APPLICATION FOR TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS
IN
CORE BIOLOGY COURSES 2016-2017

By completing this application, you will be considered for a Teaching Assistantship in one of the Core Biology Courses. The courses are conducted in a variety of different formats and consequently each instructor may have different expectations of teaching assistants. In general, a balanced training in undergraduate biology courses is required for the Investigative Biology Laboratory (BioG 1500) and Foundations of Biology (BioG 1140), and applicants who have taken specialized courses will have the advantage of being selected for the other courses. All courses require their TAs to have a good command of spoken and written English, organizational skills, and interpersonal demeanor.

TA applications are due by 13 March 2016 at 8am E.S.T. Review of applications and subsequent offers will begin immediately thereafter and continue until all positions are filled. We anticipate filling all positions before 15 April 2016. In general, TAships are awarded in the spring for the following academic year. In some special cases, however, TAships will be offered for one semester.

After reading this application, if you need additional information please contact Cole Gilbert, Director of Undergraduate Biology; email: cg23@cornell.edu
Section I. COURSE FORMAT AND TA RESPONSIBILITIES

A. BioG 1445: Introduction to Comparative Anatomy and Physiology, Individualized Instruction

This is an individualized instruction course serving biology majors. Students learn information through readings, demonstrations, small group discussions, and, most importantly, through one-on-one tutoring. An important aspect of this course is that it is based on mastery learning using oral tests as the primary method of evaluation. There is one one-hour meeting per week, which may be a lecture, or small group discussion, and 4 formal labs per semester.

Your total time commitment will average 20 hours per week. This includes time for preparation. However, it is expected that you will spend additional time reviewing material in areas where your knowledge is deficient. TAs:

1. must attend orientation and training meetings scheduled for the two days prior to the start of each semester.
2. work 3 three-hour sessions in the Study Center per week. Extra sessions may be required during unusually busy times.
3. are given supervisory responsibilities over undergraduate TAs.
4. must attend preparatory 2-hour staff meetings each week (Monday, 2:30-4:30 p.m.) and special laboratory preparatory sessions (individually scheduled).
5. are required to teach a maximum of four laboratory sessions during each semester.
6. are expected to be adequately prepared to present the materials and concepts of each of the 10 units to students. TAs must write out and submit answers to all unit objectives in the Survival Manual according to a prescribed schedule.
7. must attend all 50-minute lectures given during the 9:05 a.m. lecture period on Tuesdays.
8. lead small group discussion sections as scheduled during the Tuesday 9:05 a.m. session (4/semester).
9. grade lab reports and quizzes for students in your lab sections.
10. proctor the final exam each semester and assist in the grading of essay questions.

B. BioG 1140: Foundations of Biology

BioG 1140 is a general biology course primarily for students majoring in life sciences, other than biology. The emphasis is on cell biology, biochemistry, genetics and molecular biology. The goal is to provide students with a common, basic background that other courses in their discipline can build on. We do not deal very much with biological systems, for example the nervous system or xylem transport, unless we use those systems as examples to illustrate more fundamental concepts such as membrane transport. We teach little at the ecological level.

This is a good course in which to develop teaching skills since you will be introducing fundamental concepts to a varied group. This is a 15-hour per week TA assignment. TAs are responsible for the following:
• Teach and grade two 50-min Discussion Sessions per week. See the Course and Time Roster online for session times. There are 4 TAs and 8 sessions. The TAs work out the most convenient session times among themselves. Several of the discussion sessions require grading.
  • Attend all lectures (11:40 – 12:55 in Kennedy 116).
  • Attend a TA meeting once per week, usually held on Friday.
  • Hold office hours (1 hr/week)
  • Review quizzes and final exam before they are printed, monitor the quizzes (probably 2, in class), and monitor the final exam (1.5 hrs). You will probably be called upon to grade quizzes as well since they often consist of part multiple choice and part essays. There is no manual grading of the final exam because it is strictly multiple choice.

C. BioMG 1350: Principles of Cell and Developmental Biology

Instructors: Tim Huffaker, fall semester; Maria Garcia-Garcia and Tony Bretscher, spring semester.

This is one of the core “choice” introductory biology courses for students majoring in biology and a few other life science majors. Students planning to major in biology will be encouraged to take this course within their first three semesters. Students will attend two lectures and one active-learning section per week. TA applicants should have taken basic courses in biochemistry, cell biology and genetics; coursework in developmental biology is helpful, but not required. This is a 15-hour per week TA assignment.

