



All-University TA Orientation

Schedule of Events

August 2026

**Syracuse University
Graduate School**

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∞ August 2026 ∞

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 2026 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
HL=Hall of Languages
Link=Link Hall
LSB = Life Sciences Building
Lyman = Lyman Hall
Shaffer=Shaffer Art Building
Sims=Sims Hall
[Interactive Campus Map](#)

MEALS: On the mornings of the 16th, 17th, & 18th, a continental breakfast will be provided. 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, Sadler, Brockway, 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	Steven Alvarez	HL 101
2	Temitope Akinode	HL 101
3	Gideon Banson	HL 102
4	Lauren Ashby	HL 102
5	Eleanor Czajkowski	HL 105
6	Sarah Appedu	HL 105
7	Gargi De	HL 111
8	Jasmin Bowers	HL 111
9	Sena Gokkus	HL 114
10	Yanbei Chen	HL 114
11	Amanda Kingston	HL 115
12	Rein Desbien	HL 115
13	Aidee Leon Lua	HL 201
14	Shameen Fatima	HL 201
15	Jacob Reese	HL 202
16	Antonio Freiles	HL 202
17	Elena Selthun	HL 205
18	Tori-Ann Haywood	HL 205
19	Calistus Simiyu	HL 211
20	Yuheun Kim	HL 211
21	Nathalie Uwamahoro	HL 214
22	Grace Levine	HL 214
23	Rebekah Wallis	HL 215
24	Amona Major	HL 215
25	Magnolia Murphy	HL 421
26	Louise Zhuang	HL 421
27	Camryn O'Conner	Lyman 126
28	William Robert	Lyman 126
29	Mary Oluoch	Lyman 115A
30	Gabriel Ulbricht Ferreira	Lyman 115A

Small Group Room Assignments: General Program

☞ August 17-18☞

<u>Small Group</u>	<u>Teaching Mentor</u>	<u>Rooms</u>
1	Steven Alvarez	BH 104
2	Temitope Akinode	BH 105
3	Gideon Banson	BH 108
4	Lauren Ashby	BH 110
5	Eleanor Czajkowski	Lyman 115A
6	Sarah Appedu	Carn 100
7	Gargi De	Lyman 115B
8	Jasmin Bowers	Carn 114
9	Sena Gokkus	Carn 115
10	Yanbei Chen	Carn 119
11	Amanda Kingston	Carn 120
12	Rein Desbien	Carn 122
13	Aidee Leon Lua	Carn 200
14	Shameen Fatima	Carn 219
15	Jacob Reese	LSB 011
16	Antonio Freiles	LSB 100
17	Elena Selthun	LSB 156
18	Tori-Ann Haywood	LSB 200
19	Calistus Simiyu	LSB 214
20	Yuheun Kim	LSB 300
21	Nathalie Uwamahoro	Shaffer 121
22	Grace Levine	Shaffer 203
23	Rebekah Wallis	Shaffer 205
24	Amona Major	Shaffer 221D
25	Magnolia Murphy	Sims 237
26	Louise Zhuang	Sims 241
27	Camryn O'Conner	Sims 331
28	William Robert	Sims 337
29	Mary Oluoch	Lyman 126
30	Gabriel Ulbricht Ferreira	Sims 437

☞ Sunday, August 16 ☞

8:00-8:30 a.m.	Lyman Hall 132
On-site Check-in & Continental Breakfast	On-site check-in will be held from 8:00 to 8:30 a.m. for all ITA orientation participants.
8:30-8:50 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.
9:00-10:00 a.m.	Lyman Hall 132
Center for International Services-Welcome & Immigration Essentials	This session welcomes new international teaching assistants to Syracuse and introduces the Center for International Services (CIS) as their primary resource for immigration support. We'll cover the essentials of maintaining F-1 and J-1 status, key compliance considerations tied to working as a TA, and important upcoming changes to immigration regulations that students should be aware of this fall. TAs will leave knowing how to stay in good standing and how to reach CIS whenever questions come up. Presenter: Annie Dievendorf, Interim Associate Director
10:10-11:00 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>
11:10 a.m.-12:00 p.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:</i> Calistus Simiyu & Mary Oluoch
12:10-1:00 p.m.	Ernie Davis or Sadler Dining Halls
Lunch	Lunch will be provided for all orientation participants. Please remember to bring your meal voucher. (see Meals note on page 3).

