The background image shows a student in a workshop or studio. The student is wearing a grey hoodie and a brown beanie, sitting at a desk and working on a laptop. The desk is cluttered with papers and a silver tumbler. In the background, another student is visible, leaning over a table. The entire scene is overlaid with a semi-transparent orange filter.

# Being a TA in VPA: The College of Visual and Performing Arts

Presentation by Daisy Wiley (she/her)



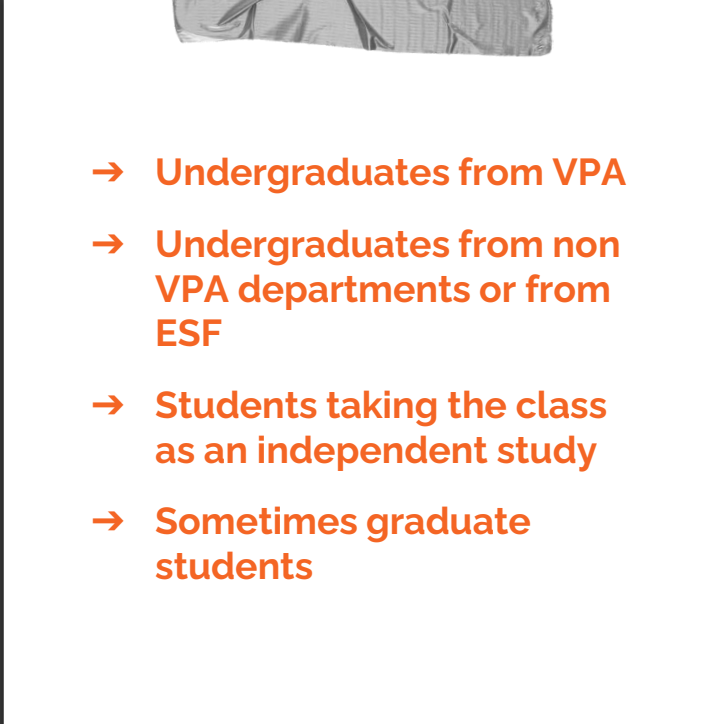
## i. VPA Departments

The College of Visual and Performing Arts consists of seven schools:

- **The School of Art (SOA)**
- **The Department of Communication and Rhetorical Studies (CRS)**
- **The Department of Creative Arts Therapy**
- **The School of Design**
- **The Department of Drama**
- **The Department of Film and Media Arts (FMA)**
- **The Setnor School of Music**

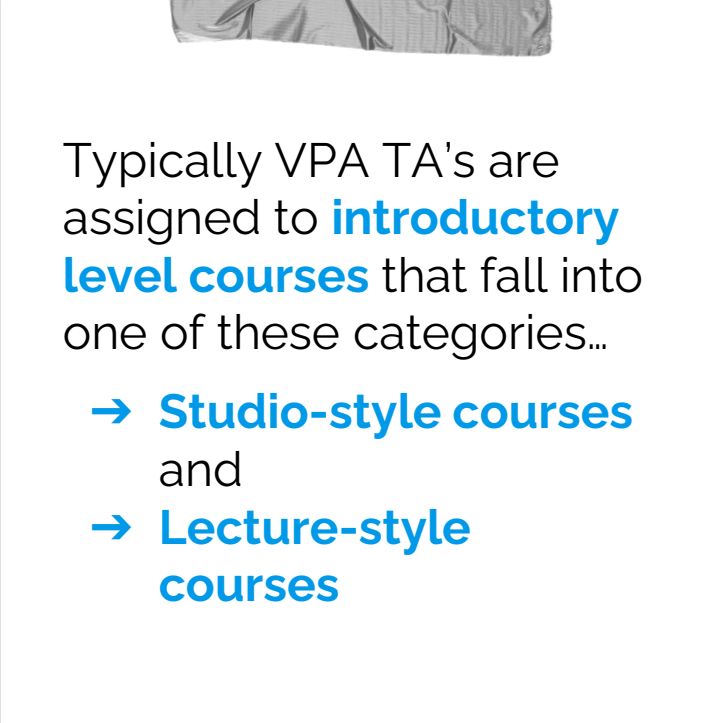
– ii.

