



All-University TA Orientation

Schedule of Events

August 2025

**Syracuse University
Graduate School**

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International Program

Saturday, August 16, 2025	6-7
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General Program

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∞ August 2025 ∞

Dear Teaching Assistant:

Welcome to Syracuse University and congratulations on being selected as a Teaching Assistant. The faculty, Teaching Mentors, and staff who planned the 2025 All-University TA Orientation have been preparing for your arrival for nearly a year. We sincerely hope that your orientation experience will provide you with a helpful introduction to graduate study, your academic peers, and your instructional responsibilities at the University.

Much of the success of past TA Orientations at Syracuse is directly attributable to our Teaching Mentors, who will serve as your small-group leaders and mentors. Teaching Mentors have much to contribute: They successfully balance dual roles as graduate scholars and Teaching Assistants, they are deeply committed to the craft of teaching and sharing their experience with colleagues, and they consistently uphold the high standards of undergraduate instruction expected of all teachers at Syracuse. I hope you will use them as a resource during this orientation program and throughout your first year as an instructor at Syracuse University.

The University extends a special welcome to all our international Teaching Assistants. World events continue to underscore the importance of nurturing an international perspective in the American university. Syracuse undergraduates are indeed fortunate to have the opportunity to learn from instructors of other cultures as an integral part of their educational experience.

Increasingly, preparation for teaching is regarded as a vital component of graduate education at major research universities across the United States. Your academic department will provide you with important guidance and mentoring, and over the course of the coming year, you will be invited to participate in programs and workshops to support your academic, teaching, and professional development. I hope you will take advantage of these sources of support.

Please accept my very best wishes to all of you for a successful and rewarding year.

Sincerely,



Peter A. Venable
Dean of the Graduate School
Associate Provost for Graduate Studies

☞ Upon Arrival at Syracuse University ☞

- **Check in with your department**
- **Check in with the Center for International Services**
(ITAs Only)
- **Find academic year housing** (if necessary)

Contact the office below for information about housing options off campus. Another excellent resource is Syracuse University's Off-Campus Housing Finder (<https://housing.offcampus.syr.edu>).

Off-Campus Housing Issues

Office of Off-Campus and Commuter Services
Goldstein Student Center (South Campus), Suite 206
401 Skytop Rd.
Syracuse, NY 13210
Tel: 315-443-3893
E-mail: oslsouth@syr.edu
<https://ese.syr.edu/studentliving/off-campus/>

Campus Building Abbreviations for TA Orientation:

BH/Bowne = Bowne Hall
Carn = Carnegie Library Building
Falk = Falk College Complex
HBC = Huntington Beard Crouse Hall
HGL = Heroy Geology Lab Building
Hinds = Hinds Hall
HL=Hall of Languages
LSB = Life Sciences Building
Lyman = Lyman Hall
PB = Physics Building
Tolley = Tolley Humanities Building

[Interactive Campus Map](#)

MEALS: On the mornings of the 16th, 18th, & 19th, a continental breakfast will be provided by Campus Catering. In addition, orientation participants will be given a lunch voucher each day during their morning small group session. These can be redeemed at the dining halls in the **Ernie Davis and Graham** residence halls. These coupons will only be issued during the initial, daily small-group session and are the responsibility of the voucher holder. Lost vouchers will not be replaced. Questions about meal arrangements may be addressed in small groups.

Small Group Room Assignments: International Program

🌀 August 16 🌀		
<u>Small Group</u>	<u>Teaching Mentor</u>	<u>Rooms</u>
1	Erika Arias	Bowne Hall 104
2	Jun Zhang	Bowne Hall 104
3	Chris Cho	Bowne Hall 105
4	Rebekah Wallis	Bowne Hall 105
5	Gargi De	Bowne Hall 108
6	Steven Alvarez	Bowne Hall 108
7	Darzhana Kazbekova	Bowne Hall 110
8	Sohrob Aslami	Bowne Hall 110
9	Amanda Kingston	Bowne Hall 116
10	Mehdi Nejatbaksh	Bowne Hall 116
11	Aidee Leon Lua	Hall of Lang. 102
12	Soham Sinha	Hall of Lang. 102
13	Minnie McMillian	Hall of Lang. 105
14	Nurzharyn Samigolla	Hall of Lang. 105
15	Fasika Melese	HBC 204
16	Stella Clymer	HBC 204
17	Gizem Ozyazici	HBC 209
18	Elena Selthun	HBC 209
19	Jacob Reese	HBC 213A
20	Gideon Banson	HBC 213A
21	Morgan Shaw	HBC 213B
22	Sena Gokkus	HBC 213B
23	Natalia Gulius	HBC 306
24	Ava Breitbeck	HBC 306
25	Marie Shuter	HBC 323A
26	Pierre Lacaille	HBC 323A
27	Calistus Simiyu	Lyman Hall 115A
28	Eleanor Czajkowski	Lyman Hall 115A
29	Nathalie Uwamahoro	Lyman Hall 115B
30	Vatya Raina	Lyman Hall 115B
31	Ben Valen	Lyman Hall 126
32	Bo Jian	Lyman Hall 126

