

Princeton Theological Seminary * Teaching Apprenticeship Program

The Teaching Apprenticeship Program (TAP) is an integral part of doctoral education for all PhD students at Princeton Theological Seminary. It is designed to achieve two goals: the formation of effective teachers and the cultivation of their expertise in a specific academic discipline.

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

TAP is structured so that doctoral students develop as teachers through theoretical and methodological instruction, teaching practice, and coaching and mentoring. Both doctoral students' development as teachers, as well as the impact of TAP, will be assessed regularly.

TAP entails four interrelated requirements aimed at developing students' proficiency in teaching:

- Two 1.5 credit year-long TAP colloquia on the practice of teaching and pedagogical method;
- Experience in multiple teaching roles that recognize various levels of teaching experience;
- Coaching and mentoring by faculty supervisor(s); and
- Written assessments by faculty supervisor(s) for inclusion in a teaching portfolio.

A. Theoretical and methodological instruction

Students will participate in two year-long colloquia during the first two years of the doctoral program. The colloquia begin with a one-day intensive introduction to basic teaching concepts, such as the role of the teacher, diversity of learners, classroom management, student learning assessment, and relevant seminary policies. Subsequently, students meet monthly for 90-minute sessions from October to April to discuss readings and special issues related to teaching philosophies and methods. TAP Colloquium Faculty will grade the students Pass/Fail and will provide written assessments that may be included in students' portfolios.

B. Teaching Practice

There are three possible teaching levels that a doctoral student may assume in the teacher preparation component of the doctoral program at PTS: teaching assistant, teaching fellow, and senior teaching fellow. Every doctoral student is required to serve as a teaching assistant for at least two semesters. Some students may serve as teaching fellow or senior teaching fellow based on the needs of the departments and the skill level of the PhD students.

The descriptions of the various doctoral teaching roles are as follows:

1. Teaching Assistant

Learning Tasks:

- Teaching assistants gain experience in course observation, student mentoring, small group facilitation, assessment, and course evaluation. Supervising Faculty may request other tasks as well.
- If the course lends itself, teaching assistants may also lecture or assume leadership of a session at the request of their faculty colleague.

2. Teaching Fellow

Prerequisite: At least one teaching assistant appointment or approval of the department.

Learning Tasks:

- The teaching fellow and the Supervising Faculty colleague act as a teaching team (i.e. the teaching fellow shares a teaching role in the course at the level determined by the faculty colleague).

- A teaching fellow is involved in aspects of course preparation, execution, and assessment, though spending less time on these tasks than the faculty member.
3. Senior Teaching Fellow
- Prerequisites:* ABD status, teaching assistant experience, completion of TAP Foundations I and II. Departments may determine that an individual student be considered as a senior teaching fellow without having served as a teaching fellow.
- Learning Tasks:*
- A senior teaching fellow is a PhD student who teaches a course on his or her own.
 - Senior teaching fellows are responsible for all aspects of course development, instruction, and assessment.

C. Mentoring and Coaching

TAP introduces an intentional mentoring component into the doctoral program by allowing doctoral students to take on increasing responsibility in the classroom while working closely with faculty to develop and teach courses. The Supervising Faculty colleagues will offer specific feedback to students who assume a teaching role in class and will also meet with doctoral students regularly as part of the teaching process (including a period of reflection about the course as a whole at the end of the semester).

LEADERSHIP

The Teaching Apprenticeship Program includes three primary leadership roles:

A. Teaching Faculty for the Two Required TAP Colloquia

Teaching the TAP colloquia is optional for faculty. Normally the colloquia will be team-taught by two to three faculty members from varying departments. They will be appointed by the Dean of Academic Affairs upon the recommendation of the PhD Studies Committee. TAP Faculty commit to two-year cycles, which will be staggered so that in the first year, they assist with the colloquium, and in the second year, they serve as the lead teacher.

TAP Faculty will rotate into the colloquia first in an “apprentice” role with the experienced faculty member (year one) and then will become the experienced teacher (year two). This process will require two to three faculty members per year depending upon sabbaticals.

B. Supervising Faculty

Seminary faculty serve as mentors and coaches to doctoral students who are serving in teaching roles. Any faculty member who is assigned a teaching assistant, teaching fellow, or senior teaching fellow is considered Supervising Faculty and is responsible for providing assistance and feedback to help these students improve their teaching. We will set aside some time at the annual fall faculty conference to orient faculty to these responsibilities.

C. Dean of Academic Affairs

Upon the recommendation of the PhD Studies Committee, the Dean of Academic Affairs appoints TAP Faculty for the two TAP colloquia: Teaching Foundations I and Teaching Foundations II. The Dean of Academic Affairs assigns the teaching assistant and teaching fellow opportunities based upon requests from faculty and recommendations from departments.