# Who will you be teaching as a VPA TA?

- 
- Undergraduates from VPA
  - Undergraduates from non VPA departments or from ESF
  - Students taking the class as an independent study
  - Sometimes graduate students

– iii.

**What kind of  
classes could  
you be assigned  
to as a VPA TA?**



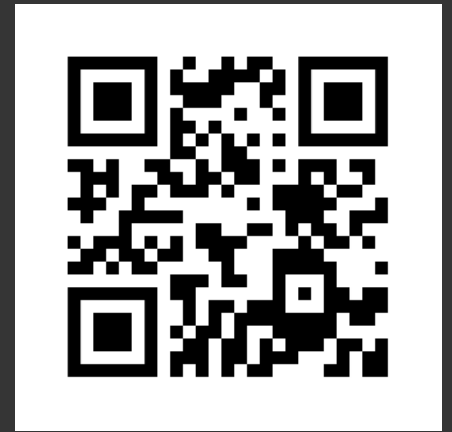
Typically VPA TA's are assigned to **introductory level courses** that fall into one of these categories...

- **Studio-style courses**  
and
- **Lecture-style courses**

– iv.

# How are **Studio** courses different from **Lecture** **courses?**

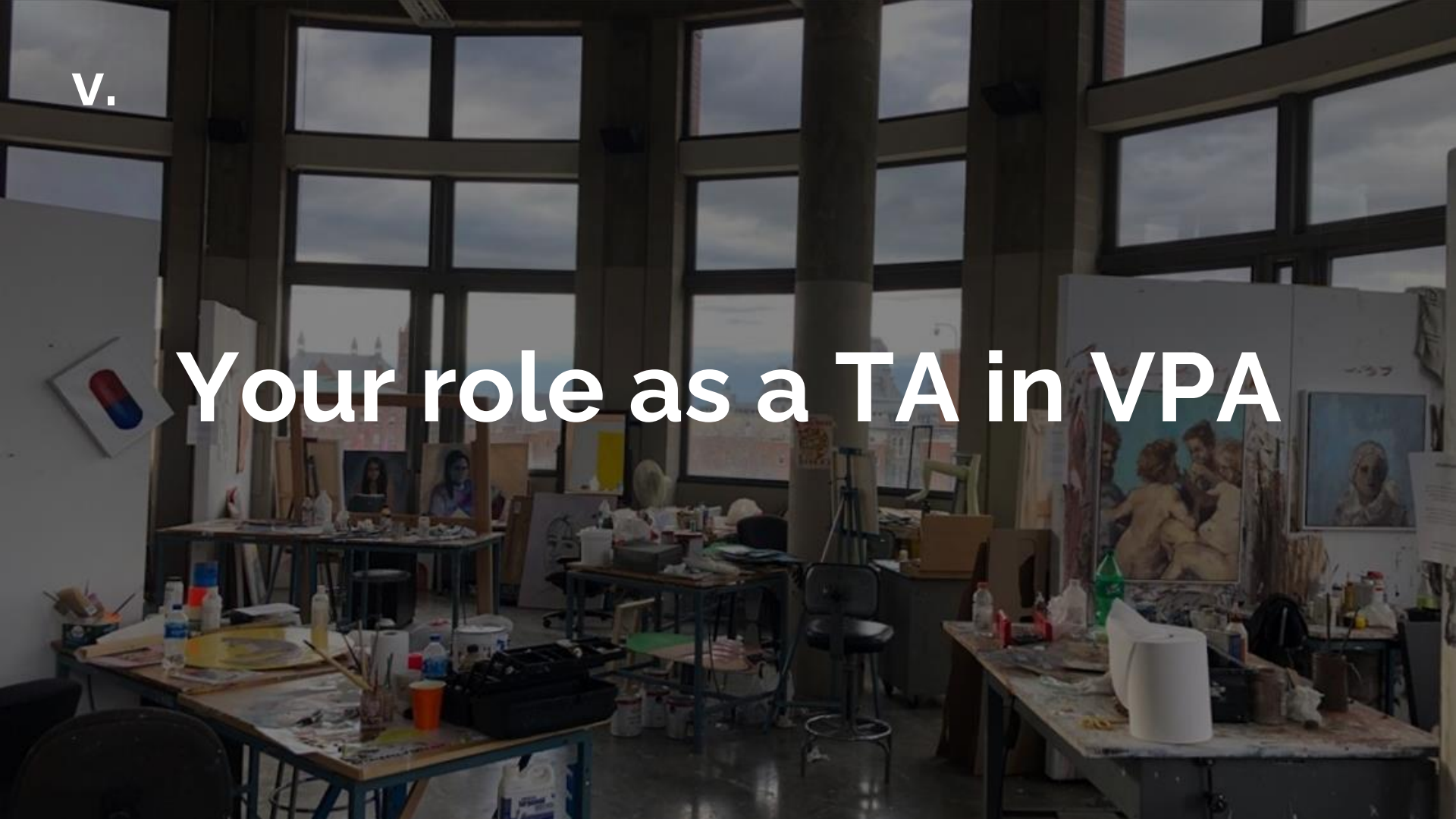
Let's brainstorm together!