TA duties are as follows:

1. Attend two 50-minute lectures per week
2. Attend a weekly ~2-hour meeting with instructors to plan section activities
3. Teach three active learning sections per week (50 minute duration, maximum 20 students in each)
4. Keep records of attendance and homework completion by students in your sections
5. Hold office hours (1 hour/week)

D. BioG 1440: Introduction to Comparative Physiology

This course is another of the introductory biology “choice” courses in the core curriculum for student majoring in biology and some other life sciences. Students will be primarily freshmen with interests in medical or veterinary school or graduate school in the life sciences. The course consists of two lectures and one discussion/mini lab section per week. The possibility also exists of doing a “double TAship” in one semester, thereby earning a full year of support in one semester. This is a 15-hour per week TA assignment.

TA duties are as follows:

1. Attend two 50-minute lectures per week and a 1-hour weekly meeting of the course staff to plan section activities.
2. TA training specific to this course is required the first semester and thereafter a mutually agreeable development activity each semester is strongly encouraged (for example: CLT workshop, CALS workshop, tutorial project or lab development).
3. Teach three 50-minute discussion/lab sections each week (maximum 20 students in each), and keep records of attendance and homework completion by students in your sections.

4. Help write and grade two prelims and one final exam.

5. Hold office hours (1 hour/week).

E. BioEE 1610: Ecology and the Environment

This is the third “choice” introductory biology core course for students majoring in biology and some other life sciences. It is designed to introduce the core concepts of the science of ecology. A fundamental knowledge of the relationship between organisms and their environment is critical for understanding the intricacies of the natural world and for solving many of the environmental problems that confront us today. Our goals are for students to gain an understanding of: 1) major principles underlying the ways organisms interact with their physical and biological environments, 2) how complex ecological systems function, 3) approaches and tools employed in ecological research, 4) application of ecological concepts to solving environmental problems and conserving biodiversity. We aim to engage different learning styles with a combination of readings, lectures, and section activities. Lectures will highlight the major points about each topic, often taking a different approach than the text and providing additional examples. This is a 15-hour per week TA assignment.

TA duties are as follows:

1. Attend two 50-minute lectures per week and a 1-hour weekly TA meeting to review instructional plans for section activities.

2. Teach three discussion/lab sections each week (maximum 20 students in each), grade section activities and keep grading records of attendance and homework completion by students in your sections.

6. Help proctor and grade two prelims and one final exam.

7. Hold office hours (1 hour/week).

F. BioG 1500: Investigative Biology Laboratory

This is a two-semester assistantship; however the course content is identical each semester. A single semester assistantship is not offered. Your total time commitment will average 20 hours per week. This includes time for preparation. Teaching assistants gain real teaching experience and can improve their pedagogical skills in this course. They teach two 18 student lab sections of 3 hours duration, with the help of at least one undergraduate teaching assistant. Grades are based on two in-lab practical exams, quizzes, paper discussions and writing assignments. Lab topics are organized into three-week-long modules, emphasizing the scientific process in biological investigations. Students design their own experiments, conduct statistical tests using the statistical software R, write a scientific paper and produce a poster. The course staff includes a lecturer, a teaching postdoc, 12 graduate teaching assistants, 12-16 undergraduate teaching assistants, two lab preparators, and one administrative assistant. As a TA, you will:

1. Participate in a brief Lab Instructor training program during the week preceding the first week of laboratory teaching.
2. Teach two laboratory sections (3 hrs duration, 16-18 students in each).

3. Attend the Monday afternoon preparatory meeting from 1:30 to around 4:30 p.m. and the lecture on Tuesday at 9:05 a.m. each week. It is recommended that new TAs attend a lab section taught by an experienced TA each week before their first section.

4. Hold office hours (2 per week) during which you can meet with and tutor students. Rooms 1109 and 1122 in Comstock Hall are available for office hours.

5. Be adequately prepared to present the materials and concepts of each laboratory sequence to your students.

6. Grade practical exams and writing assignments for students in your lab sections.

7. Hold a review session near the end of each semester to help your students prepare for the practical exam.

8. Keep accurate written records on all grades received by your students.

9. Mentor one or two undergraduate teaching assistants.

G. BioMG 3350: Biochemistry

BIOMG 3350 is an intensive one-semester lecture course in biochemistry. This course is ONLY offered during the spring semester. Students attend class four days per week, M-Th. Every other week (on Thursdays), they will take either a quiz or an exam. The primary responsibility of the course TA will be to hold office hours twice per week for two hours each time. These should be scheduled in the afternoon and with thought given to general availability (i.e. they should not be MW or TR). To prepare for these office hours the TA will be required to attend each of the daily lectures, read the daily assignments and solve the assigned problems in the text and study guide. Additional responsibilities of the course TA will be to duplicate the lecture handouts, help write and proctor the quizzes and exams, and, with the assistance of the course instructors and two hired graders, to grade them. This is a 15-hour per week TA assignment.

