

**TA Roles & Responsibilities for Basic Language Courses**  
**Department of French & Italian**  
**University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign**

This document applies to teaching assistants (TAs) teaching courses in French and Italian Basic Language (FR 101-104, 133-134 and ITAL 101-104) during both Fall and Spring semesters. The agreement between the Graduate Employee's Organization and the University takes precedence over this document.

**1. Contract Dates and Presence on Campus.**

*1.1 Contractual Dates*

All TAs will be available to begin work on the start date of the contract before the Fall semester through the end date of the contract in the Spring semester (August 16th through May 15th).

*1.2 Fall Presence*

New TAs are required to be on campus on the start date of the contract in the Fall.

Returning Teaching Assistants are required to be on campus no later than 9am the Thursday before classes start, unless teaching a course that requires physical presence at an earlier date. Before making travel arrangements, TAs are expected to confirm with their Director of Basic Language (DBL).

All TAs must remain on campus until the date indicated semester-by-semester by their DBL.

All TAs must return materials to the DBL before leaving campus.

*1.3 Spring Presence*

All TAs are required to be physically present on campus no later than 9am the Friday prior to the first day of classes in the Spring semester, unless teaching a course that requires physical presence at an earlier date. Before making travel arrangements, TAs are expected to confirm with their DBL.

All TAs must remain on campus through the contract end date (May 15th). An earlier date may be indicated semester-by-semester by their DBL.

All TAs must return materials before leaving campus.

*1.4 Vacation and Holidays*

TAs are expected to be physically present for regularly scheduled course dates, all scheduled meetings, and required professional development sessions.

TAs must be reachable by phone or email and respond within 48 hours during fall break, winter recess, and spring break for time-sensitive grading- and teaching-related matters.

*1.5 Absences*

TAs will not be permitted to be absent from class or cancel any class meeting without consulting their DBL.

Commonly approved reasons for absences include: conference attendance, emergencies, illnesses, and family events (e.g., weddings, funerals). Absences to attend on-campus events and/or professional development sessions required by a class must be requested at least one week in advance and will be granted depending on availability of substitutes.

Any TA who is not able to teach a scheduled class for an approved reason must, after consulting their DBL, find a substitute and include the coordinator and DBL in any and all correspondence pertaining to such an absence. Substitutes must be approved by the DBL. Requesting a substitute should be a rare event.

Vacations are not permitted during regularly scheduled courses.

*1.6 Meetings, workshops, and orientations*

TAs will attend all required meetings, workshops, and orientations, unless prior permission to be absent from such activities is accorded.

## **2. Teaching Expectations**

### *2.1 Teaching Methods*

TAs will teach in accordance with the methodology underlying the philosophy of teaching of the French and Italian Language Programs, as projected by the DBL and course coordinators.

### *2.2 Instruction in Target Language*

TAs are expected to teach in the target language (French or Italian), with only a limited, judicious use of English.

### *2.3 Syllabus and Materials*

TAs are expected to adhere to the syllabus and cover material on the date prescribed in the syllabus.

TAs may not change exam dates or dates of major assignments as outlined on the course syllabus.

If at any point a TA is not on schedule, the TA should communicate this information to their DBL.

### *2.4 Timeliness and Preparation*

TAs are expected to arrive in their classrooms on time and fully prepared. Similarly, TAs are expected to end class on time.

### *2.5 Records and Student Feedback*

TAs are expected to keep accurate records of student attendance and participation.

TAs are expected to return graded assignments/assessments and feedback in a prompt manner (no more than 1 week after submission for quizzes and tests and no more than 2 weeks for compositions).

TAs must maintain copies of exams and records of grades and attendance for 1 calendar year after the end of the semester. If leaving campus before that year passes, TAs are expected to leave these files with their DBL.

### *2.6 Exam and Quiz creation*

TAs will participate in quiz and exam creation process as directed and by following the exam creation timeline (unless exceptions are granted). This may involve writing, pointing out typos and mistakes, and/or reviewing exams and quizzes.

TAs will communicate with the coordinator and/or DBL to review final exam drafts. They will make any necessary changes to drafts and submit them to the coordinator for printing, as per the dates stipulated on the schedule.

### *2.7 DRES Accommodations*

TAs will inform the DBL of all DRES accommodations in their courses and are encouraged to meet together with their DBL and the student requesting accommodations.

### *2.8 Daily Lesson Planning*

TAs are expected to create their own daily lesson plans based on the course calendar and syllabus.

Lesson plans should take into account timing, transitions, and sequencing of selected activities/tasks.

## **3. Observations**

### *3.1 Observing other sections or courses*

New TAs are required to observe a designated experienced instructor of the same class they teach for the first four weeks of the semester. Exceptions will be granted on a case-by-case basis. Continuing observations are encouraged.

All TAs teaching a course new to them are encouraged to observe an experienced instructor of the same course as needed.

### *3.2 Observations and evaluations*

TAs may be observed by the DBL or coordinator at any point in the semester at the request of the TA, the coordinators, or the DBL.

New TAs will be observed and evaluated in writing at least twice in the first year. Pending satisfactory performance, continuing TAs will be evaluated in writing once per year. TAs will be notified that they will be observed at least one week in advance. These observations and written evaluations will be conducted by the DBL or another faculty member and will be a part of the TAs' official record. The DBL or faculty member observing the TA will provide a written observation report to the TA within 2 weeks of the observation.

TAs will fully participate in their evaluation process, which may include pre-observation meetings, post-observation meetings and, in those rare instances where necessary, unannounced classroom visits by the DBL.

TAs may request an alternate evaluation date if they feel that the evaluation is not representative of their typical teaching (e.g., late arrival by observer, unusual student behavior, misrepresentation of TA's teaching ability).

In the case where improvement is needed, the DBL and TA will devise and agree upon a professional development plan, to which the TA is expected to adhere.

## **4. Communication**

### *4.1 Professionalism*

TAs will conduct themselves in a professional and courteous manner toward course coordinators, DBL, and students. This includes appropriate language, correspondence, and behavior. They can expect the same professional and respectful behavior from their DBL and coordinator.

All official correspondence will be communicated through Illinois platforms (i.e. meeting requests, observation requests, information regarding check in/out meetings for materials and debriefs, important and urgent information regarding sections, etc.).

### *4.2 Timely Communication*

TAs will respond to all emails, requests, or directives from their course coordinators or DBL in a timely manner (within 24 hours for time-sensitive requests and 48-hours for all others) unless circumstances render this impossible; they can also expect their own queries to be answered by their coordinator or DBL within the same timeframe. Timely responses to emails are particularly important.

TAs are expected to document all student issues as they arise and to communicate all cases of academic misconduct, discipline problems, etc., to their course coordinators and DBL in a timely fashion. In particular, cases of prolonged absences (more than one week), or major missed or failed assignments must be reported by TAs to both course coordinators and the DBL immediately.

### *4.3 Office Hours*

TAs will establish, publicize, and respect reasonable office hours. TAs will hold one office hour per course taught during regular business hours, except in the case of courses taught outside of regular business hours.

### *4.4 Grievance*

TAs may contact the Grievance Committee in the case of any complaints or queries regarding their status, condition of employment, or any other matter with direct effects on their professional welfare, according to section III.B.2 of the departmental bylaws, "The Committee for Grievance and Mediation."