



Teaching Discussion Sections in the Social Sciences and Humanities: Tips from TAs

With

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Overview

- What is the function of a discussion session?
- Scenarios from the TA frontline
- Beyond the TA years
- Q&A

Function of a Discussion Section

- Support instructor's lecture
- Explain instructor's lecture
- Discuss readings
- Address questions, concerns, and related thoughts
- Discuss course concepts

- ...all leading towards greater student comprehension and increasing their ability to think critically about the course material.

Your role as a TA is to...

- Support the instructor
- FACILITATE LEARNING!!!
 - ...but how?
- Make discussion sections successful
 - What is the measure of success?

How to Create Successful Discussion Sections

- Make a plan, layout
 - Preparation ensures structure
- Keep them engaged
 - Read the audience. When their eyes glaze over you need to change tactics.
- Follow directions
 - Work WITH the course instructor
- Check for comprehension
 - ‘Any questions, concerns, or thoughts?’

Teaching Scenarios

- Questions to consider...
 - Is the scenario promoting or hindering student development?
 - What actions can you take to improve the situation?
 - Is your boss going to be happy?
 - How will your decisions affect the course? Grades? Students? Your workload?