

# Preparing for the First Day of Teaching

by Nick Korevaar

We'll discuss goals for the first day of class, and ways to attain them.

## Goals for the First Day of Teaching

"The first day of class sets the tone for the rest of the term....[It is your opportunity to] convey your enthusiasm for the material and stimulate students' curiosity about topics that will be covered during the term... create a relaxed, open classroom environment conducive to inquiry and participation...let students know what you will expect from them and what they can expect from you and the course." --Barbara Gross Davis (1993)

## How?

set tone for rest of term?

convey your enthusiasm?

stimulate students' curiosity about topics?

create relaxed, open environment conducive to inquiry and participation?

make clear your expectations of students?

make clear what students can expect from you?

More goals?

Personally, I am always nervous/excited on the first day of any class I am teaching. The more effectively I am prepared, the calmer I will be. Ask for help; collaborate! (I asked Kelly for help with the content for this presentation.)

1) Laying the Foundations in the week(s) before classes begin:

- Meet with your course coordinator <http://www.math.utah.edu/people/committees.html> This person is the primary expert about your students' backgrounds, the purpose of this course, the content, the pedagogy.
- Prepare a syllabus, and possibly a course web page.
- Consider CANVAS, <https://utah.instructure.com>, at least for on-line posting of grades. Use CIS from [www.utah.edu](http://www.utah.edu) to activate CANVAS for your class.
- Ask [Aryn DeJulis](#) in the Rushing Tutoring Center, for a homework grader; and/or use on-line systems webworks ( <http://www.math.utah.edu/online/ww/classes.html>) or webassign. It depends.
- Visit and know your classroom: <http://www.map.utah.edu>
- Review the Math Department teaching guidelines - see tentative updated version and a copy of these notes as well, at <http://www.math.utah.edu/~korevaar>

## 2) SYLLABUS:

If you google "University of Utah course syllabus guidelines" the top hit is

[http://ctle.utah.edu/\\_doc/syllabus-guidelines.pdf](http://ctle.utah.edu/_doc/syllabus-guidelines.pdf)

- course title, number, credit hours; textbook and ISBN.
- meeting time and location
- instructor office hours, location; contact information
- course description
- course learning objectives
- teaching and learning methods

- Evaluation methods and criteria

Important dates and deadlines should be announced in the syllabus and on the first day of class, and adhered to. (In particular, use University final exam schedule.) <http://registrar.utah.edu/academic-calendars/>

- schedule of topics and due dates
- ADA statement (see text in link)
- Faculty and student responsibilities (see suggested text)
  - students: <http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.php>
  - faculty: <http://regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-316.php>

Sample Syllabi and course webpages:

- <http://www.math.utah.edu/~macarthur/current.html>
- <http://www.math.utah.edu/~korevaar>
- <http://www.math.utah.edu/~rice>

google

3) Prepare your first day presentation with the aim of meeting the goals we've articulated. In my own classes, I expect to spend the first 20 minutes going over key syllabus details, including a brief course overview; the last 30 minutes will be a presentation that introduces some interesting course ideas, and my manner of teaching.

Come prepared:

- Arrive a few minutes early.
- Print out the picture class roster - from CIS.
- Bring: syllabi, dry erase markers/chalk, pen, paper, your lecture notes, a watch.
- Email your students several days before school starts, introducing yourself and welcoming them to your class, e.g. from CIS. I also point students to the syllabus and course home page, including first day lecture notes.

Here is my own attempt at meeting the first day goals, from Math 2250 this past spring:

<http://www.math.utah.edu/~korevaar/2250spring14/jan6.pdf>

Other links:

<http://www.csus.edu/HHS/faculty/Faculty%20Resources%20Docs/25-Whaton1stDay.pdf>

<http://www2.honolulu.hawaii.edu/facdev/guidebk/teachtip/teachtip.htm>