TEACHING MANUAL FOR TEACHING ASSISTANTS OF
HUMAN ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY (BIO 201)

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This manual is a short guide to help you become an effective teaching assistant for the human anatomy and physiology course at Elizabethtown College. It is not an all-inclusive document, and does not have all the answers and solutions to questions/challenges that you might encounter. The purpose of this manual is to give you some guidelines to help you get started.

As you continue to TA, you will find that you develop your own strategies to help explain certain concepts, tricks to help students remember structures, and methods to inspire students. Please don’t hesitate to share this information with the other TAs and with us. We will gladly add your wisdom into the manual, so that all TAs can benefit from your experience.

**BIO 201 Lab Overview**

As you know, BIO 201 lab primarily focuses on the musculoskeletal system. Students will learn all the bones and most of the muscles in the body and will use the cadaver to identify muscles. In the past students were given a list of structures that they needed to learn and were expected to learn all the information with little guidance from the TAs. We believe that while this system promoted independent learning, students also had a very difficult time understanding what is expected of them and how to integrate the multiple structures they were learning with the function of these structures.

To address some of these setbacks, we switched to the current teaching method. Most of the labs will be broken up into stations. Each station will focus on one particular topic. During these “station labs”, students will work in groups of 4-5, and will move from station to station to learn the material. Each station will be manned by a TA, who will teach the station topics to the group. You will be an essential part of implementing these techniques.

Each TA will be assigned a topic that she/he will need to learn and be able to teach the students. During the TA meetings, each TA will have an opportunity to practice teaching the materials to everyone else. The stations will change each week and will use different teaching materials. We will use this “station” approach when starting a new section, to show students how the different structures they are learning work together to produce motion, and how these structures actually look on a cadaver.

We hope that this approach will make the lab experience much more interactive for the students and will also give you the opportunity to teach and share your knowledge and passion for this field. Therefore, the success of this type of lab is highly dependent on the quality of the TAs and instructors. Making this course successful will require a lot of practice and dedication on your part. The best way to become an effective teacher is by attending weekly TA meetings, knowing the material, and practicing multiple times. You will have an opportunity to practice and get feedback on the quality of your presentation during TA meetings, but the TA meeting should neither be the first nor the last time you practice presenting.

Being a TA for this course will be a lot of work and will require a lot of your time. However, actively participating and taking advantage of this opportunity will allow you to become experts in the topics you teach (which will be very helpful for graduate school entrance exams, A&P in grad school, and the A&P portion of the OT Board exam) and will give you an invaluable teaching experience. Of course, being a TA will also significantly enhance your resume.
To make sure that labs run smoothly, below is a list of the expectations and responsibilities of all the TAs for this course.

**TA responsibilities**

1. **Attend every TA meeting.** During the TA meetings we will go over experiments and material that we will be covering that week. Important changes to existing protocols and announcements will also be discussed during that time. Missing a meeting will result in you being unprepared to do your job during the lab, thereby diminishing the quality of your peer’s educational experience. **Therefore, it is imperative that you attend all the TA meetings.** If you cannot attend a TA meeting:
   a. Notify Dr. Goldina or Mrs. Bartlett as soon as possible.
   b. Attend a lab BEFORE your lab and make sure that you know exactly what is going to be covered.
   c. If you miss a meeting and fail to attend another lab, you will not be allowed to teach during your assigned lab (and you will not be paid for that lab). Therefore, arrange for another TA to work during your time.
   d. **Missing more than 3 meetings will be grounds for termination.**

2. **Study and prepare for every lab.**

3. **Participate in setup and cleanup.**
   a. If you use dissecting tools/probes during the lab, clean them up and put them away before you leave.
   b. If you notice that we are running low on certain materials (i.e. gloves, paper towels, hydrating solution, etc.), let the instructor know.
   c. You are responsible for setting up your assigned teaching station.

4. **Teach assigned stations in the lab.**
   i. Make sure that you know the material you are assigned to teach.

