing this information is helpful when planning learning activities and your teaching approach).
  - From which academic programs will students be entering your course(s)? What level/year will they be at? What skills or knowledge base will they have coming into the course? (Knowing the history of your course and the nature of your students will assist in determining what and how much content to cover, how much of a challenge your students can handle, and what expectations they might have coming into the course.)
  - Who previously taught the course(s)? Do they have any advice to offer? Do they have any teaching materials to loan (e.g., lecture notes, overhead transparencies, audio/visual, etc.)?
  - What is the expected course enrollment?
- Information about degree programs and the individual courses associated with those programs (e.g. restricted/electives courses) can be found in the Undergraduate calendar under section 10. Check with your department/administrative secretary for more information.
  - Teaching Support Services offers a number of course design resources. Visit the Teaching Resource Centre (room 125, Day Hall) or check out our available online resources via our website – <http://www.tss.uoguelph>.

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## Scheduling

- Have you checked the “Final Edition of the Undergraduate and Graduate Schedule and Exam Timetable” newspaper set by the Registrar’s Office for meeting times, dates, room location of the course(s) you are teaching, and exam slots?
  - Have you checked the time, date, and room location for Special Class meetings?
- The scheduling of classes and final exams is done by the Registrar’s office. They produce a Final Edition of the course schedule and exam timetable newspaper each semester. The newspaper provides information on course schedules and final examinations for undergraduate and graduate courses. Instructions on how to use the newspaper are provided in the newspaper. Check with your department if you have questions, or contact Registrarial Services at ext. 6041.
  - Special class meetings are scheduled before regular class meetings begin – usually the previous Thursday and Friday. They provide an opportunity to introduce students to the course, hand out a course syllabus, and set expectations and the tone for the rest of the semester. It’s also important for dealing with drop and adds to your

course. Talk with your department secretary and/or refer to the Undergraduate calendar for more information. Information and resources on preparing for first class meetings are available at the following website [http://www.tss.uoguelph.ca/onlineres/firstclass\\_mtgs.htm](http://www.tss.uoguelph.ca/onlineres/firstclass_mtgs.htm). (NB: special class meetings will no longer be scheduled starting Spring 2002).

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### **Department**

- Does your course have a teaching budget? How much? Acceptable use policy?
  - When does your department require a course outline? Are there copies of previous course syllabi in circulation that you can review?
  - Do you know the names and roles of the academic advisors and program counsellor(s) for your course(s)?
  - How much support, if any, will the department provide with copying? The preparation of teaching materials?
  - Does your department have any A/V equipment available for loan?
  - What are the procedures for use?
- Check with your department for a list of academic advisors. A list of program counselors can be found under section 7 of the Undergraduate Calendar or online at [http://www.uoguelph.ca/undergrad\\_calendar/html](http://www.uoguelph.ca/undergrad_calendar/html). Section VII additionally highlights the roles of academic advisors and program counsellors.
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### **Classroom**

- Have you visited the classroom(s) in which you will be teaching?
  - Is the classroom appropriate in terms of class size, physical arrangement, and A/V equipment?
  - Is another classroom required?
- Classroom allocation and examination schedules are set by the Registrar's office. If your classroom is unsatisfactory (i.e., doesn't suit teaching methods, student numbers) or if you know in advance the type of classroom space needed, speak with your department secretary. For additional classroom space during the semester, contact Cathy Tutton in Undergraduate Program Services, at ext. 3015.
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### **A/V Equipment**

- Do you need to order A/V equipment above and beyond what is already available in the classroom?
  - Will you need instruction or a review of how to operate equipment (e.g., data projection unit, video camera)?
  - Do you need a key to access secured equipment in the classroom?
- Classroom Technical Support (CTS) supplies all classrooms with overheads, chalk, chalkboards and seating. Some classrooms additionally offer other equipment (e.g., TV/VCR). If you need to reserve equipment or sign-out a key

to access equipment in a specific classroom, contact CTS at ext. 2778 or drop by in-person - Day Hall, Rm 108. Equipment instruction is also available at the loan counter or by appointment in the classroom. After hours assistance until 8pm is available by contacting ext. 2778. For more information (e.g., loan services, delivery, repair, etc.) visit <http://www.tss.uoguelph.ca/cts/classsupport.html> or contact CTS directly.