Small Group Room Assignments: General Program

☞ August 18-19 ☞

<u>Small Group</u>	<u>Teaching Mentor</u>	<u>Rooms</u>
1	Erika Arias	Hinds Hall 018
2	Jun Zhang	Bowne Hall 104
3	Chris Cho	Hinds Hall 021
4	Rebekah Wallis	Bowne Hall 105
5	Gargi De	Life Sciences 011
6	Steven Alvarez	Bowne Hall 108
7	Darzhana Kazbekova	Life Sciences 100
8	Sohrob Aslami	Bowne Hall 110
9	Amanda Kingston	Life Sciences 156
10	Mehdi Nejatbaksh	Bowne Hall 116
11	Aidee Leon Lua	Life Sciences 200
12	Soham Sinha	Hall of Lang. 102
13	Minnie McMillian	Life Sciences 214
14	Nurzharyn Samigolla	Physics 104
15	Fasika Melese	Physics 105
16	Stella Clymer	HBC 204
17	Gizem Ozyazici	Physics 106
18	Elena Selthun	HBC 209
19	Jacob Reese	Tolley Hall 104
20	Gideon Banson	HBC 213A
21	Morgan Shaw	Tolley Hall 110
22	Sena Gokkus	HBC 213B
23	Natalia Gulius	Tolley Hall 115
24	Ava Breitbeck	HBC 306
25	Marie Shuter	Tolley Hall 204
26	Pierre Lacaille	HBC 323A
27	Calistus Simiyu	Carnegie 100
28	Eleanor Czajkowski	Lyman Hall 115A
29	Nathalie Uwamahoro	Carnegie 110
30	Vatya Raina	Lyman Hall 115B
31	Ben Valen	Carnegie 114
32	Bo Jian	Lyman Hall 126

🌀 Saturday, August 16 🌀

8:30 - 9:00 a.m.	Lyman Hall 132
On-site Check-in & Continental Breakfast	On-site check-in will be held from 8:30 to 9:00 a.m. for all ITA orientation participants.
9:00 - 9:30 a.m.	Lyman Hall 132
Welcome	This opening session offers welcoming and encouraging remarks focusing on the important roles that ITAs play at Syracuse University.
9:45- 10:35 a.m.	See Room Assignments on page 4
Small Groups	ITAs will meet together in small groups. There will be time for introductions, conversation, and questions. Leaders: <i>Teaching Mentors</i>
10:45 - 11:35 a.m.	Lyman Hall 132
Introduction to the U.S. Classroom	As an international graduate student, it can be difficult to adjust to a new culture and your new TA role. As a graduate student and TA, this session will help you adjust to the US classroom setting and facilitate a seamless transfer by giving you an overview of expectations and differences, and how to turn these into opportunities that will benefit you and your students. Presenters: <i>Teaching Mentors: Calistus Simiyu, Soham Sinha & Stella Clymer</i>
11:45 - 12:35 p.m.	Lyman Hall 132
Do's and Don'ts as an ITA	It is difficult to know what to do and what to avoid to succeed as a first time TA, especially when you are also new to a place and a culture. This friendly, practical session provide you with helpful tips on how to teach at Syracuse University, communicate effectively, build professional relationships with colleagues, and lay a strong foundation for your future. Presenters: <i>Teaching Mentors: Calistus Simiyu, Nurzharkyn Samigolla & Gargi De</i>
12:45 - 1:35 p.m.	Ernie Davis Dining Hall
Lunch	Lunch will be provided for all orientation participants. Please remember to bring your meal voucher. (see Meals note on page 3).

🌀 Saturday, August 16 🌀

1:45 - 2:35 p.m.

Lyman Hall 132

Succeeding as an ITA

This session provides an overview of how to succeed as an international TA. By sharing common challenges and personal experiences, presenters will explore expectations as an ITA and student as well as opportunities that ITAs can utilize. We will also address ITAs' questions and concerns.

Panelists: *Teaching Mentors: Calistus Simiyu, Sena Gokkus, Gideon Banson, Rosemary Ayine, Jun Zhang*

2:45 - 5:00 p.m.

See Room Assignments on page 4

Microteaching

ITAs will meet together in small groups for the microteaching exercise - a practice teaching exercise. The five-minute presentation that you prepared prior to your arrival at TA Orientation will be recorded and critiqued in a constructive and supportive manner by your Teaching Mentor and small group.

