

Department of Family and Human Development Teaching Expectations and Philosophy

Instruction within the Department of Family and Human Development (FHD) plays an important role in the work that we do, in evaluations of faculty, and in meeting our mission and goals. Teaching expectations in FHD focus on coursework and intellectual experiences that enhance students' understanding and awareness of issues related to the well-being of children, youth, and families. In essence, the instructional goals of the department are designed to provide students with scientifically-based information about individuals and families across the lifespan. In doing so, our mission is to provide students with a high-quality experience that helps them gain a better and more diverse perspective on the needs of individuals and families, and their complex and dynamic social contexts. Faculty in FHD take their teaching responsibilities seriously and are dedicated to excellence in teaching. We expect full- and part-time faculty to challenge students by instilling critical thinking, enhancing their knowledge base, and requiring academic rigor. In essence, teaching is an embodiment of our discipline and reflects a core element of academics – namely, a focus on *learning* in all its varieties and methods.

The Department recognizes that teaching takes many forms and extends well beyond the classroom. We teach a range of courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels, but we also work closely with students on research projects and internships. Instruction also involves the direction of M.S. theses and Ph.D. dissertations, service as members of thesis and dissertation committees; service on comprehensive examinations for doctoral students; advisement of undergraduate and graduate students; guiding students enrolled in independent study courses; directing honors students; as well as mentoring students in their professional development. When assessing an individual faculty member's teaching, the Department attempts, as much as possible, to take into consideration the whole range, context, and ecology of the individual's teaching.

Requirements expected in teaching can take numerous forms, including lectures, readings, papers, presentations, internet discussions, projects, mandatory preparations for class, and class attendance. Faculty legitimately differ in the emphasis they allocate to the activities in their particular classes (e.g., some faculty prefer more writing assignments, whereas others place more stress on heavy reading assignments). Courses should reflect the legitimate requirements of a four-year major university. Also, we expect that faculty teaching upper division classes will advance the level of rigor and achievement of lower division classes.

Our faculty are expected to give grades that reflect the standards appropriate for their courses. Grades should be based upon a careful evaluation of each student's performance, which reflects his/her ability to understand and use the information and ideas presented in the course. We specifically support our faculty in their resistance to the nation-wide tendency toward grade inflation.

FHD also supports a variety of teaching methods, as well as innovations and experiments with these techniques. Along with the traditional university teaching methods of lectures, reading assignments, and classroom discussions, we support faculty's use of library work, multimedia, internet-based resources, discussions and presentations, blackboard software, use of computers in the classroom, outside speakers, field trips, and observation projects. We encourage the incorporation of new technologies into instruction both inside and outside of the classroom and we are increasingly interested in preparing our students for technology-based career paths.

To maintain excellence in the classroom, faculty teaching will be evaluated through the use of student evaluations, assessments of mentoring of students, and review of instructional innovation.

Faculty members also are encouraged to submit, or may be asked to submit, any of the following: classroom exercises and tests, sample class projects or other assignments, class grade distributions, reading lists, or any other material deemed relevant for student academic achievement and academic standards. Prior to awarding tenure, faculty teaching will be evaluated by the use of a teaching portfolio. This will include review of syllabi and other class materials or forms by the department chair and/or evaluation committee.