Your First Class

Matt Hankins, Astronomy, Postdoc

Dan Johnson, Geochemistry, G6

Outcomes: By the end of this session, participants will be able to…

- Develop strategies for making your first class go well
- Recognize the value in setting the tone / classroom environment in your first class with students
- Understand the role of a TA / instructor in adding value to student learning

---

Before Your First Class:

- ❏ Make a checklist of beginning course items (e.g., syllabus, handouts, etc.)
- ❏ Make a plan for the class

Strategies for Dealing with Pre-Class Nerves:

- ❏ Practice in advance
- ❏ Dress comfortably (but professionally)
- ❏ Talk to students before class
- ❏ Begin class with some discussion questions

The Day of Your First Class:

- ❏ Make a plan for the day- leave time for any last minute prep work
- ❏ Find your class (is it somewhere you already know?)
- ❏ Try to relax and briefly review your course plan right before the class

During Your First Class:

- Offer Added Value
  - Teach! Give students a reason to come back!
    - Facilitated discussion, interactive lecture, classroom demonstration
    - Be an engaging link between experts and novices
  - Link labs, recitation sections, or other assignments to the lecture

- - Give students friendly tips and advice about resources
  - Create an Enjoyable Classroom Environment
    - Make an inclusive classroom
      - activities that help students share and connect with the material
    - Provide thoughtful responses in class
      - LARA method
    - Be mindful of tone and body language
  - Motivate Your Students
    - Connect material to students' interests
    - Provide authentic, real-world tasks
    - Show relevance to their lives and careers
    - Show your own passion & excitement for the material (+ the value you place on the subject / field)
    - Describe effective study strategies
    - Use personal statements (e.g., "I would approach this problem by…")

ACTIVITY

If you are a TA:

- Make a task list of things to do to help you prepare for your first class.

If you are an instructor:

- Plan out your first class in 15 minute increments.