Leaders: *Teaching Mentors*

☞ Monday, August 18 ☞

The General Program Begins Here

8:00 - 8:30 a.m.	HBC Patio/Breezeway
On-site Check-in, and Light Breakfast	On-site check-in will be held from 8:00 to 8:30 a.m. for all TA orientation participants.
8:30- 8:55 a.m.	HBC Gifford Auditorium
Welcome Session	<p>This opening session is intended to welcome all new TAs to Syracuse University through a discussion of your importance on this campus and a brief overview of the importance and goals of the orientation.</p> <p>Presenters: Peter Venable, Associate Provost for Graduate Studies & Dean of the Graduate School TA Orientation Staff</p>
9:00- 9:55 a.m.	See Room Assignments on page 5
Small Groups	<p>ITAs and domestic TAs will meet together in small groups. There will be time for conversation and questions.</p> <p>Leaders: <i>Teaching Mentors</i></p>
10:05 - 11:00 a.m.	Falk Grant Auditorium
Academic Integrity for Teaching Assistants	<p>To be successful in one's studies as well as teaching responsibilities at Syracuse University, it is essential for Teaching Assistants to be familiar with the university's academic integrity policies. These policies vary widely among different educational institutions, so this session is designed to introduce you to what academic integrity entails at Syracuse University. Through discussion based on real-life cases, we will demonstrate various examples of academic integrity violations -- including many that students and TAs often overlook. We will discuss practical tips on how to manage violations when they occur as well as information about helpful resources.</p> <p>Presenters: Kate Marzan & Ashley Jimenez Academic Integrity Development Office Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence (CTLE)</p>
11:10 a.m.- 1:10 p.m.	Rooms as noted
Breakout Sessions & Lunch Break	
Small Group #s 1-16 will attend the <i>Inclusive Teaching through Universal Design</i> session from 11:10-12:05 p.m. and will break for Lunch from 12:15 -1:10 p.m.	
Small Group #s 17-32 will break for Lunch from 11:10 - 12:05 p.m. and will attend the <i>Inclusive Teaching through Universal Design</i> session from 12:15 - 1:10 p.m.	
Lunch	Lunch will be provided for all orientation participants. Please remember to bring your meal voucher (see Meals note on page 3).
Ernie Davis and Graham Halls	

Monday, August 18

Inclusive Teaching through
Universal Design

Grant Aud-Falk
(1st iteration)
or
LSB 001
(2nd iteration)

In this session, participants will explore how the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) help Teaching Assistants (TAs) and instructors create an inclusive learning space for all students. We will address the concept of intersectionality and how different relational identities affect students and TAs in the classroom. Thinking about access gives us a way to think about developing instructional outcomes, materials, assignments, and classroom experiences while centering students' diverse strengths and needs. Participants will actively engage with these principles and walk away with strategies to incorporate multiple models of engagement, representation, and expression into their teaching. The session will also address TAs' access needs as students and teachers.

Presenters: *Teaching Mentors:* Rebekah Wallis , Rosemary Ayine,
Elena Sethun & Bo Jian

1:20 - 2:15 p.m.
2:25 - 3:20 p.m.
3:30 - 4:25 p.m.

Rooms as noted

Concurrent Sessions 1

Please review the following session descriptions and select one session to attend from 1:20 to 2:15 p.m., a different one from 2:25 to 3:20 p.m., and a third session to attend from 3:30 to 4:25 p.m.

Motivating Students

HBC 032-Kittredge Aud.

This session will present a practical and grounded discussion of what it means to motivate students in a classroom or laboratory setting. We will first look broadly at key pedagogical approaches to student motivation, reflecting on how students become active participants, and even collaborators, in their own learning. The session will also focus on practical applications of these ideas as session leaders share their own experiences motivating students in different contexts. They will offer concrete tips and advice and answer any questions you have about this crucial topic.

Presenters: *Teaching Mentors:* Sohrob Aslamy & Nathalie Uwamahoro

Dealing with Dispute

LSB 105

Tension, misunderstandings, disagreements, and arguments in the classroom are inevitable. As a TA you'll likely face situations that push your comfort zone. How do you manage a heated conversation? How do you set and maintain boundaries? How do you teach to encourage students from different backgrounds to work as a group and engage in respectful and constructive dialogue? This session will focus on strategies for engaging, and disengaging from, conflict both in and beyond the classroom. We encourage you to attend as we explore common challenges and share practical tips to help you navigate them effectively.

Presenter: *Teaching Mentors:* Pierre Lacaille & Sena Gokkus

Concurrent Sessions 1 continued on page 10

Monday, August 18

1:20 - 2:15 p.m.
2:25 - 3:20 p.m.
3:30 - 4:25 p.m.

Rooms as noted

Concurrent Sessions 1

Please review the following session descriptions and select one session to attend from 1:20 to 2:15 p.m., a different one from 2:25 to 3:20 p.m., and a third session to attend from 3:30 to 4:25 p.m.

The Classroom as
Community

Lyman 132

This session sets out to help you think critically about what makes for a successful classroom experience for your students (and you) and how to build the classroom as a community before, during, and after class. For each stage, we begin with goals and principles, followed by specific techniques and activities that can be implemented. Beyond sharing the “how,” the session also includes activities to help new TAs experience what a sense of community in the classroom feels like. These activities are built around understanding community as opposed to isolation, and the conscious and intentional act of building one in classrooms.

Presenters: *Teaching Mentors:* Jung Zhang, Vaty Raina
& Natalia Gulius

Creating a Teaching
Persona

HL 207

Join this interactive session on developing your teaching persona as a new TA at SU. In this workshop, we will explore effective strategies and practical techniques to create a dynamic and adaptable persona that resonates with your students. We will underline challenges TAs may experience and suggest how those will affect, or are affected by, your teaching persona. Whether you are just starting your teaching journey or have years of experience, this session offers valuable insights into how to flexibly adapt your existing strategy or create a new one.

