**GEN300 – Supervised Experience in College Teaching**

**Course Objectives**

1. To instill a greater understanding of basic soil science principles by assisting in the teaching of fellow students from one laboratory section for Fundamentals of Soil Science (PLS 366).

2. To provide students with an opportunity to learn about basic pedagogical concepts.

3. To build student confidence in public speaking by having them teach components of a lab (i.e. “mini-lectures”).

4. To initiate students into the ways and workings of the academic/graduate student culture (an effective recruiting tool).

5. To work together with faculty, staff and graduate students in the development of enhanced and up-to-date instructional materials.

**Course Background:**

Supervised Experience in College Teaching is designed to provide students who have previously taken PLSC 366 the opportunity to further refine their understanding of soil science while sharpening their teaching and public speaking skills. Part of the impetus for this course draws from the lack of opportunities for undergraduates in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) related majors to receive formal training in pedagogical concepts prior to either going to graduate school (where they will likely be asked or required to teach), entering into a career in teaching in elementary or post-secondary institutions, or taking on other employment opportunities in which oral communication, interpersonal and problem solving skills are a must. The other part of the impetus comes from several recent studies that site the effectiveness of peer-to-peer or peer-led instruction as a method for helping the student-teacher build upon the concepts they learned while enrolled in the same or similar course while improving their critical thinking and problem solving skills. Peer-lead instruction can also be an effective way of reducing the student to instructor ratio particularly in labs where hands on and attentive instruction is important. Further, a peer may be more accessible or approachable to the enrolled student when questions arise as they may both “run in the same circles”. Finally, having undergraduate assistants, with the additional benefit of providing instructional and grading help to the graduate student, also gives the graduate TA’s the opportunity to experience what it may be like to manage and have students of their own should they go on to run their own labs or research groups.

**Student Selection:**

Undergraduate students having already taken PLS366 will be selected based on their performance in PLS366, their availability for the scheduled sections, as well and their response to the essay on the attached application form. Once selected, students will be formally notified in writing of the lab section and graduate TA they will be assisting.

**Evaluation Methods:**

Students will be evaluated in three ways:

1. Students will be required to keep a journal of their weekly interactions with students, enlightening moments that occurred while teaching, or any other events related to their experience. At the end of the semester they will then take these experiences and write an essay summarizing how their involvement in PLS4?? has changed them.
2. A Written evaluation will be provided by their graduate TA mentors. The evaluation will be based on how well they were prepared for lab, the mini-lecture they delivered and their report with students
3. Third, a question will be added to the semester evaluations for the course requesting input from the PLS366 students on their undergraduate TA’s performance during the semester.

**Responsibilities:**

Each student will be enrolled in three (3) credits of GEN 300. Three credits of course work involves, on average, about 8 hours of work each week. The average amount of work each week will vary depending on the lab schedule. The specific responsibilities can be broken down as follows:

* 2 hours per week teaching or assisting in one lab section
* 2 hours per week preparing lab materials and studying subject matter
* 2 hours per week evaluation – a one-hour meeting each week with the PLS366 staff, evaluation of lab reports and other student work, and recording course related activites and observations in the journal
* 2 hours per week advising – office hours, helping fellow students with lab or lecture related questions

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**Student Application Form**

Thank you for your interest in working with us as an undergraduate teaching assistant for PLS366 next semester. Because we are limited in the number of positions we can offer each semester we are asking that you fill out this brief application form. Your application will be evaluated based on our perception of responsibility, ability to work with others, ability to handle the workload and performance in class. Among equally qualified candidates we will make our selections on a first come, first serve basis.

Please fill out the information below and return to your instructor as soon as possible.

Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Phone:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

ID: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ email:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Major:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

When did you take PLS366?\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Who was your lab instructor?\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

For which lab sections are you available next semester?\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Of those sections, which do you prefer?\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

On a separate piece of paper (1page limit, 12pt font, single space) tell us why you should be selected to be a PLS366 undergraduate TA.

**PLS366 Lab Sections, Fall 2013**

Section 001 M 2:00-4:30pm N9 Ag North

Section 002 T 2:00-4:30pm N9 Ag North

Section 003 W 9:30-12:00 noon N9 Ag North

Section 004 W 2:00-4:30 pm N9 Ag North