

Tips for the First Class

Beforehand, be sure to meet with the course supervisor and discuss the role of the tutorials, obtain the course outline, textbook, solutions manual (not to be lent to your students), and first problem set. Pick some good discussion problems from it.

Check where the tutorial room is in advance, and arrive a few minutes early and greet the students as they arrive. Start on time (i.e. 10 minutes after the hour).

Write your name on the board (along with the course number and title, so they know they are in the correct room). Tell them your name and how you want them to address you (perhaps by first name). Tell them what your area of study or research is and why you are enthusiastic about teaching this course.

DO NOT tell them that the subject of this course is not one of your areas of interest or research, or that you have never taught this course before, and hence, know very little about it (i.e. don't pass on your insecurities to the students). Students have paid for and have a right to expect a competent teacher. Also DOT NOT say things like "I am only a teaching assistant," as if teaching assistants were a low and not very worthwhile category of instructor.

Try to begin to get to know your students during the first class. For example, you could have them fill out index cards with info like-name, area of specialization, math background, why they are taking the course, what they think or expect of this particular subject; maybe even some data for future analysis like height and shoe size.

Run the first class in the way you want the class to operate during the rest of the term. Be sure to get into the statistics content during the first class (perhaps a question and answer session on the first problem set). There may be no quiz at the first tutorial, but you could still post a "quiz" question on the board, for discussion or feedback purposes. If you want the students to participate in discussion, get them involved in discussion during the first

class. If you spend the first session lecturing, you are giving the students the message that the purpose of the class is to listen to you.

End the class a few minutes early, so that individual students can come up to ask you questions about the course.

If you experience any difficulties in your first class, discuss it with your supervisor right away.

Do expect to enjoy your teaching! If you work at being a good teacher, you should find it one of your most enjoyable, professional experiences.