Presenters: *Teaching Mentors:* Steven Alvarez, Amanda Kingston
& Marie Shuter

Artificial Intelligence in
the Classroom and
Beyond

LSB 001

This session will provide new Teaching Assistants (TAs) with key concepts and conversations around AI in education. The session will start with a brief discussion of the broad category of AI and moves into the specific developments in Generative AI (GenAI) and their applications in classrooms. Participants will evaluate selected GenAI tools, engage in demonstrations, and have critical discussions. The session also will include exploring pedagogical frameworks that can help in navigating digital tools for classrooms that can be adopted for GenAI tools. The session concludes with an examination of emerging institutional, national, and global policy responses to AI in education.

Presenters: *Teaching Mentor:* Fasika Melese

5:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Teaching Assistant
BBQ Buffet

The Inn Complete

TAs and their partners/families are welcome to attend this social gathering. Refreshments will be served (please bring a valid picture ID if you wish to drink any alcoholic beverages). A dedicated trolley will run from the College Place bus stop and the Inn Complete between 4:45 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. (as needed).

🌀 Tuesday, August 19 🌀

8:30 - 9:00 a.m.	HBC Patio/Breezeway
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Continental Breakfast Breakfast will be provided for all orientation participants.

9:00 - 9:50 a.m.	See Room Assignments on page 5
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Small Groups ITAs and domestic TAs will meet together in small groups. There will be time for conversation and questions.

Leaders: *Teaching Mentors*

10:00 - 10:55 a.m.	Falk Grant Auditorium
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Recognizing and Supporting Students in Distress Students experiencing emotional and/or personal distress present in numerous manners and will seek assistance from various resources, including Teaching Assistants. The purpose of this session is to help participants more readily identify students who are experiencing emotional/personal distress and to provide participants with the knowledge and skills needed to more effectively respond to these students. Campus resources, including the Office of Student Assistance and Barnes Center at the Arch-Counseling, will be discussed.

Presenters: Mitch Sartin, Assistant Director of Counseling
Shelley Crawford, Associate Director of Student Outreach & Support

11:00 - 11:55 a.m. 12:05 - 1:00 p.m.	Rooms as noted
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Concurrent Sessions 2

Please review the following session descriptions and select one session to attend from 11:00 to 11:55 a.m. and a different session to attend from 12:05 to 1:00 p.m.

Assessments, Grading, and Rubrics - Demystified! HL 207	Grading doesn't have to be a guessing game and assessments shouldn't feel like a mystery. In this session, we'll walk you through the ins and outs of designing fair, meaningful assignments, grading with clarity and consistency, and creating rubrics that are both easy for students to understand and manageable for you. You'll learn how to provide feedback that actually helps, manage your grading time, and minimize the risk of student complaints like, "My TA is unfair!"
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Presenters: *Teaching Mentors:* Gargi De & Nurzharyn Samigolla

Creating a Successful Work/Life Balance LSB 001	This session will focus on strategies to develop a healthy work-life balance as a graduate student, Teaching Assistant, researcher, and practicing human being. We will discuss and work through real-life scenarios and learn about practical strategies you can implement at any point during your years at Syracuse University and (hopefully) beyond.
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Presenters: *Teaching Mentors:* Ben Valen, Eleanor Czajkowski & Erika Arias

Concurrent Sessions 2 continued on page 12

🌀 Tuesday, August 19 🌀

11:00 - 11:55 a.m.
12:05 - 1:00 p.m.

Rooms as noted

Concurrent Sessions 2

Please review the following session descriptions and select one session to attend from 11:00 to 11:55 a.m. and a different session to attend from 12:05 to 1:00 p.m.

What to do on your First Day/Week

LSB 105

Do you recall your first day of class as a college student? There was an instructor, a presentation, and maybe an icebreaker. Now, the roles have reversed, and here you are; it's your first day of class, and you are the instructor. If you're feeling anxious about your first day and unsure about what to do, this session is for you! In this session, we will provide a broad overview of how to prepare and have a successful first day and week. We will cover icebreakers, prep work before your first day, an example "run of show," and other valuable insight to help your first day and week run smoothly.

Presenters: *Teaching Mentors:* Minnie McMillian & Bo Jian

Teaching Controversial Topics

HBC 032-Kittredge Aud.

College teaching often involves addressing topics and debates that evoke strong emotions and reactions like race, gender, immigration, religion, and evolution. While these conversations can be uncomfortable in some classroom settings, they are essential for fostering critical thinking and preparing students to engage thoughtfully with the complexities of the real world. In this session, presenters will share their experiences and strategies for teaching controversial topics. Using practical examples and possible classroom scenarios, they will explore how to sustain respectful dialogue, navigate challenging dynamics, and support students from diverse backgrounds, perspectives, affiliations, and orientations.

Presenters: *Teaching Mentor:* Morgan Shaw, Vatya Raina & David Okanlawon

1:00 - 2:00 p.m.

Ernie Davis & Graham Halls

Lunch

Lunch will be provided for all orientation participants. Please remember to bring your meal coupon (see Meals note on page 3).

2:00 - 5:00 p.m.

See Room Assignments on page 5

Microteaching

TAs will meet together in small groups for microteaching - a practice teaching exercise. The five-minute presentation that you prepared prior to your arrival at TA Orientation will be recorded and critiqued in a constructive and supportive manner by your Teaching Mentor and small group.