[tinyurl.com/VPATA](https://tinyurl.com/VPATA)

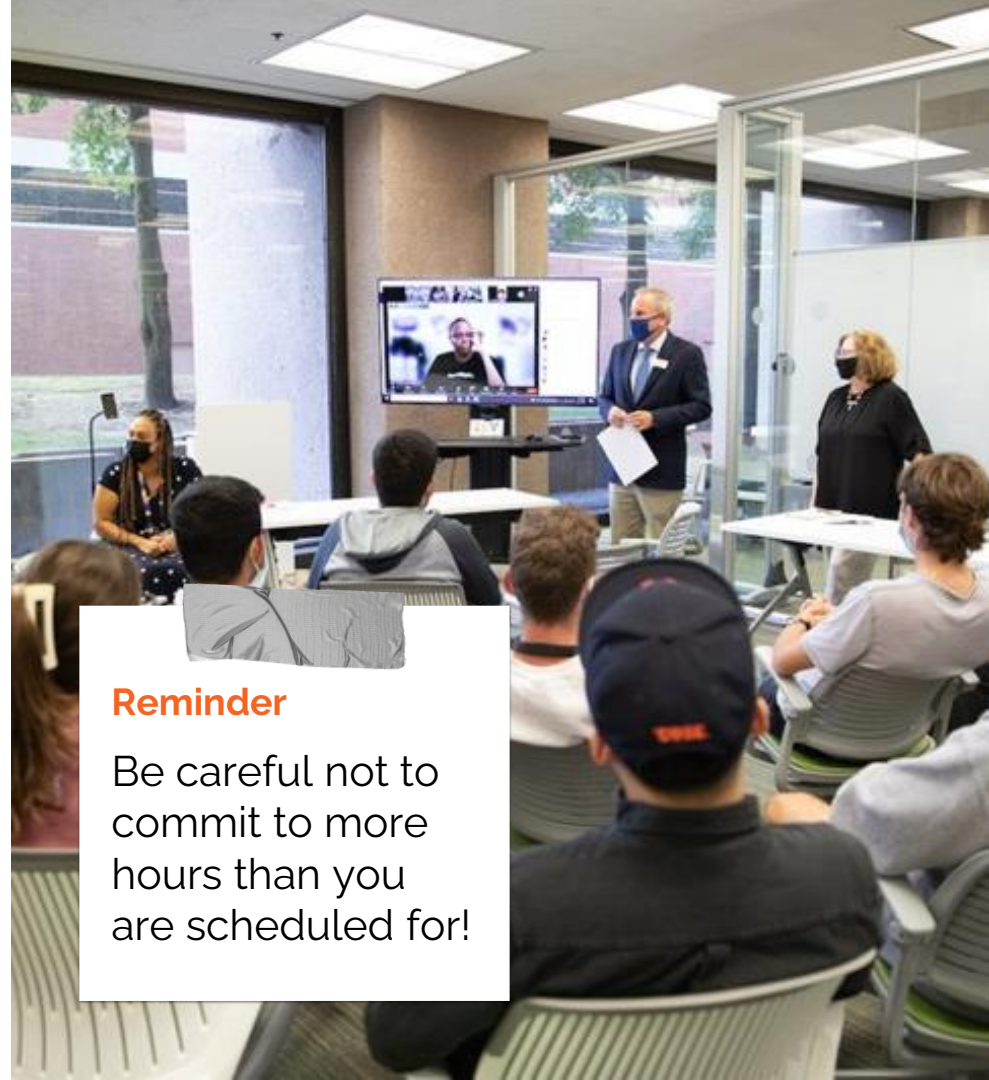
V.

