

# CETL 2000/8000 BioSci TA Preparation Course Fall 2026

**Class meetings:** Note the class runs only *half* of the semester

BY1: 8:25 – 9:15 am, Tues & Thurs in Clough 102

BY2: 12:05 – 1:50 pm, Fridays in Clough 102

**Instructional team:**

Dr. Hannah Smith, [Hannah.smith@biosci.gatech.edu](mailto:Hannah.smith@biosci.gatech.edu), Boggs 1-90E

Pronouns: she/hers

Dr. Linda Green, [linda.green@gatech.edu](mailto:linda.green@gatech.edu), Boggs 1-90A

Pronouns: she/hers

*Student Hours (Office Hours) can be arranged directly with the instructional team. Please email us with 3-4 times that work for your schedule to start the conversation.*

**Course Description:**

CETL 2000/8000 is designed to support your responsibility to provide our undergraduates with the high-quality education that we desire in the School of Biological Sciences undergraduate program. In addition, your teaching experience will hone transferable skills that enhance your professional development in your intended career path. During this course, you will build a foundation for learner-centered teaching. You will practice making clear and concise explanations about concepts and reinforcing those ideas through active learning. You will build skills for facilitating inquiry-based labs, grading, and managing classroom dynamics. By the end of the semester, you will have the foundation you need to be a great teacher and to continue your professional development in teaching. This course is a required accompaniment to your first semester as a member of the School of Biological Sciences Undergraduate Program teaching staff. **We ask that you take part in the ownership of your education as a co-educator, rather than being a “student” in the more traditional and passive sense.** It is our expectation that as a co-educator you will:

- Participate actively and thoughtfully at all times.
- Have the conviction to ask and respond to difficult questions, take what may seem to be unpopular positions, and admit when you do not know.
- Have patience to, listen to, and respect others.
- Think, write, and engage with your peers in a scholarly manner. Foster a collegial learning environment that is purposeful, open, disciplined, caring, and celebrative.

**Course Objectives:**

By the end of this course, New Teaching Assistants will be able to:

1. Create a valuable, student-centered learning experience for students.
2. Assess the level of student understanding using inquiry teaching practices and rubrics.
3. Understand that learning new content is a part of teaching and develop strategies for doing so efficiently.
4. Craft explanations about concepts in response to students' level of understanding.
5. Identify and use active learning strategies appropriate to course learning goals.
6. Manage group and classroom dynamics, including incivilities that may arise.
7. Apply GT strategic priorities, policies, and procedures in the context of teaching.
8. Coordinate responsibilities with assigned course faculty instructors and co-TAs in a professional manner.
9. Recognize teaching as a set of transferable skills useful for future career goals.
10. Reflect on one's teaching practice to continually improve as a teacher.

**Course Materials** will be available to all students on Canvas.

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## Course Requirements and Grading Scale:

**Attendance and Participation:** This course meets in person and has required attendance. However, **merely attending is not sufficient for credit.** We expect your participation, which we define as regular, on-task engagement and timely submission of in-class deliverables. We work hard to create an engaging classroom community, and we encourage you to contribute actively and positively in classroom discussions.

**Classroom Observation:** You will conduct a 30-min classroom observation (COPUS) of another TA or faculty member. We will coordinate a sign-up process for you to select which class/instructor you will observe. Your observation sheet will be submitted to Canvas before our discussion class day, and you will complete a short assignment based on your observations.

**Reflections:** Reflection is important to improve teaching skills. Each week will have an associated reflection to facilitate connections between the topics discussed in class and your teaching experience. Your response should be your original work and thoughts, in your own words and formatted with correct grammar and syntax, and crafted *without the use of AI*. Reflections should be approximately 300 words.

**Pre-test and Post-test:** These are diagnostic tests designed to measure your knowledge and opinions about teaching before and after you take this course. Both tests must be completed to earn the points. The survey can be found here: <http://www.teachingperspectives.com/tpi/> Note that you should upload your results as a file or screenshot to the Assignment on Canvas each time you take test.