Leaders: *Teaching Mentors*

Directory of Speakers & TAOP Staff

SPEAKERS

Rosemary Atanliga Ayine is a graduate teaching assistant in the mathematics department at Syracuse University. She believes in hard work, determination, and empowering people around her. She has since been seen as a mentor to many students through her diverse teaching skills, quick mathematical understanding, and ability to assist students succeed in many ways.

Shelley Crawford serves as the Associate Director of Student Outreach and Support (SOS) at Syracuse University. A Syracuse alumna, she also holds a Master's in Higher Education Administration from Bay Path University. With over a decade of experience in student support, financial aid, and case management, Shelley is known for her strategic leadership and student-centered approach. Her leadership in developing proactive outreach strategies and fostering cross-campus collaboration has strengthened support systems for students navigating academic and personal challenges. Shelley is a trusted partner in student success initiatives, known for her strategic insight, compassionate approach, and commitment to inclusive excellence.

Ashley Jimenez is in the Academic Integrity Office in the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence (CTLE). Ashley is currently pursuing a Master's in Higher Education with a concentration in Intercollegiate Athletic Advising and Support. Ashley previously earned a B.S. in Accounting and Business Management from Syracuse University in 2020. Prior to CTLE, Ashley was the Program Support Coordinator in the Center for Learning and Student Success. Additionally, she worked as an Accounting Analyst in the Comptroller's Office here on campus. Ashley's role is focused on academic integrity, case management, and student development. Outside of work, Ashley holds personal passions for sports, reading, traveling, animals, and family.

Kate Marzen is in the Academic Integrity Office in the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence (CTLE). She earned an M.B.A. in Organizational Leadership from Newman University, an M. Ed. in Higher Education and Student Affairs from the University of South Carolina and a B.S.Ed. in Deaf Education from Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Kate was previously the Assistant Director of Academic Expectations with the Center for Learning and Student Success at Syracuse University. In her role, Kate is specifically focused on academic integrity, faculty development, and policy improvement. Outside of work, Kate is an avid reader and runner who enjoys spending time outside with her husband and their dogs.

David Okanlawon is a PhD Candidate in the Anthropology Department. His dissertation research explores the entanglement of European Atlantic merchants with local African women on the West African coast. He brings his experience as a teaching assistant for several courses, guest lecturer at Syracuse University and beyond, and a former Graduate Student Diversity Committee member to mentoring new Graduate Teaching Assistants.

Mitch Sartin, Ph.D., is assistant director of Barnes Center Counseling at Syracuse University. In addition to providing direct clinical services, he coordinates services for student athletes as well as helping to coordinate eating disorder services. Dr. Sartin joined Syracuse University 20 years ago as a staff psychologist. He has a doctorate in clinical psychology from the University of Nebraska and clinical specializations in student-athlete concerns, eating concerns, identity development, and perfectionism. Dr. Sartin also provides suicide prevention training to other college/university campuses.

Directory of Speakers & TAOP Staff

STAFF

Tracy Balduzzi is the Associate Director for Strategic Initiatives at the Graduate School. Tracy completed her B.S. in Organizational Management from Keuka College, an M.S. in Health Care Administration from Utica College, and an Ed.D. in Higher Education from Wilmington University. She is also a graduate of the Leadership Mohawk Valley program and the Upstate Leadership Academy. In addition to her full-time role at S.U. she is an adjunct at Utica as well as a board member for the CNY Women's Leadership Fund, St. Camillus Nursing & Rehabilitation Center, and Safe Space CNY.

Peg De Furia is an Executive Administrative Specialist for Graduate School. Peg completed a dual B.S. (pre-med and psychology), an M.S. (recreation education), a C.A.S. (physical education) and a Ph.D. (teaching and curriculum) at Syracuse University and is an adjunct instructor in the Department of Health and Exercise Science. An Orange Plus Hall of Fame member, Peg played varsity volleyball at SU, was a percussionist in the marching, concert, graduation and Sour Citrus Society bands, is commissioner of the men's collegiate club volleyball ECVA-Upstate Conference, coordinates and coaches men's volleyball for the Central Region Empire State and Senior Games, is the state chairperson for the Empire's master's competition and is the assignor of the CNY Volleyball Officials' Corporation. Peg belongs to the "600 Club" and holds a 48-year singles title for the annual City of Syracuse Bowling Tournament. Her brother Chuck lives in their hometown, Chicago, and her sister Mary lives in Syracuse and teaches at Onondaga Community College.

Dina Ioannidis started with the Graduate School in December 2003 as Office Coordinator. She holds a B.S. in Business Management from Rochester Institute of Technology. She moved to Syracuse from Rochester, New York, in November 2002. Outside of the office, Dina is busy keeping up with her four children.

Shawn Loner is Assistant Director of Professional and Career Development for the Graduate School. His main responsibilities include developing professional development and pedagogical programming for Teaching Assistants, providing classroom and portfolio consultations, overseeing the TA Orientation, managing the ELP and Conversation Partner programs, and providing career development for master's students.

Daniel Olson-Bang, Ph.D., is Director of Professional and Career Development in the Graduate School, a role that he has held since 2017. Previously, he was Associate Director of Graduate Career Services, also at Syracuse, beginning in 2014. He holds a B.A. in English from North Carolina State University, an M.A. in English from New York University, and a Ph.D. in English from Fordham University. He is a Writing Faculty Fellow in Syracuse's School of Information Studies (iSchool), where he teaches research writing to doctoral students.