# Your role as a TA in VPA



Every professor in VPA has different expectations of TA's. Clarify expectations with the instructor

**BEFORE** beginning the course in full.



**Reminder**

Be careful not to commit to more hours than you are scheduled for!

\_vi.

# TA roles during class time

Record attendance and track class participation

Monitor the classroom

Lead sections of the class on your own



# Recording attendance and tracking class participation

## 1. Keep a class roster

*Always ask student pronouns!*

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	<b>CLASS ROSTER</b>					
2						
3	Student Name	Preferred Name	Pronouns	Major	Academic Year	Notes
4	Student Name					
5	Student Name					
6	Student Name					
7	Student Name					
8	Student Name					
9	Student Name					
10	Student Name					
11	Student Name					
12	Student Name					
13	Student Name					
14						
15						
16						
17						
18						
19						

## 2. Keep track of attendance and participation

The screenshot shows the 'Attendance and Participation' tool interface. It features a grid for tracking attendance and participation for a class. The columns represent days of the week from Monday to Friday, followed by 'Late', 'Excused absence', 'Unexcused absence', and 'Participation'. The rows represent individual students, with the first row labeled 'Teacher' and subsequent rows labeled 'Student name'. The interface includes a menu bar at the top with options like 'File', 'Edit', 'View', 'Insert', 'Format', 'Data', 'Tools', 'Extensions', and 'Help'. A toolbar below the menu bar contains various icons for editing and viewing. A 'Share' button is visible in the top right corner. The grid is currently empty, with only the headers and student names visible.

## 3. Record attendance and participation in Orange Success



## Monitoring the classroom: demos and lectures

During demos or lectures you are generally expected to...

- Walk around the classroom to make sure students are engaged
- Assist the instructor with technical aspects of demos
- Keep an eye out for questions



## Monitoring the classroom: open work time

During open work time you are generally expected to...

- Walk around the classroom to check in with students
- Make sure safety protocol is being followed
- Provide creative or technical feedback on work



## Monitoring the classroom: discussion and critique

### During discussion and critique you could be expected to...

- Engage students in group conversation
- Take notes on the discussion
- Track student participation
- Run a timer





vii.

Let's go over some  
general tips for  
**engaging in  
meaningful critique**



1.

## Have questions prepared

Prepare questions ahead of time that will help spur conversation. Have both **general** and **specific** questions ready. More specific questions can spur conversation if open-ended prompts do not.



### Tip

Whenever possible, look at the work before class. This will allow you time to process and come up with applicable questions before critique.

## Keep the conversation to what is in the room

Keep discussions about the work in the room. Do not discuss what the work *should* do or is *trying* to do. Discuss what the work is *doing*.



### Tip

If a comment is off track, ask the student how the work in front of them generated that train of thought.



3.