H. PLHrt 1115: The Nature of Plants

This is a general overview course structured for life-science majors outside of the Biology major and is focused on plants including topics on succession, species diversity, reproduction, plant defense, water relations and bioenergy. For information concerning TA responsibilities please contact Dr. Taryn Bauerle (bauerle@cornell.edu).

TA duties:
1. Hold office hours twice per week.
2. Teach one lecture in area to be decided at the beginning of the semester.
3. Proctor exams
4. Help grade homework assignments, quizzes, and exams.
5. Help run 3 field trips on weekends in late April/May
Section II. SUMMARY OF STIPEND AND APPOINTMENT PERIOD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Numbers</th>
<th>BioG 1445 and BioG 1500</th>
<th>BioG 1140, 1440, BioEE 1610, BioMG 1350, 3350, PLHrt 1115</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average time required/wk during teaching wks.</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two-semester stipend</td>
<td>$33,536</td>
<td>$25,152</td>
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<td>Appointment period*</td>
<td>Fall appointment: August 16 – December 31</td>
<td>Spring appointment: January 1 – May 15</td>
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* As per University Policy 1.3: “TA assignments follow the academic year calendar. Because the academic calendar does not always correspond with the appointment periods, TAs should be informed that, when a semester either begins or ends outside that period, they may be required to fulfill teaching responsibilities outside of the appointment period”

Double TAships: There are restrictions to serving a double TAship during a single semester. Please refer to Section V.6 of the Graduate code of legislation for details.

Employment and Registration Units: The time devoted to part-time work affects the opportunities for accumulation of registration units, as follows:
· Up to 20 hours of employment per week, either on- or off-campus. A student may be allowed up to one registration unit each semester. For certification to outside agencies consenting to this interpretation, graduate students who hold assistantships for which the contracted duties do not exceed twenty hours per week are regarded as full-time students.
· 21 to 40 hours of employment per week, on- or off-campus. A student may be allowed up to one-half of a registration unit for each semester. Master's students may earn a maximum of one registration unit in this way. Ph.D. students may earn a maximum of two units in this way. Students who wish to earn registration units in this way must obtain the prior approval of their Special Committee chair and Director of Graduate Studies. The General Petition is available at http://gradschool.cornell.edu/sites/gradschool.cornell.edu/files/field_file/General%20Petition%206_11_13%20(2).pdf

Section III. APPLICATION, SELECTION AND NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES

A. Application

There is a separate MS-Word file which many people have, likely including your department Chair or DGS. It is also available at the OUB website [http://biology.cornell.edu/] Follow the link on the front page. Download the form, fill it in electronically, save it as a PDF and email the PDF to Ms. Anne Plescia, acp3@cornell.edu

B. Selection Process
Your application will be reviewed initially by a member of the course indicated as your top choice. An interview may be arranged if your application file is favorable and, following a successful interview, the instructor may indicate his or her intent to offer a TAship. This is not binding – the actual offers and contracts will come from the OUB as described below. Your file may also be reviewed by staff members of courses not listed as your top choice, and if your application is favorable, the instructor again may call you for an interview and may indicate his or her intention to offer a TAship in a course that is your second or third choice. The staff of each course will meet or correspond regularly among themselves and even instructors of other courses to select TAs. As best as we can, we will match your preference and application to the course of your choice.

C. Notification Procedures

If your funding situation changes before you are offered a TA contract, e.g., your NSF GRFP is awarded, please let us know immediately so that we can remove your application to make room for others. You may contact Cole Gilbert (cg23@cornell.edu), the Director of Undergraduate Biology, regarding the status of your application. If initially a position is not available we will retain your application. Quite often slots become available even late in the spring and summer and we will continue to make offers until all positions are filled.

Please note that only the Office of Undergraduate Biology can make you an offer and supply a contract. All conversations with course instructors or other members of the Cornell community are purely a preliminary review and those entities cannot make an offer. Moreover, TAship offers can only be made to students in a research track paying contract college rates of tuition. If you are in a professional program, you will be excluded from consideration.

If you are offered a TAship, you must accept it or reject it by the deadline specified in the contract letter. Your failure to accept an offer by the specified deadline may preclude your being offered the same TAship again. Once you have signed a contract letter, you are bound to adhere to the contract. If your situation changes, e.g., your Advisor’s NIH grant is awarded in July, please contact Cole Gilbert (cg23@cornell.edu) immediately. We, in conjunction with your department chair, DGS, and Advisor, will strive to find an alternative and release you from the contract. However, the fulfillment of the contract is ultimately the student’s responsibility.