Glenn Wright is Executive Director of Professional and Career Development for the Graduate School. His main responsibilities include professional development programming for graduate students, administering SU's Future Professoriate Program at the campus level, providing oversight to the Graduate School's TA Program and English Language Proficiency Services, and directing the Graduate School Press publication series. Glenn has a B.A. in English from Carleton College in Northfield, MN, an M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Michigan, and has worked in educational assessment, academic publishing, and intermittently as a freelance editor and writer. His is the editor of *The Mentoring Continuum: From Graduate School through Tenure* (2015) and co-editor of *Leaving the Grove: A Quit Lit Reader* (2022).

∞ Directory of Teaching Mentors ∞

TEACHING MENTORS:

Steven Alvarez has been a Ph.D. student in the Philosophy Department since the Fall of 2023. He thinks a lot about what it is to be rational. In his free time, Steven watches certain tv shows/movies for the 4th (or more) time, can be seen at the gym, and is planning his next trip to NYC (his hometown).

Erika Arias is a Ph.D. Candidate in the Department of Political Science. Her research interests include social movements, public opinion, state violence, and memory. This is her fourth year as a Teaching Mentor. She has experience in being instructor of record, grading, and guest lecturing. Erika enjoys cooking, reading, and exploring parks in upstate New York.

Sohrob Aslamy is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Geography and the Environment. His research examines state-led urban development in Kabul, Afghanistan. Constantly working to develop his teaching strategy as a teaching assistant and instructor at the university, he is enthusiastic about facilitating pedagogical knowledge sharing among graduate students. Originally from Seattle, he now considers Syracuse home.

Gideon Banson is a doctoral student in Mathematics Education at the School of Education and a graduate teaching assistant in the Mathematics Department at Syracuse University. He has diverse teaching experience and strong research interests in mathematics education, technology integration, and inclusive education. As a future teacher educator, he strives to foster mastery of both content and pedagogical knowledge, grounded in emerging theories, through his research and teaching.

Ava Breitbeck is a Ph.D. student in the Department of Science Teaching. She completed bachelor's degrees in physics and political science from SU in 2022 and is originally from Syracuse. She currently works as a teaching assistant in the Physics Department and conducts research into Americans' science attitudes and impactful STEM education.

Chris Cho is a 4th year Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Philosophy. He is mainly interested in the problem of free will. Chris holds a B.A. in Philosophy and Cognitive Science from the University of Toronto. When not doing philosophy, Chris can be found reading at a cafe (most likely Cake Bar!), weightlifting, or listening to music on his record player.

Stella Clymer is in her second year of the Linguistics M.A. program, and teaches Spanish in the Department of Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics. She's originally from Nashville, Tennessee, and enjoys travelling, going to cafes, and talking about language.

Eleanor Czajkowski is a doctoral student in the School Psychology program at SU. She also attended SU for her undergrad, where she received her bachelor's degree in psychology with a minor in philosophy. Her research interests include writing interventions, writing apprehension and planning behaviors in school-aged children and adolescents. In her free time, she enjoys singing in the Hendrick Chapel Choir at SU and spending time outdoors.

Gargi De, an international student from India, is currently a second-year Ph.D. student in Civil Engineering. She is actively engaged in various student organizations and initiatives and has successfully completed the WISE-FPP program. With a strong commitment to sustainability, her academic and professional aspirations focus on advancing research for eco-friendly solutions to global challenges. In her free time, she enjoys traveling and spending time with dogs.

Sena Gokkus is a third-year Ph.D. student in the Civil and Environmental Engineering Department. Upon obtaining her master's degree from the School of Architecture at Syracuse University, she spent two years working in industry. Her research interests include sustainability and community resilience with a focus on asset management. She has a great passion for teaching and wishes to pursue it as a career after graduation.

Natalia Gulius earned her first Ph.D. in postmodern literature (2006) and was a Fulbright Visiting Scholar at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs (2018-2019). Now Natalia continues her research, teaching, and administrative journey in the Higher Education Ph.D. Program. Natalia and her husband have three teenagers with different abilities. They also have a cat, a dog, three chickens, and several hundred books on contemporary art. Salsa dancing, running, swimming, travelling, and fine art museums help her unwind.

Bo Jian (she/her/hers) is a Ph.D. student in Human Development and Family Science and Aging in Diverse Populations Research Laboratory. She has guest lectured and been a teaching assistant for multiple courses, and addresses mentoring relationships in a research setting. Her research interests are empathy and intergenerational relationships across culture, as well as understanding parenting beliefs.

Darzhaz Kazbekova is a Ph.D. candidate at the Maxwell School at Syracuse University. She holds a Ph.D. in International Relations from the Academy of Public Administration under the President of Kazakhstan. Passionate about both learning and teaching, she enjoys exploring complex issues and fostering critical thinking in the classroom. At Maxwell, she teaches "Critical Issues for the United States," which is a signature course. Recently, she co-authored the book *Management in Public Administration: A Handbook for Government Administrators in Kazakhstan*.

