Meet the 2022 GTO Facilitators

Below, you can meet the wonderful facilitators who will be working with us at Graduate Teaching Orientation this year. Throughout the application and interview process, these graduate students demonstrated empathy for their students, awareness of best practices in teaching and learning, a commitment to inclusive teaching practices, and an ability to support their fellow graduate students. They will be responsible for facilitating our synchronous sessions, monitoring our discussion boards, and grading the required orientation worksheets that we use to track participant completion. We couldn’t run Graduate Teaching Orientation without them.

Name: Sarah Beam (she/her/hers)
Department: College of Medicine

I have worked as a GTA in the division of anatomy for 2 years, mostly in the undergraduate curriculum in the lab and running recitations. Before graduate school, I was also a UTA for one of the undergraduate anatomy courses for 3 years where I discovered my passion for teaching and anatomy.

My favorite quote is a Plutarch quote that reads “the mind is not a vessel to be filled, but a fire to be ignited.” This idea has resonated with me since the day I heard it and is what I want to strive for in my teaching. I do not want to simply deliver information to students; I want to excite them and spark their interest to learn more.

Name: Abbie Enders (she/her/hers)
Department: Chemistry and Biochemistry

I’ve been teaching since 2016 at my undergrad university as a lab teaching assistant. At OSU, I have experience in three different courses as a lab and recitation TA. I taught from 2019-2021 and am currently a RA.

Students really benefit from knowing about your educational experience. I struggled with topics throughout these same courses, and I can help students feel more confident in asking questions if they know that I’m not perfect!

A fun fact about me: I’ve been to 34 states and 21 countries!
Name: Alex Christmas (she/her/hers)

Department: Dance

The classroom is a space for liberatory learning. As students learn course material, they simultaneously develop agency about who they are and how they want to interact with the world. As a teacher, I know I teach more than a particular discipline; I subconsciously instill principles into my classroom that promote ethical antiracist practices and encourage individual student development.

The central values that guide my teaching are 1) respect for students and their wholistic humanity, 2) inclusion of all students and their cultural backgrounds, and 3) co-creating a constructive classroom ethos. I view the teacher-student relationship as a partnership where we both need each other to succeed. Working together creates an environment where students can set and accomplish their own goals and build a positive classroom community. I base my courses around the idea of education as liberation. As students experience the courses I teach, they should be able to use the information to understand themselves and the culture in which they live. I love the process of helping students learn and unlearn simultaneously. Helping students better understand themselves and their thoughts through education is my favorite part of teaching.

A fun fact about me: Pink is my favorite color.

---

Name: Anne Van (she/her/hers)

Department: Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies

I have been teaching for 4 years at OSU in various contexts like recitation, independent, in-person, and online.

One of my favorite teaching tips for new instructors is to try to include at least one active learning activity per class session.

A fun fact about me is that I love trying new apps and programs to digitally engage my students!
Name: Jacob Coutts (he/him/his)

Department: Psychology

I have six years of teaching or teaching-adjacent experience. I have taught lessons in math and science at the middle school and high school level, taught psychology at the undergraduate level, and taught a class in teaching psychology at the graduate level. I spent several semesters as a teaching assistant in an Introductory Statistics class where I helped conduct classroom experiments and designed an online lab. I also have administrative experience as a coordinator of the Introduction to Psychology program at OSU where I helped incoming (and veteran) graduate instructors incorporate more active learning into their classroom and met weekly with the program director to streamline the course design.

One of my favorite parts about teaching is the random comments that students make, particularly in teaching evaluations. If you teach long enough, you will inevitably receive many heart-warming (and eye-rolling) comments, but sometimes students will say something off-the-cuff like “Jacob is a legend” or “Mr. Coutts was a beast” — both of which are false, but they made me laugh for an entire week.

Fun fact: I performed a full hour stand-up set as an undergraduate and I’m going to try to do a second hour before I finish graduate school.

Name: Eiena Cruz-Lopez (she/her/hers)

Department: School of Music

I’ve been a TA for 5 semesters and a primary instructor for 3 semesters during my time at Ohio State. I’ve taught music history courses to both music majors and non-music majors. I also teach violin lessons at a music studio in Lewis Center, and over the summers I have volunteered for Girls Rock Columbus Music & Creative Arts Camp (now the camp is called Tempo) where I teach keyboard lessons and work as a band coach with campers from ages 12-18.

I always try to find ways to incorporate skills they’re familiar with or want to try out into class activities or assignments that students can use after they graduate even if music studies aren’t part of their future plans. I always end up learning so much from my students by the end of the semester!

Fun fact: I have 5 tattoos, and 4 of them are animal-related (even if they aren’t tattoos of animals).
Name: Victoria Gurevich (she/her/hers)

Department: Political Science

This fall will be my second year of teaching as the instructor on record in the political science department. I was able to design my own course based on my research interests in radicalization and countering violent extremism, and it’s been awesome to teach what I study. My course enrollment across semesters has been between 30 and 50 students. I am a big believer in learning by doing; I love designing hands-on activities for my students and watching them apply what we learned in lectures and readings to solve problems and develop solutions.

A teaching tip: Sign up for the 614 mailing list. You receive daily emails about what’s going on in Columbus (festivals, new restaurant and store openings, various contests and promotionals) which is great material for talking with your students.