☞ Sunday, August 16 ☞

1:10-2:00 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: *Teaching Mentors: Antonio Freiles, Louise Zhang, & Gargi De*

2:10-3:00 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: Antonio Freiles, Sena Gokkus, Gabriel Ulbricht Ferreira, Amona Major, & Tori-Ann Haywood*

3:10-5:30 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 17 ☞

The General Program Begins Here

8:00-8:30 a.m.	LSB Atrium
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.	LSB 001
Welcome Session	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. Presenters: Peter Venable, Associate Provost for Graduate Studies & Dean of the Graduate School TA Orientation Staff
9:00-10:20 a.m.	See Room Assignments on page 5
Small Groups	ITAs and domestic TAs will meet together in small groups. There will be time for conversation and questions. Leaders: <i>Teaching Mentors</i>
10:30-11:20 a.m.	LSB 001
Academic Integrity for Teaching Assistants	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. Presenters: Kate Marzan & Ashley Jimenez Academic Integrity Development Office Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence (CTLE)
11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.	Rooms as noted
Breakout Sessions & Lunch Break	
Small Group #s 1-15 will attend the <i>Inclusive Teaching through Universal Design</i> session from 11:30-12:25 p.m. and will break for Lunch from 12:35-1:30 p.m.	
Small Group #s 16-30 will break for Lunch from 11:30- 12:25 p.m. and will attend the <i>Inclusive Teaching through Universal Design</i> session from 12:35-1:30 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, Sadler, Brockway, and Graham Halls	

Monday, August 17

Inclusive Teaching through Universal Design

LSB 001

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:* Camryn O'Conner, Jasmin Bowers, Shameen Fatima, Tor-Ann Haywood, Neda Abdolrahimi, & Temitope Akinode

1:40 - 2:30 p.m.
2:40 - 3:30 p.m.
3:40 - 4:30 p.m.

Rooms as noted

Concurrent Sessions 1

Please review the following session descriptions and select one session to attend from 1:40 to 2:30 p.m., a different one from 2:40 to 3:30 p.m., and a third session to attend from 3:40 to 4:30 p.m.

Motivating Students

LSB 001

How do I motivate students in the post-pandemic era of GenAI? It's a question every TA asks that often leads to one of the most complex and rewarding challenges we face. What starts as a straightforward task can quickly demand careful consideration and new strategies. This session is a practical and grounded discussion of what it means to model engagement and motivate students in a classroom or lab setting. It looks broadly at key pedagogical approaches to student motivation, reflecting on how students become active participants, and even collaborators, in their own learning. The presenters share their own experiences motivating students in different contexts, offer concrete tips, and answer any questions you have about this crucial topic.

Presenters: *Teaching Mentors:* Sarah Appedu, Rein Desbiens & Nathalie Uwamahoro

Dealing with Dispute

Carn 122

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:* Gabriel Ulbricht Ferreira, Antonio Freiles & Sena Gokkus

Concurrent Sessions 1 continued on page 10

Monday, August 17

1:40 - 2:30 p.m.
2:40 - 3:30 p.m.
3:40 - 4:30 p.m.

Rooms as noted

Concurrent Sessions 1

Please review the following session descriptions and select one session to attend from 1:40 to 2:30 p.m., a different one from 2:40 to 3:30 p.m., and a third session to attend from 3:40 to 4:30 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:* Grace Levine, Lauren Ashby
& Rebekah Wallis

Creating a Teaching
Persona

Link 160

Developing your “teaching persona” in an intentional, strategic manner is important. 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:* Aidee Leon Lua, William Robert
& Elena Sethun

Setting the Stage-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:* Maggie Murphy, Titus Kisakye
& Gideon Banson

5:00 - 7:00 p.m.

The Inn Complete

Teaching Assistant
BBQ Buffet

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 18 🌀

8:30 - 9:00 a.m.	LSB Atrium
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Continental Breakfast Breakfast will be provided for all orientation participants.

