

## **Departmental Affairs Guidelines for Teaching Observation**

(Adopted December 2, 2020)

The Department of History utilizes peer teaching observations for two primary purposes:

- 1) To provide mentorship to faculty in order to help them improve their teaching.
- 2) To document teaching excellence for the purposes of annual evaluations or promotion cases.

### **Tenure Track Teaching Observation**

Tenure track faculty members will be observed at least once each academic year during the probationary period. These teaching observations will be conducted with the dual aims of offering mentorship to probationary faculty and as a means of documenting success in the classroom and/ or online learning environments for the purposes of tenure and promotion.

The Chair of the Tenure and Promotion Committee will arrange one teaching observation by a tenured faculty member each year.

The observer and the tenure track faculty member will mutually agree upon which class period will be observed. After visiting the class, the observer will write a report and submit copies to the faculty member who was observed, to the Chair of the Tenure and Promotion Committee, and to the Department Chair, who will place a copy of the report in the faculty member's personnel file.

Tenure track faculty members may also, if they choose, invite additional colleagues to observe their classes and write reports, which will also be placed in their personnel file.

### **Lecturer Teaching Observation**

Anyone holding the rank of "Lecturer" or "Senior Lecturer" will be observed at least once each academic year. These teaching observations will be conducted with the dual aims of offering mentorship to lecturers and as a means of documenting success in the classroom and/ or online learning environments for the purposes of promotion.

The Chair of the Tenure and Promotion Committee will arrange one teaching observation by a tenured faculty member each year.

The observer and the lecturer will mutually agree upon which class period will be observed. After visiting the class, the observer will write a report and submit copies to the faculty member who was observed, to the Chair of the Tenure and Promotion Committee, and to the Department Chair, who will place a copy of the report in the faculty member's personnel file.

Lecturers may also, if they choose, invite additional colleagues to observe their classes and write reports, which will also be placed in their personnel file.

### **All Ranks: Voluntary Teaching Observations for Mentorship and Documentation**

Faculty members who wish to be evaluated in order to get feedback to help them improve their teaching or to secure documentation of teaching excellence may ask to be observed. Faculty members may solicit their own evaluation(s), or they may ask the Department Chair to arrange for an observation. In either instance, the observer and the tenure track faculty member will mutually agree upon which

class period will be observed. After visiting the class, the observer will write a report and submit copies to both the faculty member who was observed and to the Department Chair, who will place a copy of the report in the faculty member's personnel file.

### **All Ranks: Mandatory Teaching Observations to Ensure Quality of Instruction**

During the annual evaluation period, the DAC may request a teaching observation report for any faculty member whose teaching record demonstrates need for improvement. Any SPOT score lower than 3.0 will automatically trigger a teaching observation for the class (or a comparable class) which received the low score. By a majority vote, the DAC can trigger a mandatory teaching evaluation under any circumstances where there are questions about the quality of instruction. The DAC will also determine how many classes should be observed.

The Department Chair, in consultation with the DAC, will arrange mandatory teaching observations as warranted. In the instance of a Mandatory Teaching Observation, the faculty member being observed should provide the DAC with a copy of the syllabus and a list of class days (such as test days) that are not suitable for observation. After visiting the class(es), the observer(s) will write a report and submit copies to the faculty member who was observed, to the DAC, and to the Department Chair, who will place a copy of the report in the faculty member's personnel file.

In the case of a Mandatory Teaching Observation, the faculty member being observed should respond to the DAC in writing after they receive their observation(s), explaining what they have learned through the process and what steps they will take to improve the quality of instruction in their class(es) based upon the feedback they received. Failure to respond in writing to the Mandatory Teaching Observation may be interpreted as further evidence of unsatisfactory teaching performance during the Annual Review process.

In the case of tenure track faculty or lecturers, any Mandatory Teaching Evaluations requested by the DAC would be in addition to the regularly scheduled annual observation of teaching.