Princeton Theological Seminary * Findings for April 2012 Summative Conference

A. Key Framing Questions for the Teaching Initiative Gathering at Princeton Theological Seminary (PTS):

- 1) The preparation our doctoral students have received for teaching: its strengths and weaknesses as they perceive them after a few years of teaching
- 2) Curricular and structural changes that might improve the pedagogical aspects of our program
- 3) How this consultation might help us to strengthen our assessment process and might also help our students to prepare for teaching in a “culture of assessment”

B. Pros and Cons of PTS program gleaned from the conversations by Wabash consultant, Joretta Marshall:

- 1) Strengths of the Princeton graduate experience:
 - Genuine sense of appreciation for what Princeton is and its commitments to graduate education in the past
 - Preparedness as scholars
 - Learnings from watching passionate scholars and mentors who became models
 - Experience received in teaching while at Princeton
 - Informal and formal mentors who were more attentive to the teaching/learning process and encouraged conversations
- 2) Areas for improvement:
 - A more intentional and structured way of gaining experience in teaching and reflecting on that experience
 - Attention to the embodiment of teaching as it shows up in issues of gender, race, power, authority
 - Learning how to “read a culture” of an institution and of the students in that institution to assist them in a more immediate way when they begin teaching
 - A more thorough investigation of teaching strategies in the classroom
 - More intentional conversation about the “telos” of theological education, or liberal arts education
 - Reflections on the life or vocation of teaching
 - Effective use of technology
 - The complexities of international and global realities
 - Increased faculty development of Princeton Theological Seminary faculty
 - Continual tracking of where graduates from Princeton find positions (including the number of graduates who teach adjunct or who have one-year placements)
 - A financial commitment for the doctoral program on part of the institution

C. PTS Program Review and Teaching Apprenticeship Program proposal:

We are in a time of transition and re-assessment of our doctoral program. A comprehensive review of our PhD program was conducted from 2007 to 2011. As the result of extensive consultation with our faculty, alums and current doctoral students, we evaluated our program and proposed some changes that were approved by the faculty in February 2011. The most important and the most challenging mandate we received was to enhance the preparation of our PhD students for their vocation as teachers. Our first step toward fulfilling this mandate was to draft a proposal for a more structured preparation of our

doctoral students for teaching, the Teaching Apprenticeship Program (TAP). It consists of four inter-related components:

- 1) teaching experience on graduated levels of independence and responsibility
- 2) structured forms of mentoring and assessment by faculty
- 3) training in pedagogical theory
- 4) opportunities to integrate and assess students' experience as teachers using the theoretical tools they have studied

The Wabash Initiative was ideally timed for this process. It was immensely helpful in our Wabash conversations to have the TAP document around which to center the many observations and suggestions of our alums.

D. Appropriating the results of the Wabash Consultation

The conversations with our alums confirmed the results of our own recently completed program review, and they added many concrete suggestions for the improvement of our doctoral program. Valued aspects of our doctoral program include: its role 1) as a preparation for advanced scholarship; and 2) as a broad preparation to teach the content of a primary academic field – these first two are what our alums called their “classical” theological training. Their mixed review of our performance in mentoring them as scholars and especially as teachers, again, corresponds with our own findings.

We have certainly been affirmed in our sense of urgency to enhance the teaching preparation of our doctoral students. The essential structure envisaged by the TAP proposal will address many of the concerns expressed by our alums. The discussion and critique articulated in the Wabash conversations also highlighted specific issues that need to be resolved as we move forward to implement this program.

At the same time, these conversations have pointed to the budgetary issues that worry PTS faculty increasingly. It is difficult to imagine implementation of TAP without substantial input of faculty time as well as additional funding. Yet we are faced with budgetary constraints that have held down the number of our faculty appointments and the number of PhD admissions for several years. These decisions, over which we have no control, hamper our efforts to maintain the traditional strengths of our program. In this situation it is difficult to move forward to bring about changes despite our agreement on what is needed. Nonetheless, we are moving ahead as well as we can.

The input from our alums at the Wabash Gathering has been central to progress toward the realization of TAP. Approved “in principle” by the faculty (February 9, 2011), its implementation has been one of the major tasks on the 2011-12 agenda of the faculty committee on PhD Studies. A subcommittee has undertaken the revision of the TAP document. We expect to bring the subcommittee's final revision to the PhD Studies Committee for approval in mid March and then to bring it to the full faculty in early April for discussion and approval by the end of the spring term 2012. We will introduce this program as a part of the curriculum for our newly admitted PhD students in the fall of 2012.

We have also been encouraged by our Wabash conversations to move ahead with other projects: 1) more systematic assessment of student progress, 2) gathering fuller and thus more reliable statistics on our PhD applicants, students and alums. These projects are grounded in a comprehensive shift from paper to digital processes for application, for tracking students and their progress, and for keeping in touch with our alumni/-ae.