5. **Help ensure that all material is covered in a timely fashion by making sure that you don’t go over the allotted time limit at your station.**

6. **Write practice exam questions for the review stations.**

7. **Proctor lab exams.**
   a. Be mindful of cheating. As a TA, it is your responsibility to ensure that cheating is not tolerated. If you notice someone cheating, notify the instructor immediately.

8. **When exams are returned, students often have questions about why they got points taken off for various answers. You may review a student’s exam with him/her and help understand the correct answer. However, it is not your job to negotiate for that student how many points should been taken off. Refer the student to the appropriate instructor for these sorts of discussions.**

9. **Photocopy quizzes, tests, and handouts, if asked.**

10. **Ensure that cadavers and all preserved specimens are treated with utmost respect.**
    a. **NEVER** allow anyone to photograph any part of the cadaver
    b. Always speak in a respectful manner about the cadaver
       i. Do not use derogatory language
       ii. Do not make fun of any aspect of the cadaver anatomy
    c. Remind the students what a privilege and a unique opportunity we all have to be able to work with human cadavers at the undergraduate level.

11. **Make sure that all cadavers and preserved specimens remain hydrated and properly covered (see instructions below).**
Important note: As a teaching assistant, you may find yourself in an uncomfortable position of teaching your friends or being asked by students in your class to offer them additional help (since you are friends). Similarly, you might often be asked to show your old lab reports, case studies, and other graded materials. As a teaching assistant, you are bound by the same rules of integrity as the E-town faculty and students. Any previously graded material from this course should NOT be disseminated to students currently taking the course. Distribution/sharing of your old material while a TA for this course, will result in immediate dismissal from this position.

Please remember, while there is nothing wrong with you helping your friends succeed in this tough course, as teaching assistant, you must be able to offer equal opportunities to all your students. Therefore, to make sure that all students have equal opportunities, don’t do anything for one student that you are not willing or cannot do for every student.

TA Code of Conduct

As a teaching assistant, you serve as an example to the students taking this course. You have more experience and knowledge about this course, but you also have more responsibilities. Therefore, it is essential that you are always prepared, tactful, respectful, and professional. Here are some important pointers to be mindful of:

1. Do not use derogatory language in class.
2. Always conduct yourself in a professional and courteous manner.
   a. Unless given permission to do otherwise, refer to the course instructors by title (Dr. Goldina, Mrs. Bartlett).
   b. Do not interrupt. If the instructor or your fellow TA is talking to a student, wait until the conversation comes to a natural stop.
   c. Respect the students. Do not talk down to them or boss them around. Your job is to facilitate learning and help create a supportive, engaging environment (not show off how much you know).

3. Some students in your classes will be your friends and others you might not like as much. As teaching assistants, it is important that you are equally respectful to everyone in the class.
   a. Especially during class time, never talk about students or professors with TAS or with other people in that class.
   b. Do not discuss students’ grades, potentially embarrassing or uncomfortable situations that might have happened in class with your classmates.
   c. Respect the students. Do not talk down to them or boss them around. Your job is to facilitate learning and help create a supportive, engaging environment (not show off how much you know).
   d. Above all, be empathetic and respectful. Treat students the way that you would like to be treated.

4. During class, focus on the course material. It is completely ok to share your life with the students and we encourage you to make meaningful connections with them; however, during class time, please try to limit extended non-course related conversations. As you might remember from your own experience, there is a lot of information to cover and much of it is overwhelming.
a. If you are not actively teaching a station, like during a self-study day (see schedule below), then walk around and make sure that students do not have any questions.

5. Never answer a question if you are not sure that you are correct. Anatomy and Physiology is a huge field, there are many structures to remember and these structures often have multiple names and functions. We do not expect you to know everything, but we do expect you to be honest about your level of knowledge. If you are not sure about something, please ask us before you teach. However, even during lab, feel free to say “I don’t know the answer, but I will find out” and then check with the course instructor. Make sure to follow-up with the student(s) and let them know the correct information.

6. If you notice that another TA/instructor makes a mistake about a particular concept/structure, do NOT interrupt with the correction. Instead, wait for the TA/instructor to finish, then pull her/him aside and together verify the correct information. Then, allow the TA/instructor to return to the group and correct the mistake. Interrupting in the middle of the conversation is likely to frazzle and undermine the TA/instructor and set a bad precedent for the students. Pulling her aside, on the other hand, gives both of you a chance to make sure that you have the correct understanding of the material (which is the ultimate goal).

