



# Teaching Practicum in Health Sciences/Sports Medicine

## HEAL 499/KINE 499

### Introduction

HEAL 499 and KINE 499 provide advanced teaching experience for upper level students who have demonstrated particular aptitude and interest in one area of Kinesiology. Students will assist in conducting a course in which they have previously excelled. The student will learn techniques in course management, instruction, and evaluation. As an undergraduate teaching assistant (TA) in the Health Sciences or Sports Medicine program at Rice University, you are considered a junior scholar who works under the course instructor's supervision. While you serve as a course assistant, the faculty member / instructor bears the overall responsibility for the course.

In order to help you understand what is expected of you, the following summary statements of the expectations and responsibilities of you as a TA are:

1. In the Health Sciences or Sports Medicine program in the Kinesiology Department, you will work under the direction of the faculty member responsible for the course for which you have elected to serve as a teaching assistant. This is the person to whom you should go with questions concerning the particular course.
2. As a TA for the course, you are expected to assist the course instructor as needed.
3. You are expected to be available to the course instructor throughout the semester except for scheduled academic recesses.
4. Attend the class at the time and in the place assigned, and for the number of meetings designated in the class schedule.

### Frequently asked Questions

Who can serve as a TA? Upper level students who have (1) demonstrated particular aptitude and interest in one area of Kinesiology and (2) excelled (A- or better) in a previous semester in the course for which they wish to serve as a TA.

How do I become a TA? First, you must be approved / invited by the course instructor to serve as a TA, and a Special Registration form must be filled out and signed. Enroll in either HEAL 499 or KINE 499, depending on the course chosen to TA and make sure to register in the section with the correct course instructor.

How do I get "paid"? HEAL 499 and KINE 499 provide advanced teaching experience for which you earn academic credits hours (variable) towards your degree. There is no monetary compensation.

What will I learn as a TA? In addition to learning course material in depth, the student will learn techniques in course management, instruction, and evaluation.

What will I do as a TA? Your responsibilities will vary depending on the course for which you serve as a TA and will be assigned to you by the faculty member supervising you. Generally, TAs perform a combination of administrative and instructional duties, such as drafting of course assignments and tests, marking and grading course work, monitoring course website, assisting with audio-visual equipment, leading discussion sessions, providing support for lecture and debate sections, helping prepare materials for instruction, keeping grade and attendance records, and doing typing and filing. The TAs may also teach and provide instructional reinforcement to students, under the direction and guidance of the faculty member.

## **TA Roles and Responsibilities**

This list includes some of the major roles and responsibilities assumed by a TA. It is by no means all-inclusive, nor are the duties necessarily listed in order of importance:

- Reinforcing basic lecture material
- Emphasizing relevance of course content
- Directing students to additional resources
- Answering students questions
- Stimulating interest, enthusiasm, and encouraging student initiative
- Interpreting and enforcing course policies
- Usage and understanding of Owl-Space
- Maintaining clear and complete records
- Drafting course assignments and tests
- Marking and grading course work
- Monitoring course website
- Assisting with audio-visual equipment
- Leading discussion sessions
- Providing support for lecture and debate sections
- Preparing materials for instruction
- Teaching
- Typing and filing
- Confidentiality with all grades and assignments

## **TA Rewards**

For starters, this may be the first time you have had to communicate in an instructional role about health sciences or sports medicine topics as a professional. Until now you have filled the relatively passive role of student conveying your knowledge through structured examinations and reports. Your teaching assistantship represents a chance to solidify your overall understanding of health sciences or sports medicine fundamentals. The saying 'the best way to learn something is to teach it' is based on the testimony of most experienced instructors.

As a TA, you have an excellent opportunity to practice (in a relatively non-threatening arena) skills such as thinking on your feet, answering questions, organizing a presentation, improvising, and establishing a poised presence -- attributes of considerable value in making it through graduate seminars and even oral examinations.

You will encounter long-range benefits from your teaching experience. If you decide to continue in the academic community upon completion of your graduate program, you'll probably be called upon to teach at both the graduate and the undergraduate levels. Your exposure as a TA will provide the initial opportunity to practice the skills that can make you effective in the classroom. Or, if you prefer to eschew the academic world, the ability to communicate effectively about your research or other professional efforts to an audience of peers of non-technical types may prove as valuable in industry or government as the scientific knowledge and experience you acquired with the degree.