9:00 - 9:55 a.m.	LSB 001
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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 and Shelley Crawford, Associate Director of Student Outreach & Support

10:00 - 10:55 a.m.	LSB 001
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Teaching in the Age of AI: A Practical Guide for Graduate TAs Generative AI is rapidly changing the landscape of higher education, creating both opportunities and challenges for graduate teaching assistants. This session provides practical guidance on how TAs can responsibly use AI to support teaching, communication, feedback, lesson preparation, and student learning while maintaining academic integrity and professional standards. Through real-world scenarios and interactive discussions, participants will explore common AI-related questions that arise in the classroom and develop strategies for exercising sound judgment in an AI-enabled learning environment. Attendees will leave with a practical framework and actionable tools they can apply immediately in their teaching roles.

Presenters: Doug Yung, Teaching Professor; Director, Biomedical Engineering Undergraduate Program; Core Faculty, Renée Crown Honors Program; ASEE Campus Representative; Meredith Professor Faculty Fellow; Department of Biomedical and Chemical Engineering

11:05 - 11:55 a.m. 12:05 - 12:55 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 11:05 to 11:55 a.m. and a different session to attend from 12:05 to 12:55 p.m.

Creating a Successful Work/Life Balance LSB 105	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. Presenters: <i>Teaching Mentors:</i> Tori-Ann Haywood, Eleanor Czajkowski & Neda Abdolrahimi
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Concurrent Sessions 2 continued on page 12

🌀 Tuesday, August 18 🌀

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

Rooms as noted

Concurrent Sessions 2

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

Assessments, Grading,
and Rubrics -
Demystified!

Link 160

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!"

Presenters: *Teaching Mentors:* Gargi De, Louise Zhuang,
& Wusirige

Teaching Controversial
Topics

Lyman 132

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 Mentors:* Camryn O'Conner, Jasmin Bowers
& Wentao Ding

Teaching in the Age of AI:
A Practical Guide for
Graduate TAs—Follow-Up
Session

LSB 001

A follow up to the Large Group Session for those interested in diving deeper into the world of AI in the classroom.

Generative AI is rapidly changing the landscape of higher education, creating both opportunities and challenges for graduate teaching assistants. This session provides practical guidance on how TAs can responsibly use AI to support teaching, communication, feedback, lesson preparation, and student learning while maintaining academic integrity and professional standards. Through real-world scenarios and interactive discussions, participants will explore common AI-related questions that arise in the classroom and develop strategies for exercising sound judgment in an AI-enabled learning environment. Attendees will leave with a practical framework and actionable tools they can apply immediately in their teaching roles.

Presenters: Doug Yung, Ph.D.

Teaching Mentors: Yanbei Chen & Sarah Appedu

🌀 Tuesday, August 18 🌀

1:00 - 2:00 p.m.

Ernie Davis, Sadler, Brockway, and 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

Neda Abdolrahimi is a Ph.D. candidate in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science at Syracuse University. She has served as a Teaching Assistant for multiple courses, including Programming Language, Theory and Principles, Discrete Mathematics, Data Networks and Robotic in Summer College, where she has supported both undergraduate and pre-college students in developing strong analytical and problem-solving skills. Her teaching focuses on making abstract concepts accessible through structured explanations, interactive learning, and practical examples.

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.

Annie Dievendorf serves as Interim Associate Director at the Center for International Services (CIS), part of the Intercultural Collective at Syracuse University, where she is a Principal Designated School Official (PDSO) and Alternate Responsible Officer (ARO). She has worked in international education since 2013 and joined CIS in 2017, bringing deep expertise in F-1 and J-1 immigration compliance, SEVIS administration, and international student advising. She partners closely with students, faculty, and campus offices to help international scholars navigate their immigration responsibilities and thrive at Syracuse.

Wentao Ding is a PhD student in philosophy at Syracuse University. He mainly works on ethics and philosophy of science, especially the intersection of both. Outside philosophy, he likes travelling and playing video games.

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.

Titus Kisakye is a second-year doctoral student in Mathematics education at the School of Education and a graduate teaching assistant in the Mathematics Department at Syracuse University. He earned an M.S. degree in Teaching & Curriculum from Syracuse University in Fall 2024. He has diverse teaching experience and a strong research interest in mathematics education and prospective teacher training. As a future teacher educator, He is committed to helping students develop a deep understanding of mathematical concepts using emerging theories and evidence-based methods that promote effective teaching practices.

