

## Department of Philosophy

### Teaching Expectations and Policies for Tenure-Track Faculty

adapted from 'Teaching Load Policy' (4 Sept, 2002)

adopted 18 January, 2014

revised and adopted August, 2017 to reflect College policies on course buyouts

This document concerns expectations regarding the frequency and distribution of teaching. It does not concern evaluation of quality. For departmental criteria regarding the evaluation of teaching, please see our Tenure and Promotion Criteria, which spell out in detail the methods and criteria for the evaluation of teaching. Questions or concerns regarding evaluation or responsibilities should be brought to the attention of the chair.

#### 1. Teaching Volume

The Department of Philosophy takes seriously both our teaching and our research mission. Except in extraordinary and officially sanctioned circumstances, all members of the faculty are expected to contribute equally to both of these missions. The normal teaching volume for tenure-track faculty is two courses per semester. This expectation is in addition to the expectation that faculty will agree to reasonable requests to direct independent studies at both the graduate and undergraduate levels, serve on MA and PhD committees, and direct MA theses and PhD dissertations.

Teaching during summer terms is purely voluntary, not always available, and does not affect one's duties during the Fall and Spring semesters.

In some circumstances, teaching expectations are reduced due to administrative responsibilities, but normal administrative responsibilities, even if onerous (such as chairing a search committee, or chairing DCTP), will not result in a lower teaching volume. All tenure-track faculty will be asked to provide these sorts of onerous administrative services – commensurate with their rank – from time to time.

#### 2. Distribution of Teaching

All tenure-track faculty are expected to contribute to all aspects of the teaching mission of the department. That mission includes three distinct (though at times overlapping) aspects: (1) providing university-wide and college-wide general education; (2) providing appropriate and diverse courses for majors; (3) providing appropriate and required coursework for graduate students. In light of these three aspects of our teaching mission, and in light of the relative levels of demand for each aspect, the normal expectation for *each* tenure-track faculty member is that his or her teaching in any given academic year would be distributed as follows:

1. Two courses at an introductory level, aimed primarily at satisfying university-wide or college-wide general education requirements, in some cases also providing instruction that could serve as an introduction to the major. In most cases, these courses will be at the 100 level, though there other courses that come under this category. For example, PHIL 211 ('Contemporary Moral Issues') is considered to be at this level, as is PHIL 325 ('Engineering Ethics'). As the demands of general education change (and as our capacity to meet them changes), other courses could be considered in this category.
2. One course at an upper-level undergraduate level, aimed primarily at satisfying requirements for the major or minor. These courses tend to be at the 300 level, although some 200-level courses are also be considered in this category; PHIL 490 ('Senior Seminar') is also considered in this category.
3. One graduate-level course. The usual expectation is that this course would be at the 500 level, with the

possibility of a 700-level course in alternate years or every third year, as demand and faculty preferences dictate. (In short, when there is low demand and high faculty preference for graduate seminars, you will have to wait longer. Every attempt is made to distribute graduate seminars equally amongst all faculty who desire to teach those courses, regardless of rank. However, in addition to that desideratum, we must also take into account the areas that our graduate students wish to pursue – when there is high demand for a course in a particular area, proposed courses in that area will get some preference. Finally, the department has a policy that that newly hired faculty are encouraged to teach a graduate seminar some time within the first three semesters of being hired, whenever feasible.)

The shifting demands for teaching and the diverse abilities and expertise of faculty inevitably mean that there will, in any given year, be deviations from this standard expectation. The expectation of all tenure-track faculty in the department should be that over any roughly three-year period, the average of one's teaching responsibilities will be as outlined above. Any faculty member who feels that his or her distribution of teaching has been unduly skewed in some way should bring the matter to the attention of the chair.

### **3. Buyouts**

It is sometimes possible to use grant funds or other funds (but not salary) to reduce one's teaching load. Contact the chair for the current cost of doing so. Funds used for this purpose will be directed towards appropriately replacing the lost teaching capacity.

Course buyouts are *not* automatic. They must be approved. Considerations that are important for approval include (but are not limited to):

- frequency of buyouts from the faculty member in recent years
- the merit of the project that will be pursued in place of teaching
- internal University support (for example, internal grant support)
- collateral benefit to the department from a grantee's project
- availability of qualified instructors to cover the teaching

Reducing a teaching load to zero courses in a semester is not generally permitted.

### **5. Preferences for Teaching**

Prior to the scheduling of classes for any given semester, the chair sends out a request for submission of preferences for teaching assignments, including preferences regarding courses taught and scheduling of those courses. Every reasonable effort is made to accommodate these preferences, consistent with the primary goal of satisfying the teaching mission and responsibilities of the department, and working within the constraints given to us by the college and university. Every effort is made to ensure that the task of pursuing our mission and responsibilities is shared equally amongst all tenure-track faculty.

### **6. Teaching Option**

While our department is a research department, and every faculty member is expected to pursue philosophical research, the Department recognizes that not every tenured faculty member will be equally successful or enthusiastic about maintaining a research agenda. In such special cases, a faculty member may apply for a heavier standard teaching load (3-3 in usual cases), and, in exchange, be evaluated primarily on the basis of success as a teacher and not success as a researcher. There are several conditions:

- (a) *Good Teacher*: A faculty member who applies to be evaluated primarily in terms of teaching, in exchange for a heavier teaching load, should be—and be recognized to be—an excellent teacher. Faculty members who are not excellent teachers will not be allowed the teaching option.

- (b) *Commitment*: The teaching option is not available to opt into and out of as one predicts success or failure in one's research endeavors. Applying for the teaching option requires a commitment of four years teaching at a 3-3 load before one can seek to return to the 2-2 load. The teaching option should be thought of more in terms of a major shift in a faculty member's career goals, instead of a way to maximize merit pay in the short run.
- (c) *Timing*: Applications to be considered for the teaching option must be submitted in the Fall semester prior to the academic year for which the option would take effect.
- (d) *Application*: The application should include a statement of purpose and evidence of excellence in teaching. The decision to accept the application is the prerogative of the Chair, who may also ask for additional information or justification.

## **7. Stalled Research**

The Department recognizes the possibility of a faculty member, not on the teaching option, whose research has stalled. In order to equitably share the total workload undertaken by the Department, a faculty member who is not actively pursuing research, and having some success in the form (usually) of presenting papers at meetings or publishing, will be given a heavier teaching load, usually 3-3. This additional teaching responsibility is implemented as follows:

- (a) *Annual Review*: Every year, at the end of spring semester, every faculty member is reviewed by the Chair. As part of this review each faculty member's contributions to teaching, research and service are rated in accordance with the ratings described in our Tenure and Promotion Guidelines. A faculty member who, for three years running, receives less than a "Good" rating for research will be assigned a heavier teaching load for the following year. The Chair will inform the faculty member of this result in his or her annual review letter.
- (b) *Annual Re-assessment*: On an annual basis, each faculty member who has been given a heavier teaching load due to stalled research will be re-assessed for return to the standard load. The primary consideration will be evidence of research productivity.