A fun fact about me: I’ve been stung by a jellyfish... twice!

Name: Christian Hines (she/her/hers)

Department: Teaching and Learning

I'm a fourth year PhD candidate in the Teaching & Learning department at The Ohio State University. I have 8 years of teaching experience and currently teach education courses for preservice teachers and formerly taught high school English and Journalism. I'm interested in exploring the representation of Black youth and adolescence in literature, particularly their visual narratives in comics and graphic novels. As a self-proclaimed “Blerd” (Black nerd), I became interested in visual narratives as a way for students and education practitioners to understand and “see” the lived experiences of Black youth and the impact that youth have on society and enacting resistance. I also love musicals and cosplaying at comic conventions.
Name: Amanda Luff (she/her/hers)
Department: Epidemiology

I have a BA in Physical Education and 4 years of experience in elementary and early childhood education, 1 year of experience as a grader and undergraduate teaching assistant, and 1 year of experience as the instructor of an online undergraduate course.

My favorite teaching tip is not to worry about being perfect. Sometimes messing up (with grace and humility) can help you connect with your students.

I live in Milwaukee with my spouse, cat (pictured) and about 50 houseplants.

Name: Mario Martinez Garcia (he/him/his)
Department: Teaching and Learning

I’ve been an educator for 10+ years. I worked as an English teacher in K-12 levels as well as at the college level in Oaxaca, Mexico, for five years. In the US, I have experience working as a bilingual elementary teacher, and as a college instructor and supervisor. As an instructor, I have taught classes on educational linguistics, literacy instruction, and phonics. In my role as a supervisor, I have been in charge of conducting observations of pre-service teachers in their placements and leading recitation sessions.

What inspires me about teaching is the hope for social justice. In my work, I draw upon critical pedagogies that allow us to question normative approaches to teaching in all educational levels and fight for a more egalitarian society.

Fun fact about me: I sing terribly, but I love karaoke.
Name: Paige Mason (she/her/hers)

Department: English

My teaching tip, for both new and experienced instructors, would be to embrace reflection and revision. Unfortunately, there are aspects of teaching as a graduate student which make it difficult to have the time or opportunity to reflect on your teaching and redesign your courses. However, if you can take the time to reflect on your teaching and revise your strategies, assignments, and course structure every semester, your classes will be refreshed and organized, you will feel more prepared and intentional in your planning, and your students will benefit from your thoughtful assessment of your own pedagogy.

Check in with your students to see what's working well for them or what could be adjusted. Identify barriers for your students, but also for your own teaching, and see what new approach you can take to overcome those challenges. Being an intentional, mindful instructor means changing more than the dates on your syllabus each semester.

In my free time, I enjoy playing TTRPGs (tabletop roleplaying games) like Pathfinder and Dungeons and Dragons. When we can afford to give up some of the space in the office, my partner and I like to drag out our big table, put on a stream or an actual play, and put together puzzles.

Name: August Masonheimer (he/him/his)

Department: Educational Studies

I have been a GTA at OSU for the previous three years teaching an undergraduate course in college study skills and working as a lab instructor for a graduate statistics course. Prior to these activities, I have worked as a summer school teacher for middle school students for 14 years and currently work as a co-site director for the program. These activities have helped me develop experience in topics including classroom discussion, curriculum development, discussion and project-based learning, and online/hybrid teaching.

Teaching requires adaptability. While planning and a well organized classroom routine are crucial, it is important to adjust elements of your teaching style based on a plethora of reasons including the flow of the class, current events, and student interest and comprehension.

I have never cut my hair short (above my shoulders) as a memento to the times when my mom would braid it every day before elementary school.
Name: Tamryn McDermott (she/her/hers)

Department: Arts Administration, Education, and Policy

I have had a range of teaching experiences including four years of K-12 and five years of college-level teaching. One of my favorite things about teaching is building community in the classroom and mentoring students. I currently work with pre-service art education students at Ohio State, supporting them through their practicum and pre-service teaching experiences in Columbus area K-12 classrooms.

I lived in Augsburg, Germany for seven years when I was growing up and I love travelling!

Name: Allie Mickle (she/her/hers)

Department: History of Art

I am a 5th year PhD Candidate in the History of Art Department. I’ve been teaching at the college-level for over 6 years at two institutions, both online and in-person, as an instructor of record, recitation leader, and grader. My primary experience has been with introductory GE courses, and I’ve developed a great appreciation for teaching to and working with non-major students to develop accessible and critical content and syllabi.
Name: Alyssa Stover (she/her/hers)

Department: Dance

I began teaching as a TA in my master’s program at University of North Carolina-Greensboro in 2014, where I taught ballet, dance history, and dance appreciation. Since then, I have taught ballet, jazz, and contemporary dance at dance studios, as a private instructor, and as an adjunct at Loyola University New Orleans. I am also an RYT-200 certified yoga instructor and have been teaching yoga for five years. Here at OSU, I have taught yoga and Dance in Popular Culture in the Department of Dance.

Remember that it's okay to not have all the answers, especially if you're just starting out! And don't be afraid to reach out to other GTAs in your department for help. They've probably encountered a lot of the same questions as you will.

Fun fact: I worked at a dog day care for a year after college and it was there that I met my best friend, my future husband, and my dog (a 14 year old pit bull named Violet, who was found eating trash by a Walmart dumpster. She eats much better food now.)