7. To make sure that our teaching methods are effective, we are constantly trying new methods and re-evaluating existing strategies. The benefit of this approach is that we are learning the best ways to reach our specific types of students. The disadvantage is that our ideas don’t always work and require fine tuning. As teaching assistants, you are at the forefront of these changes. When these changes work, it is exciting to watch students learn; when they don’t work, it can be frustrating and uncomfortable for everyone. No matter how difficult these frustrating moments become, please behave professionally throughout the entire experience. We would love to know your input and want you to feel free to express positive and negative opinions during the TA meetings. However, in the classroom, in front of students, you need to be able to maintain composure, not point fingers, and always make the best of the situation at hand. If you can stay calm and positive, students will follow your lead and will also have a good attitude.

8. At the end of the semester, students in your sections will evaluate you. You will be allowed to view these evaluations and you will be able to use these evaluations to assess your own performance. We will use these evaluations to guide us in our TA selections for the following semester.

**Working and teaching with cadavers**

Having access to human cadavers in a small undergraduate institution is a very unique learning opportunity and an incredible privilege. Being able to observe the human body will provide invaluable preparation for all students going in the allied health and medical professions.

To make sure that the cadavers and associated specimens are of highest quality, we must all share the responsibility of caring for them. Furthermore, transmit your knowledge and care for the cadavers to
your students by being an example that they can observe and imitate. Follow these basic rules when caring for the cadavers:

**Handling of structures while teaching:**

1) Do NOT use sharp, pointed probes to stab various parts of the cadaver while teaching or during open labs. This is especially important when you are demonstrating soft structures like the brain.
2) Do NOT pull forcefully on structures (vessels and nerves are easily torn).
3) Use blunt probes or forceps to gently point at or lift structures that you are trying to demonstrate.
4) Try not to use your fingers to point out small structures.

**Cadavers/specimen maintenance**

1) To make sure that the cadavers/specimens don’t dry out, keep them tightly covered in plastic when not in use.
2) As soon as the lab is over, spray the cadaver with the hydrating solution and tightly cover it with the plastic cover.
3) During lab, keep the cadavers hydrated by spraying them liberally with the hydrating solution.
   a. Every time you come to a cadaver/specimen for demonstration, spray it down.
   b. Before leaving a demonstration, spray the specimen again.

Important note: The hydrating solution is a mixture of 5 parts 2-phenoxyethanol and 95 parts water. The 2-phenoxyethanol is a safe preservative and wetting agent that lacks any significant odor. It is a common ingredient in various cosmetics and is safe to handle. However, you should not drink it or spray it in the eyes.

**Preparing students to learn from cadavers**

For most of the students, this lab will be the first time they see a cadaver and all other specimens. Some students are more squeamish than others, some might be dealing with painful personal experiences of losing loved ones, and some might simply be excited. It is likely that in one class you will have a combination of students, and they will all have different feelings about working the cadavers.

As TAs, you need to be mindful of the students (especially on the first day of working with the cadaver), and be calm and professional about the experience. Do NOT try to be funny by making references to bad smells or other ways that your senses have been offended during your experience in this course, which will only exacerbate student anxiety. Instead, remain calm and be prepared to offer support to the students. Some students might need to sit down, step outside, or get some water. These reactions are completely normal. If a student needs to step outside, give the student a few minutes, but then check on him/her and make sure that he/she is alright.

If students are having a very difficult time with the smell, offer him/her a nose clip or a mask (both are located in the drawer in back of the room, next to the sink closest to the hood).
Working with bones

We use real bones and bone models in the lab. Real bones are very fragile and break easily. All the specimens are very expensive to replace. Therefore, it is imperative that we take great care of the specimens we have. By showing great care and proper technique in caring for the specimens, you are also modeling these important behaviors to the students.