## Embrace silence

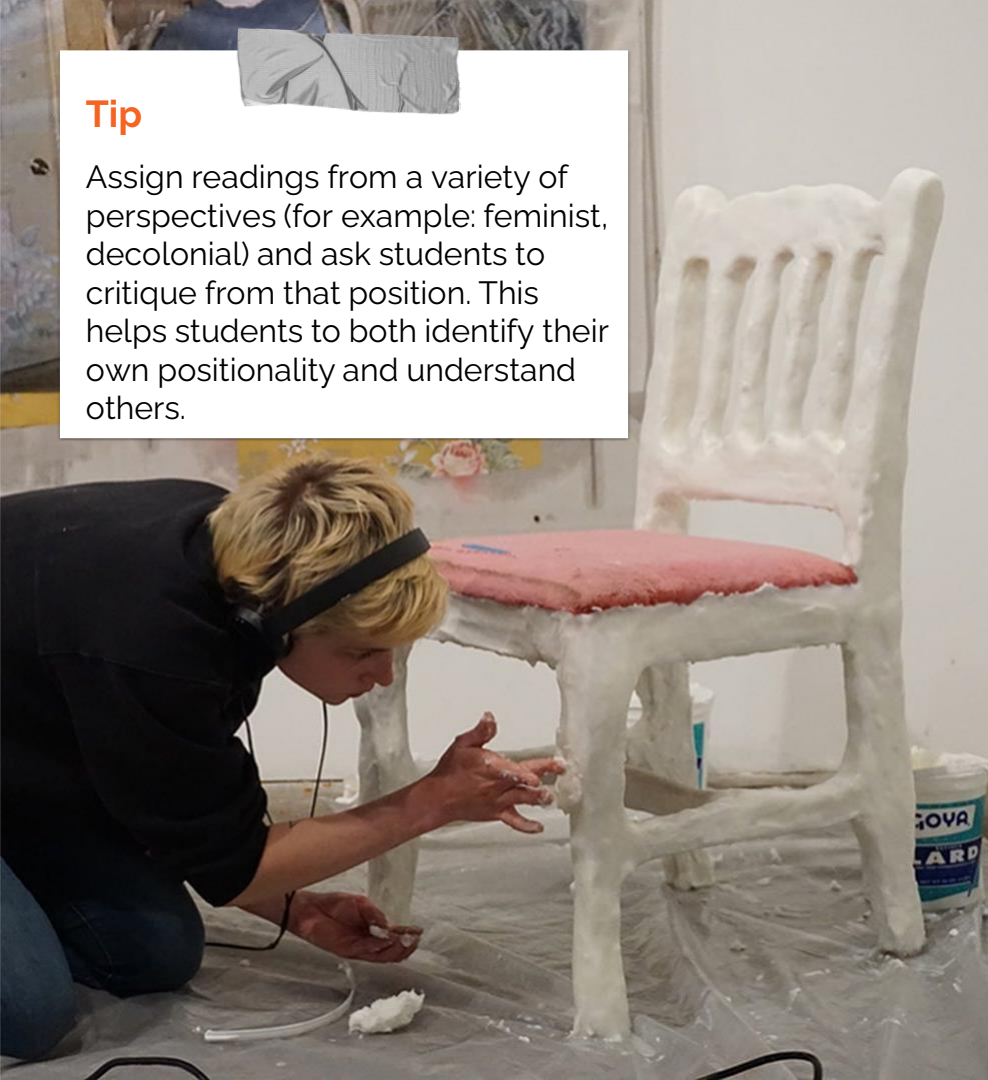
In critique, silence is a good thing. Resist the urge to fill all silence. Wait for students to answer after you ask a question or a student makes a point.





## Tip

Assign readings from a variety of perspectives (for example: feminist, decolonial) and ask students to critique from that position. This helps students to both identify their own positionality and understand others.



## Positionality

Everyone critiques from a social position informed by factors like class, race, gender, ability, life experiences, etc. Analyze how your own positionality affects your perspective and encourage other students to do the same.

\_viii.