Amanda M. Kingston (she/her/hers) is a doctoral student in the Cultural Foundations of Education program with research focused on ecojustice education. Amanda serves as a co-facilitator in the Intergroup Dialogue Program, as Co-President of the School of Education Graduate Student Council, and as a graduate voting member in the School of Education Assembly. Prior to SU, Amanda worked in Louisiana and Oklahoma for 10 years as a classroom and community educator.

Pierre Lacaille is currently an Instructor of Record and a graduate student in the Language, Literature, and Linguistics Department studying French Language, Literature, and Culture. He got his MAT in teaching English as a Foreign Language from Strasbourg University, France. He has taught undergraduate courses in intermediate French while in Syracuse. His research interests include French and francophone literature and education.

Aidee Leon Lua is a graduate student in the School Psychology doctoral program at SU. She graduated from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) with her bachelor's degree in psychology and a minor in Spanish. She is interested in learning more about the neural correlates of autistic children, especially those who were born preterm. Aidee is also interested in working as a bilingual psychologist and ensuring that Spanish-speaking, Latine families have equitable access to research opportunities and clinical services.

Minnie McMillian (she/her) will enter her 5th year in the Social Psychology Ph.D. program in the Department of Psychology this upcoming academic year. Her research focuses on vicarious racism on social media, the consequences of intersectional invisibility, and exploring individual differences that influence support for social issues and policies. Alongside her dedication to community-focused work, she aspires to become a professor at a Historically Black College or University (HBCU) or a small liberal arts college, inspiring future scholars.

Fasika Melese is a doctoral student and teaching/research assistant at the IDD&E program in the School of Education. Her research focuses on technology integration in classroom settings, specifically the use of emerging EdTech. She has vast experience in teaching technology in both formal and informal educational settings. Fasika is passionate about making learning fun. She enjoys dancing and exploring nature around Syracuse and upstate NY.

Mehdi Nejatbakhsh is a Ph.D. candidate in Sociology at Syracuse University. He works on immigration, globalization, and political sociology of the Middle East. His dissertation focuses on the Iranian diaspora's long-distance nationalism through media since the 1979 revolution. He has also taught courses on Social Problems and Global Community at SU.

Gizem Ozyazici, originally from Turkey, received her Bachelor's and master's degrees in science education from Bogazici University. She is currently a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Science Teaching and serves as a teaching assistant. She is enthusiastic about both teaching and research. In addition to her academic pursuits, Gizem enjoys traveling.

Vatya Raina is a second-year Ph.D. student in anthropology at Syracuse University. She is studying displacement and resettlement and has taught an Introduction to Cultural Anthropology course.

Jacob Reese is a fifth-year English Ph.D. student with an emphasis in screen and media studies. His research is focused on the environmental qualities of slow video game design and its potential to engender ecological thinking. Other than teaching, he loves board games, video games, film, and road trips to the national parks.

Nurzharkyn Samigolla (she/her) is a Ph.D. student in Composition and Cultural Rhetoric from Kazakhstan, with research interests in translingual and decolonial studies. She has over 10 years of teaching experience, employing a student-centered approach to foster critical thinking and effective communication in writing classrooms. She is excited to share her experiences as both a student and educator, exploring how they shape her perspectives on language, identity, and pedagogy.

Elena Selthun (they/them) is a fourth-year English Ph.D. student at Syracuse University. They are the Teaching Associate for ENG 115: Gothic and Monster Literature, and they previously TAed for 100-level English courses about drama, popular culture, and film. They research queer ecologies and decaying empires in Victorian and neo-Victorian Gothic literature.

Morgan Shaw is a Ph.D. candidate in English whose research centers on the politics of form in early modern (1500-1600s) English literature. She holds a Certificate of Advanced Study in Women's and Gender Studies as well as a Master of Philosophy in English, both from Syracuse University. Courses she has taught include ENG 113 British Literature: Beginnings to 1789 and ENG/WGS 192 Gender and Literary Texts. This will be her fourth year as a Teaching Mentor.

Marie Shuter is a fourth-year doctoral student in the School Psychology program at SU. She is from Philadelphia, PA, and taught the Foundations of Human Behavior course during her first year. When not teaching or in the lab, Marie enjoys traveling and hiking with her dog Bentley and her cat Noelle.

Calistus Simiyu is a Ph.D. student in Mathematics Education at SU and a teaching assistant in the Mathematics Department. He comes from Kenya, and his research focuses on enhancing mathematics teacher training and professional development. He is particularly interested in equipping mathematics educators with effective pedagogical strategies to foster deep mathematical understanding in their classrooms. Beyond academia, he enjoys playing badminton and traveling, and he embraces opportunities to learn from diverse educational systems and cultures.

Soham Sinha (he/him) has been pursuing his Ph.D. in the Department of English at Syracuse University since Fall 2022. His research encompasses 19th-century Anglophone literature with a focus on colonialism and the British Empire. As an instructor, he has taught courses like Class and Literary Texts, Interpretation of Fiction, and Introduction to the Novel.

