

sors approach it as a practicum, an opportunity for you to learn and exercise your pedagogical style, others use you to get their own work done. Your power is provisional and contingent. The expectations vary from course to course; the subject matter may be more or less familiar, making your job that much harder. The grading you do must accord with not only your own sensibility, but even more so with what the professor wants. You may have to run discussion sections only, or you may be expected to lecture several times.

Learn whether the department or the institution or both have stated guidelines about this role. Become familiar with your rights and responsibilities, and the length of duty. Your job will be infinitely easier if you can work cooperatively and communicate clearly with the professor with whom you are working. Before the course begins, schedule an appointment to discuss and clarify the expectations and terms. If you run into trouble, learn to whom you can go to ask for assistance (the chair of the department, the dean, and your advisor). This may be your only “formal” training as a teacher before you are unleashed in front of a class on your own, so take advantage of it.

## Teaching, first year

Teaching is a wonderful way to share the fruits of years of study (see **Teaching**). The first year can be difficult as one learns both the ropes of an institution and a lot about oneself as a teacher. Most common mistakes to avoid include putting too much material on the syllabus or taking on too much work on top of the required course load, something to which women are especially prone, given our socialization. People of color are often pressured as well by institutions anxious to show their newfound diversity (see **Tokenism**). Taking on too much is an easy mistake to make because we all want to make a good first impression and show ourselves to be team players. But it will inevitably backfire as the constraints of time and energy make learning the difference between “yes” and “no” (see **Yes and no**) a matter of life or death. Burnout is epidemic among first-year teachers, enthusiasm notwithstanding.