Directory of Speakers & TAOP Staff

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.

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.

Wusirige is a PhD candidate in Human Development and Family Science at Syracuse University. Her research focuses on how parenting practices and family processes influence children's developmental outcomes across diverse cultural contexts. She has teaching experience in both K-12 and university settings and strives to create supportive classrooms that foster students' curiosity and understanding.

Douglas Yung, PH.D., is a Teaching Professor and Director of the Undergraduate Biomedical Engineering Program at Syracuse University. He is a Meredith Professor Faculty Fellow whose work focuses on the ethical and responsible use of artificial intelligence in teaching and learning. His scholarship and professional activities explore engineering ethics, AI literacy, instructional innovation, and faculty and graduate student development. Through collaborations with the Center for Teaching and Learning Excellence, he has led workshops and initiatives that help educators integrate AI thoughtfully while maintaining academic integrity, professional judgment, and student learning. He is an active leader in engineering education through the American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE) and serves as an ABET Program Evaluator.

Directory of Speakers & TAOP Staff

STAFF

Tracy Balduzzi is the Associate Director for Graduate Student Engagement and Success 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 nearly 50-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:

Temitope Akinode is a second year Chemistry PhD student from Ogun state, Nigeria. She holds a master's degree in computational and integrative biology from Rutgers University and a bachelor's degree in chemistry from Covenant University, Nigeria. She currently serves as a teaching assistant for physical chemistry. Her academic interest lies in the study of crystal structures of pharmaceutical compounds. Outside of academia, she loves baking, DJ-ing and crocheting.

Steven Alvarez is a 4th year Philosophy Ph.D. student. He is interested in several philosophical questions, such as: What does it take for someone's actions and attitudes to be rational? What conditions must be met for something to be a welfare subject? What explains our reasons for action and belief? Aside from these interests, he enjoys traveling back home to New York City, watching cooking videos, and trying to get better at badminton.

Sarah Appedu, M.S. LIS is a Ph.D. candidate in Information Science & Technology at Syracuse University. She received her Master's in Library & Information Science from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and is a former academic library worker. Her backgrounds in philosophy, critical cultural studies, and library and information science inform her current research on the complex intra-actions between technology, human beings, society, and the natural world and their manifestations in the scholarly and professional fields of LIS.

Lauren Ashby is a PhD Candidate in Sociology and also completed her MA in Geography at Syracuse University. She has served as a TA in the sociology department for two years, in addition to a year as a University Fellow and two years as the Syracuse Community Geography GA. Lauren brings experience from instructor of record appointments with trouble&co and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology MITES Semester program, and her doctoral research focuses on questions of school choice, educational segregation, and urban-suburban educational equity.

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 a strong research interest 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.

Jasmin Bowers (she/her) is a current Master of Public Health (MPH) candidate at Syracuse University, whose research specializes in health economics and reproductive health. She is also a graduate teaching assistant for the public health department in the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs. Jasmin's career aspirations include her passion for researching and solving health inequities that disproportionately affect marginalized communities.

Yanbei Chen is a Ph.D. candidate in Instructional Design, Development, and Evaluation at the School of Education. Her research focuses on AI-assisted technology integration in teacher education, with particular attention to pre-service teachers' emotional learning experiences and responsible AI use. As an instructor of record and teaching assistant, she is committed to fostering inclusive, supportive, and engaging learning environments for diverse learners.

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 and a minor in philosophy. Her research interests include writing interventions, writing apprehension and planning behaviors in school-aged children. 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 third-year PhD 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.

Rein Desbiens is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Chemistry. He is originally from Amsterdam, New York and completed his bachelor's degree in biochemistry at SU in 2023. He has multiple years of experience as a teaching assistant for general chemistry courses and conducts research as a part of the Doyle group in the Department of Chemistry.