Nathalie Uwamahoro is a third-year Ph.D. candidate in the Electrical Engineering and Computer Science Department at Syracuse University and holds a Master's Degree in Electrical and Computer Engineering from Carnegie Mellon University. Her Ph.D. research focuses on energy systems, applied machine learning, and data analytics. She was honored to receive 1st Place for the Best Graduate Paper at the 55th North American Power Symposium (NAPS) and the Outstanding TA Award at Syracuse University in 2024. Nathalie is passionate about sharing knowledge, inspiring others, and learning through collaboration.

Ben Valen (they/he) is an NSF Graduate Research Fellow and Social Psychology Ph.D. Candidate in the Department of Psychology. Their current research interests include examining prejudice against LGBTQ+ people, attitudes toward social groups with "conflicting" intersecting identities, and health disparities between LGBTQ+ people and cisgender heterosexual people. In his free time, Ben enjoys exploring new places, playing with dogs, and eating at Pastabilities!

Rebekah Wallis (she/her) is a Ph.D. student in Inclusive Special Education in the School of Education. She has over 13 years of teaching experience in both K-12 and higher education, as well as experience in coaching and training teachers. She moved from Florida to Syracuse in 2024 with her cat and two dogs, and enjoys hiking, reading, and playing the guitar.

Jun Zhang is a Ph.D. student in the Social Science program at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University. Her research focuses on nonprofit management and collaborative governance. She is passionate about inspiring and empowering students to better understand governance and create change.

TA Orientation Program Overview

International Portion: Saturday, August 16

**Check-in/Breakfast
(Lyman Hall Lobby)
8:30-9:00 a.m.**

**Welcome
(Lyman Hall 132)
9:00-9:30 a.m.**

**Small Groups
(Small Group Assignments- see page 4)
9:45-10:35 a.m.**

**“Introduction to the U.S. Classroom”
(Lyman Hall 132)
10:45-11:35 a.m.**

**“Do’s & Don’ts as an ITA”
(Lyman Hall 132)
11:45a.m.-12:35 p.m.**

**Lunch
(Ernie Davis Hall)
12:45-1:35 p.m.**

**“Succeeding as an ITA”
(Lyman Hall 132)
1:45-2:35 p.m.**

**Small Groups: Microteaching
(Small Group Assignments - see page 4)
2:45-5:00 p.m.**

TA Orientation Program Overview

General Portion: August 18 & 19

Monday, August 18		Tuesday, August 19	
<p style="text-align: center;">Onsite Check-in & Breakfast (Breezeway-HBC) 8:00 - 8:30 a.m.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Welcome (Gifford Aud-HBC) 8:30 - 8:55 a.m.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Small Groups (Room as per small group assignment - see page 5) 9:00 - 9:55 a.m.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Academic Integrity (Grant Aud-Falk) 10:05 - 11:00 a.m.</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">Continental Breakfast (Breezeway-HBC) 8:30 - 9:00 a.m.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Small Groups (Room as per small group assignment - see page 5) 9:00 - 9:50 a.m.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Recognizing and Supporting Students in Distress (Grant Aud-Falk) 10:00 - 10:55 a.m.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Concurrent Sessions #2 11:00 - 11:55 a.m. & 12:05 - 1:00 p.m.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessments, Grading, & Rubrics (HL 207) • Work/Life Balance (LSB 001) • What to do on your 1st Day/Week (LSB 105) • Teaching Controversial Topics (HBC Kitt) <p style="text-align: center;">Lunch (Ernie Davis & Graham Halls) 1:00 - 2:00 p.m.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Microteaching (Room as per small group assignment - see page 5) 2:00 - 5:00 p.m.</p>	
<p>Small Groups 1-16</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Inclusive Teaching through Universal Design (Grant Aud-Falk) 11:10 - 12:05 p.m.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Lunch (Ernie Davis & Graham Halls) 12:15 - 1:10 p.m.</p>	<p>Small Groups 17-32</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Lunch (Ernie Davis & Graham Halls) 11:10 - 12:05 p.m.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Inclusive Teaching through Universal Design (LSB 001) 12:15 - 1:10 p.m.</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;">Concurrent Sessions #1: 1:20-2:15 & 2:25-3:20 & 3:30-4:25 p.m.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivating Students (HBC Kittredge) • Dealing with Dispute (LSB 105) • Classroom as Community (Lyman 132) • Creating a Teaching Persona (HL 207) • Artificial Intelligence in the Classroom and Beyond (LSB 001) <p style="text-align: center;">Picnic /BBQ at Inn Complete 5:00-7:00 p.m.</p>			

🌀 Other Information, Dates, & Events 🌀

Course Registration

Registration for students will be done through *MySlice*. New graduate students will be able to register beginning Friday, August 1. Please see your department for advising prior to registration.

Complete instructions for online registration have been outlined in a web tutorial (<http://registrar.syr.edu>) for your convenience.

ID Cards

To request an SUID card, you must [submit a photo](#) online. You will be notified by email when your card is ready to be picked up at 111 Waverly Avenue, Suite 111. You must have a valid NetID and syr.edu email address to request a card.

Departmental Orientations

Wednesday, August 20- Friday, August 22

Graduate Student Fall Welcome.

Information Session & Picnic

Goldstein Aud., Schine Student Center
Saturday, August 23, starting at 2:00pm

Your key to necessary information and useful resources:

<https://graduateschool.syr.edu/student-resources/>

