

CO-TEACHING ASSIGNMENT 15.269A--Fall '05

I. Rationale for Co-teaching

The co-teaching component of 15.269A, "Literature, Ethics, and Authority," counts for only 10% of your grade, yet it emphasizes the central conceptual elements of this course: if we have come together to study story-telling, ethical standards, and leadership, the co-teaching assignment allows each of us in turn to explore those aspects of corporate behavior in the classroom.

We meet 24 times during the semester, in a format that allows for maximum participation from all seminar participants. If we don't already know one another fairly well at the beginning of the semester, we will likely know one another much better by mid-December. That growing acquaintance brings with it an articulation of information unique to each participant; overall seminar-specific norms; and an individual sense of responsibility to the seminar. Co-teaching gives each of us a chance directly to exercise that responsibility.

II. Logistics of Preparation and Class

Two to three days before the class session for which your team has signed up, the four of you will sit down with TA and me to map out a teaching plan for the day. We expect the team to have read the material in preparation for the planning session, and to have elected one member of the team to serve as moderator for the session. Over an hour to an hour and-a-half, we will discuss what you liked and disliked about the material for your chosen class, as well as your sense and our sense of how it fits into the syllabus as a whole, and the specific course module. We will also set goals that you and we hope to achieve in the class discussion. The concrete take-away from the planning session should be half a dozen questions that you and we agree will generate discussion.

On the day of the class, I will briefly introduce the topic, the teaching team, and the one member of the team elected to serve as moderator and stand before the class. You will then have the full class period to run your discussion. TA and I may ask follow-on questions, as the course of the discussion warrants, and the three team members who are not standing at the front of the room may do the same; but the team moderator is in charge of the class.

So let us offer a few tips in advance:

- ***Present questions, not answers:*** you will quickly realize, from the course of class discussions in 15.269A, that your primary role lies in asking leading questions; you do not stand before the class to provide answers, though you may feel, having

invested time in prepping for the discussion, that you have them. Your questions should allow the class to arrive at its own conclusions—if all goes well, in synch' with your expected conclusions!--in terms articulated by the participants themselves.

- ***Listen closely:*** you will ask leading questions—beyond the half dozen with which you walked into the room—only if you listen closely to what people are saying. Each of your major questions will generate discussion that in turn should generate a score of lesser questions.
- ***Remember what people say:*** you will ask much better questions, over the course of the session, if you can remember who says what. Remembering comments allows you to juxtapose statements from the same person at different points during the class: the result may be a sharp portrait of that person's thinking or general attitude toward the topic under discussion; it often also reveals sharp contradictions within a single person's views! If you remember people's comments, you can also juxtapose the views of different members of the class, which will allow a more targeted agreement or debate on a specific issue.

III. Post-Class Evaluation

Within 24 hours following the class, I will send you an e-mail evaluation of your co-teaching; the grade I assign will apply to all members of the team, except those who for one reason or another didn't contribute to the preparation and delivery of the assignment. The evaluation will cover the strengths and weaknesses of your session, relative both to your teaching plan and to the possibilities that actually emerged in the class. You have the option, then, to meet briefly (no more than half an hour) with TA and me to discuss the content of the evaluation, and to review your sense of the session.

Students generally do good and unique things with this opportunity to stand before the class. Smart, leading questions flow naturally from a thoughtful approach to your subject—in this case, that subject is the material provided by the course, your classmates, your team, TA, and me. Good luck!