Shameen Fatima is a first-year graduate student in the Masters in Communication and Rhetorical Studies program. She has previously taught CRS 325, Presentational Speaking and is currently leading recitations for CRS 225, Public Advocacy. Her research focuses on representation of South Asian women, identity, critical media and culture, narratives of grief, rhetoric of affect, desire and self-sacrifice.

Gabriel Ulbricht Ferreira is a PhD student in Sociology at Syracuse University. His main research focus is related to labor, immigration, and political economy. He also has extensive teaching experience in Sociology, History and English, often promoting a critical approach that prioritizes historical context and contemporary issues.

Antonio Freiles is currently a PhD Candidate in Philosophy at Syracuse University, where he has also completed an MA in Linguistics. Before completing his BA and MA in Philosophy at the University of Italian Switzerland, he grew up in Italy.

Sena Gokkus is a fourth 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 has spent over two years working in the industry. Her research interests include sustainability in the built environment 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.

Tori-Ann Haywood is a PhD Candidate in the Department of Sociology at Syracuse University. Her work uses qualitative methods to explore the intersection of food insecurity and socioeconomic disparities in an urban setting. Outside of academia, she enjoys hiking local trails and listening to live music.

Yuheun Kim (also goes by Rachel) is a PhD candidate in the School of Information Studies. Her research is at the intersection of NLP and computational social science and responsible AI. Outside of research, she enjoys watching baseball and knitting.

Amanda M. Kingston (she/her/hers) is a Ph.D. Candidate in the Cultural Foundations of Education program with research focused on ecojustice, contemplative, and ecofeminist pedagogy. 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 K-12 classroom and community educator.

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.

Grace Levine is a doctoral student in the School Psychology department, working with Dr. Natalie Russo. Her research interests include social communication and the use of self-perception to understand differences in autistic individuals' social skills. In her free time, Grace enjoys being outside, reading, and playing cards with friends.

Amona Major is a second-year doctoral student in the program of Instructional Design and Educational Technology (IDD&E) at the School of Education, where she also serves as a teaching assistant. Her research endeavors focus on the adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) tools within higher education institutions and the experiences of belonging among [international] graduate students. With her expanding experience in instructional design, Amona aspires to provide support to new graduate students during their academic and professional transitions.

Magnolia (Maggie) Murphy is a third-year PhD candidate in the Syracuse English department. Her research considers the resonance between the aesthetics of early twentieth-century literature and the "new physics" of this same period-- namely, relativity and quantum mechanics. Before Syracuse, Maggie taught 5th grade math in Minneapolis. She enjoys riding bikes and making stews.

Camryn O'Conner is a second-year Ph.D. student in social psychology from Little Rock, Arkansas. Her research focuses on racial perceptions, prejudice, and how individuals engage in conversations about race. Outside of academia, she creates book and lifestyle content across social media, sharing her love of reading and connecting with a broad audience.

Mary Oluoch (MJ) is a second-year SU student pursuing a Ph.D. in Mathematics Education and a Graduate Assistant in the School of Education. Her research focus is on designing collaborative learning practices centered on manipulative use to promote prospective mathematics teachers' knowledge of teaching mathematics. Beyond studies, MJ enjoys watching movies and listening to music.

Jacob Reese is a PhD candidate in English at Syracuse University whose research focuses on the intersections between slow media and the environmental humanities, with a particular emphasis on how "slow" video games function in conversation with broader cultural sustainability movements. He has taught courses on American literature, popular culture, and environmental rhetoric, and has served as a teaching assistant for courses on the Western humanities, video games, and film.

William Robert is a graduate student in the Master of French and Francophone Studies program and a French Teaching Assistant at Syracuse University. He previously earned a bachelor's degree in French Language and Literature and a master's degree from the University of Strasbourg, where his research focused on the contemporary use of parables in 20th-century novels. He later moved to the United States to continue exploring the connections between literature and morality.

Elena Selthun (they/them) is a fifth-year English PhD student at Syracuse University. They are the Teaching Associate for ENG 140: Reading the Environment, and they previously TAed for 100-level English courses about the Gothic, gender, drama, popular culture, and film. They research queer ecologies and decaying empires in Victorian and Neo-Victorian literature.

Calistus Simiyu is a PhD 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.