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## Library

- Have arrangements been made to put course materials (e.g., textbook, overheads, lecture notes) on reserve for short term loan?
  - Does the library have the materials your students need for the learning projects assigned?
  - Is coordination of library resources needed (e.g., with Academic Liaison Librarian)?
  - Do you or your students need training/orientation to access library services and resources (e.g., Trellis system, on-line searching, library research, etc.)?
  - Have you arranged for any audio/visual materials needed from the library?
- When designing course/library assignments, coordination with your Academic Library Liaison is an asset. Check with your departmental library representative or visit <http://www.lib.uoguelph.ca/altsite/alt.htm> for your designated liaison contact. Library liaisons are available to help select course textbooks, coordinate library resources and course assignments, arrange library orientation sessions, and much more.
  - Reserve materials (items available for short-term loan) should be coordinated as soon as possible. Contact the Reserve desk (ext. 3621) for reserve forms and information or speak with your departmental secretary.
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## Teaching Materials (e.g. films/videos/CDs) for the Classroom

- Do you need to arrange for films/videos for classroom viewing?
  - Do you know how to access TRELIS for a list of titles and where you can book videos for classroom use?
  - Have you confirmed how far ahead you should reserve films/videos from the library?
  - Have you checked about the public viewing rights for videos or films you would like to use in the classroom (e.g., tapings from television, rented movies)
  - Does the University have a site license to show feature films in the classroom?
- The Library houses an audiovisual collection of some 12,000 films, videos, compact discs, records, audio tapes, as well as some slides which are located on the first floor in the Reserve and Media Services area.
  - All AV materials owned by the Library are catalogued in the TRELIS system and can be searched by title, author, subject, and keyword at <http://trellis.tug-libraries.on.ca/webvoy.htm>. If you need to book a film or video for classroom viewing contact Reserve and Media Services at ext.3621 at least one business day prior to the day it is required.
  - For information about obtaining films or videos from off campus, previewing, and public performance rights – contact the Library’s Media Specialist at ext.2313.
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## Bookstore

- Have arrangements been made to order textbooks and course-packs (from BOTH campus bookstores – Coop and University) for your course?
  - Have arrangements been made to order additional course materials and supplies (e.g. learning materials, protective lab wear, etc.) for your course?
  - Books can take up to 8-12 weeks to order. Check with your department for ordering guidelines or contact the University bookstore (ext. 8639/3715) and the Coop bookstore (ext. 2235) directly. NB: The University bookstore regularly stocks lab coats and other supplies students commonly need.
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## Course Countdown

- Have you made enough copies of the course outline for your students?
- Have you prepared what you are going to do and say for the first class meeting?
- Have you considered how you are going to handle students who wish to drop or add your course?
- Have you considered how you are going to handle prerequisite and co-requisite waivers for your course (if it has one)?
- Have you checked with BOTH bookstores about the availability of materials previously ordered (Coop and University Bookstores)?
- Have you checked with the library about the status of reserve items previously put on reserve?
- Have you considered how you will collect feedback from your students regarding your teaching, your students' learning, and the course in general?
- Have you considered how you will document teaching practices and select materials for your teaching dossier (this information is handy for updating your course syllabus as well)?
- The University of Guelph has a number of policies and procedures governing undergraduate courses (e.g., drop and adds, grading, Priority Access courses, scheduling, etc.). Refer to section VIII of Undergraduate calendar or on-line at [http://www.uoguelph.ca/undergrad\\_calendar/main.html](http://www.uoguelph.ca/undergrad_calendar/main.html). Check with your department for any additional guidelines.
- Resources and support for preparing for your first class meetings, collecting mid-semester feedback, and gathering other teaching and learning materials are available from the Teaching Resource Centre (Day Hall, rm. 125) or by visiting our website at <http://www.tss.uoguelph.ca/> (check under online resources).