**Department of Religious Studies’ Best Practices Guide**

**for Teaching Assistants and Faculty**\*

BEST PRACTICES FOR FACULTY

1. Maintain professionalism in all interactions with students and TAs.
2. Meet with TAs on a regular basis to discuss assignments, lectures, readings, and any issues that may arise.
3. Provide clear directions for assignments and the way they ought to be evaluated by TAs.

BEST PRACTICES FOR TEACHING ASSISTANTS

1. Maintain professionalism in all interactions with students and faculty.
2. Strive to be the best student in the class. This requires doing all the readings and attending all of the lectures.
3. Any exceptions to doing the course work, attending lectures, holding discussions, or grading assignments need the explicit permission of the faculty member in charge of the course. Discussion sections may not be terminated early without explicit written permission from the faculty instructor.
4. Avoid physical contact with students and keep office doors open during meetings. One may find UCD specific resources on this issue here: <https://sexualviolence.ucdavis.edu/>.

BEST PRACTICE FOR SIGNING CONTRACTS

When you sign the employment contract that the Religious Studies department offers you as an Academic Student Employee, it is expected that you will take the job(s) described in the letter. Once you are offered a letter, the department expects two things:

• That you sign within no later than two weeks of receiving the offer(s); *in your emailed acceptance, it is obligatory to ‘cc not only course faculty members and Maria but also the chair of the Religious Studies department* *and the* *Graduate Advisor.*

• That any changes to your contractual commitment for a given course be communicated to all the people listed above, by email, no less than sixty (60) days before the start of the quarter in which it is scheduled to be taught.

By taking these steps, you will allow the department to know who needs support in the next academic year (or quarters) and how available resources can be expended to help meet all students’ needs in an equitable and timely way. For these reasons, if you approach us with a request to cancel or change a signed contract, the department is under no obligation to honor your request.

BEST PRACTICES FOR THE TA SUPERVISOR

1. In cases where communication between TAs and the faculty member breaks down, with the help of the chair of the department, the TA supervisor will facilitate effective communication for the purpose of having a successful course.
2. Provide confidential feedback to TAs on their teaching, if TAs request it.
3. Organize TA discussion on effective pedagogical strategies, if TAs request it.
4. On a shared drive, host and organize a repository of documents that facilitate teaching.