Nathalie Uwamahoro is a fourth-year Ph.D. candidate in the Electrical Engineering and Computer Science Department at Syracuse University. Her Ph.D. research focuses on enhancing power system resilience to ensure reliable electricity under extreme weather. She received the Outstanding TA Award in 2025 and has been a teaching mentor since 2024 at Syracuse University.

Rebekah Wallis (she/they) is a Ph.D. student in Inclusive Special Education with 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.

Louise Zhuang is a PhD student in the Human Development and Family Science department. Her research interests include parent-child relationships, risk and resilience, executive functions, autonomy-supportive parenting, and cross-cultural differences in child development. Currently, she is looking into how different experiences of being lied to by parents in childhood are associated with adult social-cognitive outcomes.

TA Orientation Program Overview

International Portion: Sunday, August 16

Check-in/Breakfast

(Lyman Hall Lobby)

8:00-8:30 a.m.

Welcome

(Lyman Hall 132)

8:30-8:50 a.m.

Center for International Services: Welcome & Immigration Essentials

(Lyman Hall 132)

9:00-10:00 a.m.

Small Groups

(Small Group Assignments- see page 4)

10:10-11:00 a.m.

“Introduction to the U.S. Classroom”

(Lyman Hall 132)

11:10-12:00 p.m.

Lunch

(Ernie Davis & Sadler Halls)

12:10-1:00 p.m.

“Do’s & Don’ts as an ITA”

(Lyman Hall 132)

1:10-2:00 p.m.

“Succeeding as an ITA”

(Lyman Hall 132)

2:10-3:00 p.m.

Small Groups: Microteaching

(Small Group Assignments - see page 4)

3:10-5:30 p.m.

🌀 TA Orientation Program Overview 🌀

General Portion: August 17 & 18

Monday, August 17		Tuesday, August 18
Onsite Check-in & Breakfast (LSB Atrium) 8:00-8:30 a.m. Welcome (LSB 001) 8:30-8:55 a.m. Small Groups (Room as per small group assignment - see page 5) 9:00-10:20 a.m. Academic Integrity (LSB 001) 10:30-11:20 a.m.		Continental Breakfast (LSB Atrium) 8:30 - 9:00 a.m. Recognizing and Supporting Students in Distress (LSB 001) 9:00-9:55 a.m. Teaching in the Age of AI: A Practical Guide for Graduate TAs (LSB 001) 10:00-10:55 a.m. Concurrent Sessions #2 11:05-11:55 a.m. & 12:05-12:55 p.m. - Assessments, Grading, & Rubrics (Link 160) - Work/Life Balance (LSB 105) - Teaching in the Age of AI: A Practical Guide for Graduate TAs-Follow-up Discussion (LSB 001) - Teaching Controversial Topics (Lyman 132)
Small Groups 1-15 Inclusive Teaching through Universal Design (LSB 001) 11:30 a.m.-12:25 p.m. Lunch (Ernie Davis, Sadler, Brockway, & Graham Halls) 12:35-1:30 p.m.	Small Groups 16-30 Lunch (Ernie Davis, Sadler, Brockway, & Graham Halls) 11:30 a.m.-12:25 p.m. Inclusive Teaching through Universal Design (LSB 001) 12:35 -1:30 p.m.	Lunch (Ernie Davis, Sadler, Brockway, and Graham Halls) 1:00 - 2:00 p.m. Microteaching (Room as per small group assignment - see page 5) 2:00 - 5:00 p.m.
Concurrent Sessions #1: 1:40-2:30 & 2:40-3:30 & 3:40-4:30 p.m. - Motivating Students (HBC Kittredge) - Dealing with Dispute (LSB 105) - Classroom as Community (Lyman 132) - Creating a Teaching Persona (HL 207) - Setting the Stage: What to do on your 1st day/week (LSB 001) Picnic /BBQ at Inn Complete 5:00-7:00 p.m.		

🌀 Other Information, Dates, & Events 🌀

Course Registration

Registration for students will be done through *MySlice*. New graduate students will be able to register beginning 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 19 - Friday, August 21

Graduate Student Fall Welcome.

Information Session & Picnic

Goldstein Aud., Schine Student Center
Saturday, August 22, starting at 2:00pm

Your key to necessary information and useful resources:

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

