

Teaching and Presentation of Mathematics
Math 589, Fall Semester, 2007 – Call #26930

Surviving the first day

1. Find out for which class or classes you are TA!
2. Find out *what time and where* your TA sections meet!! Check this again from the university web site the Friday before classes start, or even the first day. Classes have had their room change at the last moment (and you may not always be told...)
3. Go to the classroom(s) where you are to teach before your first class meets. Inspect the room, stand in front, and pretend there are students there. Get a sense of how big the room is, or how small. Where would you sit if you were a student in the room? Check out how the blackboard works, or whiteboard if that is what you have.
4. Find out who is the Instructor for each class you are assigned, and make sure to meet with her or him before the first class. Attend the orientations on Friday, August 25.
5. Get a copy of the course syllabus, and any other standard course materials given to the students.
6. Get a copy of the course textbook from Jeanne Ward (in 335 SEO).
7. If your classroom has a chalkboard, get a box of chalk from the front office, and take it to class each meeting. If your classroom has a whiteboard, get several markers from the front office, and take them to class each meeting.
8. Get a list of the students in the class (might not be available until the second week.)
9. Look over the book, to get an idea of how difficult the material is, and what sort of problems you will be showing them how to solve.
10. Read the assigned sections of the book for the first week (usually the first chapter).
11. Prepare your first lesson – write out some sample problems which you will work for them in class. Be sure you have enough material to occupy the entire time.
12. Just Do It! Show up, speak clearly and slowly, say Hi! and ask their names, and then do some examples on the board. During the class, be sure to look at their faces to see whether they are frightened, or asleep, or maybe, happy they got you as the TA.

Recall, TA = “Test Assistant”, not “Theory Assistant”.

During semester, Math 589 will meet Tuesdays from 3:30 to 4:45 PM in room 216 Taft Hall, which is near SEO. We will discuss your first day’s experiences during our first meeting on August 28, 2007.

Steve Hurder