Make sure that tables are covered with rubber mats on days when we are studying bones. When picking up bones and putting them down on the table, please be gentle. NEVER toss bones across a table or drop them on the table. Gently pick up the bones and be gentle when putting them back down. When passing the bone to another person, carefully place it in the recipient’s hand and do not release the bone until you are confident that the person has a firm grip on the bone.

Use blunt probes and toothpicks (wooden and plastic) to identify a small structure without damaging the specimen.

Do NOT use any objects that may mark or scratch the bone, to point to specific structures.

- Do not use pencils or pens
- Do not use sharp pointers

At the end of the lab, return all the bones to their respective drawers.

Put away the rubber mat.
Please sign the TA contract below, and submit to Dr. Goldina.

TA Contract

I ___________________________ have read and understood the rules and expectations of teaching assistants for the Human Anatomy and Physiology course (BIO201).

By signing this contract, I agree to the terms of employment outlined above.

Name __________________________
Signature _______________________
Date ___________________________
Tentative Employment contract for Teaching Assistants

of

Human Anatomy and Physiology Course (BIO 201)

You are being considered for a Teaching Assistant position for the Human Anatomy and Physiology course. This selection is based on your successful completion of the course, enthusiasm about the topic, as well as important character traits that you exhibited throughout the year such as maturity, punctuality, and professionalism.

As a Teaching Assistant at Elizabethtown College, you will have multiple opportunities to have a positive impact on students in the Anatomy and Physiology Course. You will be able to share your experience and knowledge and provide guidance to younger classmen. You will also serve as an important link between the students and the instructors, making sure that labs run smoothly and all students get the assistance they need.

Being a TA for this course will be a lot of work and will require a lot of your time. However, actively participating and taking advantage of this opportunity will allow you to become experts in the topics you teach (which will be very helpful for graduate school entrance exams, A&P in grad school, and the A&P portion of the OT Board exam) and will give you an invaluable teaching experience, significantly enhancing your resume.

In addition to your responsibilities during class time, you will have multiple opportunities to contribute to the design of the course; troubleshooting experiments, developing learning techniques, preparing practice exams, and helping set up actual exams.

To make sure that labs run smoothly, below is a list of the expectations of all the TAs for this course. Please read this sample contract and carefully consider whether you are willing to meet the expectations of this position.

**TA responsibilities**

1. Attend every TA meeting. During the TA meetings we will go over experiments and material that we will be covering that week. Important changes to existing protocols and announcements will also be discussed during that time. Missing a meeting will result in you being unprepared to do your job during the lab, thereby diminishing the quality of your peer’s educational experience. **Therefore, it is imperative that you attend all the TA meetings.**

   If you cannot attend a TA meeting:
   a. Notify Dr. Goldina or Mrs. Bartlett as soon as possible.
   b. Attend a lab BEFORE your lab and make sure that you know exactly what is going to be covered.
   c. Contact the course instructor and make special arrangements to make sure that you are prepared for your lab.
   d. If you miss a meeting and fail to attend another lab, you will not be allowed to teach during your assigned lab (and you will not be paid for that lab). Therefore, arrange for another TA to work during your time.
   e. **Missing more than 3 meetings will be grounds for termination.**
2. Study and prepare for every lab.
3. Participate in setup and cleanup.
   a. If you use dissecting tools/probes during the lab, clean them up and put them away before you leave.
   b. If you notice that we are running low on certain materials (i.e. gloves, paper towels, hydrating solution, etc.), let the instructor know.
   c. You are responsible for setting up your assigned teaching station.
4. Teach assigned stations in the lab.
5. Help ensure that all material is covered in a timely fashion by making sure that you don’t go over the allotted time limit at your station.
6. Write practice exam questions for the review stations.
7. Proctor lab exams.
   a. Be mindful of cheating. As a TA, it is your responsibility to ensure that cheating is not tolerated. If you notice someone cheating, notify the instructor immediately.
8. When exams are returned, students often have questions about why they got points taken off for various answers. You may review a student’s exam with him/her and help understand the correct answer. However, it is not your job to negotiate for that student how many points should been taken off. Refer the student to the appropriate instructor for these sorts of discussions.
9. Photocopy quizzes, tests, and handouts, when asked.
10. Ensure that cadavers and all preserved specimens are treated with utmost respect.
    a. NEVER allow anyone to photograph any part of the cadaver
    b. Always speak in a respectful manner about the cadaver
       i. Do not use derogatory language
       ii. Do not make fun of any aspect of the cadaver anatomy
    c. Remind the students what a privilege and a unique opportunity we all have to be able to work with human cadavers at the undergraduate level.
11. As in any professional environment, at work you are expected to devote your time to your job. You also serve as an example to the students in that lab. Please abide by the following rules while TAing and at all TA meetings:
    a. Put your cell phone away. Do not check your e-mail, text your friends, or use any other cell phone app during work.
    b. Do not do work for any other class during your lab. If there is downtime, use it to read up on the material we are covering, clean up, or ask if anything needs to be done in lab.
       i. If you have an exam coming up or are not meeting deadlines in your classes, contact a sub and arrange for her to TA instead of you.
    c. Come prepared. Make sure that you download and read all the handouts posted on the lab webpage in Canvas, and the associated TA guides posted in the Shared-Anatomy folder before coming to the TA meeting. Bring all relevant documents to the TA meetings and your lab, and be prepared to discuss the material.
12. Having a good attitude is an essential component of this job. You will deal with students that are stressed, tired, and are having difficulties. Sometimes, they will take their frustrations out on you by being rude, demanding, or tactless. While you should not tolerate abuse, you will need to find professional ways to deal with such students. The best strategy is to try to remain calm and
refer the student to the instructor. If you find that a student is continually disrespectful to you, let the instructor know. Do not confront the student.