### **Grading Scheme:**

<b>Requirements</b>	<b>Points</b>
Weekly Reflections	35%
Attendance and Participation	35% (includes in-class activities and asynchronous quizzes)
Classroom observation	25% (your form as well as follow-up assignment)
Pre-test and Post-test	5% (upon full completion of BOTH)

**CETL 2000/8000 is taken as a pass/fail grade mode. Grades will be assigned based on the following scale: 80 or above = pass, 79 or below = fail.**

**Late Assignments:** It is important to stay current with your work in this class because it is courteous to the instructors, it allows for feedback in a timely manner, and it helps us gauge where you are in your development. Late assignments will be accepted up to one week late. Assignments more than 7 days late will not be accepted without approval by the instructors for an appropriate reason to justify the extension.

**Missed Class:** Please make your best effort to attend each class for the entire class period. However, we understand that life can throw us unexpected scenarios. Students unable to attend class may be accommodated on a case-by-case basis, ideally arranged at least 24 hours in advance via email. Vacation, work/volunteer commitments, and social events are not acceptable reasons to miss class; however, legitimate reasons to miss class include personal illness, illness or death in your immediate family, and participation in official university activities. We also ask that you notify your course instructor if your absences may impact the course for which you TA. Please work with us if you need assistance with this process. Note that, should you need to miss 3 or more classes (or other circumstances warrant), we may suggest you drop or take an Incomplete in the course.

**Teaching Assistants (TAs) as Leaders:** TAs bear the responsibility of being role models. As TAs, you will often be closest to both students and professors, and privy to information that is sensitive. *Please do not take this responsibility lightly.* Because of this leadership role, you will need to be a bit more careful about your professional and personal choices, even when you believe no one is watching or that something 'isn't a

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big deal'. Students may perceive your choices as more or less permissible, more or less 'right', and this impacts the learning environment in your class and others. We will give you guidance on this in class and how to best live up to these expectations (e.g. academic honesty, wearing proper PPE, etc.), but **we remind you here that TAs serve as exemplars of academic integrity and inclusivity**. By upholding the highest standards of integrity and respect for others, TAs instill in students the values that underpin a fair and just educational environment.

**Technology statement:** To foster an engaged and distraction-free environment for all students, a laptop, mobile phone, or tablet is permitted for use in class **ONLY** when responding to an instructor prompt to use technology. However, please discuss any accommodations regarding technology that are necessary for your learning with the instructors.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, contact the Office of Disability Services at (404) 894-2563 or <http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu/> to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also e-mail us to discuss your learning needs. The more proactive you are, the better we can collectively ensure your needs are met.

**Academic Integrity:** Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. For information on Georgia Tech's Academic Honor Code, please visit <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/policies/honor-code/> or <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/18/>. As per GT policy, any student suspected of cheating or plagiarizing on a quiz, exam, or assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, who will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations. While students will collaborate and use of AI is not wholly forbidden, each student is expected to directly create their own work and credit any sources, both by name and how they contributed to the final work, just as is done in author contribution sections of science papers. Be advised that plagiarism includes reprinting the words of others without both the use of quotation marks *and* citation, as well as re-using your own work without attribution (self-plagiarism). If ever something is unclear or you are unsure, please ask for clarification before turning in any assignment.

**Community Statement:** We are committed to creating a learning environment in which all students feel safe and included. Because we are individuals with varying needs, we encourage your feedback to achieve this goal. To that end, we invite you to let us know about the things we can stop, start, and continue doing to make our classroom an environment in which every student feels valued and can engage actively in our learning community. To further review the mutual expectations in our classroom, please see the [The Student-Faculty Expectations](#), which articulates expectations that you can have of us and that we have of you. I encourage you to remain committed to the ideals of Georgia Tech while in this class.

**Professional Development:** While we will cover most topics in this course, the Georgia Tech Center for Teaching and Learning offers supplementary avenues for engaging with teaching preparation. CTL has programs throughout the year that can be helpful so be sure to check out their full website for other opportunities.

**Wellness Support:** Tutoring, financial support, and more resources for your well-being can be found in this resource guide: <https://students.gatech.edu/student-resource-guide> .