

Teaching Circles (BETA2) 2021

Organized by Aaron Clauset

January 2021, kickoff

Welcome to the S21 Teaching Circles! Thank you for being an early adopter.

Goals:

1. Provide a forum for getting feedback on and advice about improving your own teaching.
2. Help each other improve as instructors.
3. Provide a mechanism for producing peer observations of teaching (for reappointment and P&T).
4. Provide a social environment for instructors and tenure-track faculty to discuss the department's instructional efforts.

Structure:

1. The teaching circle is part of your teaching time, and is not a service obligation.
 2. It's meant to be a "light" activity, and a useful one.
 3. Each circle has a "leader" who responsible for making sure things happen.
 4. Things that should happen:
 - Each circle should meet 3 times for ~1 hour; everyone should attend.
 - Peer observations of teaching, each person observes and is observed by someone in their circle; a report is produced and shared with the observee; observations should happen between meetings 2 and 3.
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First meeting (week before semester starts):

1. Introductions: who are you, what's your background, what do you teach in the department.
2. Go over the *Goals* and *Structure* of the Teaching Circle; discuss.
3. Schedule 2nd and 3rd meetings.
4. Choose peer observation matches. Who will observe whom? (Matched people should schedule observations on their own.)
5. Discuss ideas for teaching this semester. What new things are you considering? What things from previous iterations are you going to change, how, and why? What advice would you like for improving?
6. Before 2nd meeting, schedule peer observations. Use department template and guidance.

Note: Currently, untenured faculty should be observed by tenured faculty, in order to ensure that the resultant peer observation carries proper weight in the P&T process for them.

Second meeting (4-6 weeks into semester):

1. Discuss how class is going. What unexpected things have come up? Etc.
2. Discuss peer observation activity. What are they? How do they work? Go over the template and guidance document.

Third meeting (last few weeks of semester):

1. End-of-semester readout of experiences teaching that semester. What worked? What didn't? What experiments are you considering next? What could be improved?
2. Commiserate about failures. Celebrate successes.