

# Teaching Commons News For Graduate Students

## Taking the Initiative!

As the days become shorter and our to do lists become longer, one must often dig deep this time of year to find the motivation and persistence to continue, especially when you are trying to balance the demands of graduate student life and your TA responsibilities. While the attributes of persistence and motivation are fundamentally sourced from within, we can often derive inspiration from those around us who take the initiative to gain support and improve.

This month's issue celebrates taking the initiative to learn and improve one's teaching practice. Whether you are a Graduate TA who has already benefited from joining our TC teaching and learning community, whether you are contemplating next steps on how to improve your teaching, we are here to inspire, and support all those passionate about teaching and learning. Join our growing TC community and experience reciprocal inspiration from multiple sources that are striving for excellence in teaching and learning at York!



## Celebrating TC's Record of Completion Awardees!

Speaking of taking the initiative....the Teaching Commons has had an unprecedented number of Graduate TAs who have earned our Junior Record of Completion Certificate since its inception in 2012.

The requirements to obtain this certificate are to attend at least 5 Professional Development Workshops offered by the Teaching Commons within one academic year. Most of these workshops are 1 hour in duration and are facilitated by Teaching Commons staff or Senior Teaching Assistants. Examples of topics covered in these workshops include designing tutorials, marking and grading, engaging with students, active learning strategies, academic integrity, dealing with classroom and student conflict, human rights in the classroom, to name only a few.

In celebration of these outstanding Graduate TAs whose dedication and commitment to teaching and learning at York deserves to be recognized, the TC will host our first ever **Record of Completion Celebration** on Thursday, Dec. 4, 2014. Distinguished guests include graduate supervisors, members of the Faculty of Graduate Studies, the office of the Associate Vice-President of Teaching and Learning and the Teaching Commons.



Congratulations to Record of Completion Awardees! We will contact you in November to invite you to the celebration. We look forward to celebrating your achievement Dec. 4, 2014.

Did you know that by obtaining a Record of Completion you are eligible to enroll in our TACT program?

Visit our website for more details about the different requirements for the 'Record of Completion' Certificate, depending on whether you are a new TA (junior certificate) or more experienced TA (senior certificate).

<http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/teaching-assistant-record-of-completion-certificate/>

## Come for Coffee - TA Drop-in Hours at the TC Lounge

Do you have any questions or inquiries about your TAsip, or about teaching? Would you like the opportunity to speak one-on-one with an experienced TA about these issues and/or for advice in a quiet space?

Teaching Commons Tutors (TCTs) can offer you confidential, peer-based support whether you are a new or experienced TA struggling with a teaching issue, or simply wish to connect with other TAs across the university.

TCTs are PhD students with solid teaching experience at York in diverse disciplines, in the liberal arts, fine arts, sciences, and health sciences. They have completed all the accredited courses offered by the Teaching Commons, such as TACT and STA, and can provide teaching support and answer questions about these programs.

This service is open to ALL domestic and international TAs across all disciplines, Visit our website at: <http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/ta-drop-in/> to reserve your spot now or simply drop-in and enjoy a FREE cup of coffee with us.



## November's TA Drop –In - Featuring TCT, Stefan Lazov

The November drop-in hours in the TC Lounge in TEL 1050 are scheduled during:

Thursday November 6, 2014, 3:30-4:30pm  
Thursday November 20, 2014, 3:30-4:30pm



The Teaching Commons (TC) is proud to announce TCT and PhD candidate in Sociology, Stefan Lazov will be hosting the November TA drop-in hours.

Stefan has worked as a TA in the Sociology program at York University since 2009. His passion for teaching led him to the TC where he has been a TCT since 2012. As a graduate of the Senior TA program with accreditation from SEDA, Stefan has facilitated many workshops for the TC including topics such as: student engagement, teaching with technology and in an online environment, and conflict resolution in the classroom.

"I look forward to sharing the experiences and skills I have gained throughout the years with anyone who might benefit from them. Having completed all of my academic degrees at York University I also have a deep understanding of the student culture here, which could benefit anyone who is new to Campus." (Stefan Lazov)



Calling ALL TAs. Please take a quick moment to complete the on-line survey. Visit <http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/forms/view.php?id=204728> and tell us how we can best serve your TA needs during this monthly drop-in visit.

We look forward to hearing from you because your feedback is important to us!!

Sincerely,

*The Teaching Commons  
Tutors*



## Featured Event:

### TA FOUNDATIONS SEMINAR

"Dialogue, Debate, Discussion: Engaging Students in Foundations Tutorials"



Foundations TA's are invited to participate in an interactive seminar featuring Professor Robert Tordoff at **2:30pm on Tuesday, November 4th, in Ross 752S.**

The seminar will suggest some strategies for engaging students through interactive group learning in small groups. Professor Tordoff will also present a range of pedagogical techniques for planning tutorials around dialogue, debate, and discussion.

Professor Robert Tordoff is an Associate Professor of Ancient Greek and Classical Studies at York. He obtained his PhD from Cambridge University and has published on ancient Greek literature and history, focusing on Aristophanes and the history of slavery in Ancient Greece. He has taught Foundations Level Courses since 2006.

**Foundations TAs will be paid for one hour at the CUPE overtime rate for attending this session. Everyone is welcome to attend. Light refreshments will be served.**

## Course Design for Experienced TAs

The Course Design for Graduate students is a one-day workshop intended for graduate students who are preparing for their first Course Directorship or are looking to refine and develop their experience as a CD/Course Instructor. Participants will be introduced to the stages, principles and good practices of systematic course design and will engage in reflection and discussions on teaching practices as well as hands-on activities. The focus will be on facilitating an evidence-based and learner-centered learning environment that promotes deep learning.

**When:** Thursday November 20th, 2014, from 10am to 4pm

**Where:** TEL 1014

**To Register, visit:** <http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/forms/view.php?id=168041>

## Upcoming Professional Development Workshops

**Let's talk about social equalities: Addressing critical and often emotionally charged issues in tutorial**

**November 5, 2014, 12pm-1pm in TEL 1014**

**Classroom Strategies for When They Haven't Done the Readings**

**November 7, 2014, 12pm-1pm in TEL 1014**

**The Mechanics of Writing and Effective Statement of Teaching Philosophy**

**November 7, 2014, 12pm-1pm in Ross S701**

**Dealing with Classroom and Student Conflict**

**November 11, 2014, 12pm-1pm in TEL 1009**

**Academic Integrity in the Classroom**

**November 17, 2014, 12pm-1pm TEL 1009**

**Learn how to "Do" a Teaching Dossier**

**December 11, 2014, 12pm-2pm TEL 1014**

**Last  Call**

If you are interested in enrolling in this course please fill out the **Teaching Commons TACT Program Registration of Interest - Winter 2015:**

<http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/forms/view.php?id=127427>

For more information and to register for these sessions, please visit

<http://teachingcommons.yorku.ca/ta-sessions/>