13. Always conduct yourself in a professional and courteous manner.
   a. Unless given permission to do otherwise, refer to the course instructors by title (Dr. Goldina, Mrs. Bartlett).
   b. Do not interrupt. If the instructor or your fellow TA is talking to a student, wait until the conversation comes to a natural stop.
   c. Respect the students. Do not talk down to them or boss them around. Your job is to facilitate learning and help create a supportive, engaging environment (not show off how much you know).

14. We expect you to be problem solvers and self-starters. Throughout the semesters, we are constantly looking for ways to improve student learning experience, we try to develop innovative labs and learn new software. This means that you will often have to help teach labs and create setups that you have not done as a student. Your enthusiasm, good attitude, and willingness to try new things and solve problems will be essential for success of these labs.

Important note: As a teaching assistant, you may find yourself in an uncomfortable position of teaching your friends or being asked by students in your class to offer them additional help (since you are friends). Similarly, you might often be asked to show your old lab reports, case studies, and other graded materials. As a teaching assistant, you are bound by the same rules of integrity as the E-town faculty and students. Any previously graded material from this course should NOT be disseminated to students currently taking the course. Distribution/sharing of your old material while a TA for this course, will result in immediate dismissal from this position.

Please remember, while there is nothing wrong with you helping your friends succeed in this tough course, as a teaching assistant, you must be able to offer equal opportunities to all your students. Therefore, to make sure that all students have equal opportunities, don't do anything for one student that you are not willing or cannot do for every student.

At the end of the semester, students in your sections will evaluate you. You will be allowed to view these evaluations and you will be able to use these evaluations to assess your own performance. We will use these evaluations to guide us in our TA selections for the following semester.
Job Application for the Teaching Assistant of Anatomy and Physiology Course

1) Name ___________________________________

2) Contact information
   a. Phone # _________________________________
   b. E-mail _________________________________

3) Our labs in the Fall semester will be on MW at 12:30, MW at 2:00, MF at 9:30, and TH 9:30 and 11:00. Which labs will you be able to TA?

4) Why are you interested in becoming a TA for this course?

5) Please list personality/academic strengths that you believe would make you a good TA.

6) While taking A&P, you had interactions with multiple TAs. Which TA qualities did you feel were most helpful to you, and which qualities were not? Please explain your answers.

7) As a TA for A&P, we expect you to actively participate in course design, be willing to try new things, learn new material and remember material you learned while a student.
   a. Please give an example of one thing that you feel worked really well during the time you took A&P and explain what made it successful.

   b. Please give an example of one thing that did not work and how you would improve it.