# TA roles outside of class time

Maintain  
office hours

Answer  
emails

Update  
course  
content on  
Blackboard

Student  
evaluation  
and grading

# Maintaining office hours



## Tip

Office hours should be listed at the top of the syllabus and/or on Blackboard

## Fixed office hours:

- Held at a set time each week.
- Usually in person in a professor's office (or studio!)
- Sometimes held in a recurring Zoom Room

VS

## Flexible office hours:

- Students schedule appointments with you
- Typically held over Zoom
- Can be scheduled over email but scheduling programs (like Google Calendar Appointment Slots) are increasingly used

## Answering emails



### Always...

- Use your syr.edu email
- Have an email policy in place
- Respond within a stated time frame
- Don't feel pressure to respond at unreasonable times

# Updating course content on Blackboard

## A professor could ask you to...

- Upload digital versions of handouts, readings, PowerPoints to Blackboard
- Create an online assessment or assignment upload page
- Make updates to the syllabus if due dates or assignment details change
- Post class announcements
- Post grades to Blackboard

### Tip

Leave time before class to upload content the day it is discussed or assigned.



## Student evaluation and grading



### Tips for creative assessment:

- What is more important for the project? Concept or craftsmanship?
- Share clear grading parameters with students before they begin a project
- Account for time spent on work inside and outside of class, care, and student's growth over time
- Give specific written feedback in addition to a letter grade or rubric

# Student evaluation and grading

## Types of grading rubrics:

### Analytic Rubric

Rubric: Painting with a Written Statement					
	Exemplary 4	Accomplished 3	Developing 2	Beginning 1	Total Score
<b>Written component</b>	Writing is clear, concise, and research is evident.	Writing is clear and concise.	There is a written statement.	Begins to describe the work, does not develop a statement.	
<b>Time / effort</b>	Class time was used wisely. Much time and effort went into the planning and design. It is clear the student worked at home as well as in class.	Class time was used wisely. It is evident that the student could have put more time in at home.	Class time was not always used wisely. Some time was put in at home but more is needed.	Class time was not used wisely and the student did not put additional work in outside of class.	
<b>Painting skills</b>	Application of paint is thought out, precise, and consistent.	Application of paint is precise and consistent.	Some application of the paint is lacking in consistency and preciseness.	The student needs to work on controlling their application of paint. Paint application is often inconsistent, muddy, imprecise.	
<b>Layout / composition</b>	Composition is clearly discernible, visually supports the written statement, and actively guides the eye through the canvas.	Composition is clearly discernible and supports the written statement.	Composition is clearly discernible.	Composition is evident.	
<b>Use of Color</b>	Choice and application of color show substantial knowledge of color relationships. Used colors are supported in the written statement.	Choice and application of color show some knowledge of color relationships. Colors are somewhat supported by the written statement.	Choice and application of color shows some knowledge of color relationships. Used colors are NOT supported by the statement.	The student needs to further study color relationships as this knowledge is not reflected in the work or written statement.	

### Holistic Rubric

Holistic Rubric for a reading response			
4. Above Average	3. Sufficient	2. Developing	1. Needs Improvement
- Demonstrates an excellent understanding of the text - Responds clearly and completely - References the reading via quotes or examples to the text - Relates the text to their own work or knowledge base	- Demonstrates a good understanding of the text - Response is mostly clear - Some references are made to the text itself - Student begins to relate the text back to their own work or knowledge base	- Text is misinterpreted or only understood at a base level - Response is unclear or undeveloped - Text is not or barely referenced - Student attempts to tie the text into their work or knowledge base	- Student demonstrates little or no understanding of the text - No references are made to the text itself - Response is irrelevant to the text - No examples are made to students own work

### Checklist Rubric

Rubric Checklist: Photoshop Collage Assignment	
Parameter	Yes / No
Used at least 4 distinct images in the collage	
Used at least 3 different Photoshop tools to manipulate the images	
Demonstrated a knowledge of balance and composition	
Demonstrated a knowledge of layer masks	
Layer masks are clean and precise	
Elements of collage are clearly considered	
The file is in the correct format	
File naming follows the class naming conventions	



Finally, remember to lean  
on professors,  
administration, and other  
TA's for support.

**Good luck VPA  
TA's!**