Important note: As a TA, you will be required to attend weekly TA meetings. The time of the meetings will be determined before the beginning of the semester. Even if you are an ideal match for this position, if you cannot attend the TA meetings, we might not offer you the job this semester.
## Semester schedule

Below is the tentative A&P Schedule for the Fall semester.

Exams dates might change, but this will give you an idea of our overall pace.

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<th>Lab</th>
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<td>Basic terminology, vertebral column, rib cage and associated musculature</td>
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<td>Specific times will be arranged for you to take the exam in small groups</td>
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*Quiz
**Week 1, Lab 1 - Outline**

**Basic structure:** This lab is going to be led by the instructor. TAs need to be ready to introduce themselves and assist the instructor when asked. When students begin working on course material (Gummy Bear surgery and associated exercises), TAs should walk around and make sure that students are on track.

**Lab setup/prep:** Each student needs to have 1 plastic knife, 1 plate/paper towel, 4-6 gummy bears

I. **Main introductions (20 minutes)**
   a. Introduce instructor and TA
      i. Provide TA contact information
   b. Discuss syllabus and basic course structure
   c. Suggested ways to study for the lab
      i. How to use the Atlas and the provided exam material
      ii. TAs, please share what has worked for you last year
   d. Basic lab rules
      i. Closed-toe shoes
      ii. Download course material on Canvas
      iii. Cadaver etiquette (will reinforce when we start working with cadavers)

II. **Introduction of the essential vocabulary – the musculoskeletal and nervous systems (10 minutes)**
   a. Basic structures we will focus on this semester – bones, joints, muscles, and nerves
   b. Basic functional relationships
      i. Bones create a framework for the body, protection for our internal organs, and support soft tissue. In motion, bones serve as levers. Other metabolic functions, as well as the internal anatomy of bone will be discussed in lecture.
         1. Refer to multiple bone-associated vocabulary that we will learn and significance of those terms
         2. Review the list of terms listed in Exam 1 packet intro section for next lab
      ii. Joints are located between bones, provide cushion, allow movement by acting as fulcrum (point against which the lever pivots).
      iii. Muscles attach to bones and generate the force necessary to move bones.
         1. Internal anatomy of bones and means of generating muscle contraction will be discussed in lecture.
      iv. Nerves stimulate muscles to contract
         1. Action potentials will be discussed in lecture.

III. **The Anatomical position and directional terminology- Gummy Bear surgery (10 minutes)**
   a. Discuss anatomical position
   b. Introduce anatomical planes
   c. Cut your gummy bears into sections reflecting the following planes: 1) sagittal and parasagittal, 2) longitudinal 3) transverse (horizontal)

IV. **Important reminders for next lab**
a. Print and read the introduction section of the Exam 1 packet – especially the bone markings section
b. Complete exercise 2 and 3 (directional terminology) in Exam 1 packet

V. Assessment exam (40 minutes)

Lab clean up: make sure that tables are clean and all garbage is properly disposed.

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Week 1, Lab 2 – Outline

Introduction to the skeletal system

Basic structure: This lab is going to be led by the instructor. The instructor will introduce the basics of the skeletal system and the basic terminology used in describing bones and the vertebral column (The entire introduction should not take longer than 30 minutes). After the introduction, students will be asked to start looking at the vertebrae in front of them and try identify and remember the structures listed in their exam packet.

Important note: Remind students that bones are fragile and show them how to handle them. Also, point out that there are probes on the table that they can use to point to small structures. They should NEVER use sharp objects, pencils or pens to point to any structure on bones.

TAs: walk around and be ready to assist the students. Even if students are not asking for help, walk around and offer your help.

Lab setup/prep

1) Please make sure put rubber matting on the tables prior to putting the bones.
2) Bones on the tables: vertebral columns, vertebrae (cervical, thoracic, lumbar, C1 and C2), coccyx and sacrum.
3) Place blunt probes, toothpicks, and wooden pointers on the tables.

Lab clean up:

1) Return all bones to their respective drawers
2) Fold up and put away the rubber mats into a designated cabinet
3) Put all the probes into a container, into the cabinets