

# Course Change Request

## New Course Proposal

Date Submitted: 04/25/23 2:49 pm

Viewing: **COS 390 : Learning Assistant Seminar**

Last edit: 04/25/23 2:59 pm

Changes proposed by: akhanf

Are you completing this form on someone else's behalf?

No

Effective Term: Summer 2023

Subject Code: COS - College of Science

Course Number: 390

Bundled Courses:

Is this course replacing another course? No

Equivalent Courses:

Catalog Title: Learning Assistant Seminar

Banner Title: Learning Assistant Seminar

Will section titles vary by semester? No

Credits: 0-1

Schedule Type: Seminar

Hours of Lecture or Seminar per week: 1

Repeatable:

### In Workflow

1. SC Curriculum Committee

2. SC Associate Dean

3. Assoc Provost- Undergraduate

4. Registrar-Courses

5. Banner

May be only taken once for credit, limited to 3 attempts (N3) **Max Allowable Credits:** 3

**Default Grade Mode:** Undergraduate Regular

**Recommended Prerequisite(s):**

**Recommended Corequisite(s):**

**Required Prerequisite(s) / Corequisite(s) (Updates only):** Must be a Learning Assistant in the STEM Accelerator

**Registrar's Office Use Only - Required Prerequisite(s)/Corequisite(s):**

And/Or	(	Course/Test Code	Min Grade/Score	Academic Level	)	Concurrency?

**Registration Restrictions (Updates only):**

**Registrar's Office Use Only - Registration Restrictions:**

**Field(s) of Study:**

**Class(es):**

**Level(s):**

**Degree(s):**

**School(s):**

**Catalog Description:** This course is designed to prepare newly appointed STEM Accelerator Learning Assistants (LAs) to conduct tutoring/learning sessions for students enrolled in the course for which the LAs are assigned.

**Justification:**

What: Creating the course with COS prefix- it was previously offered under UNIV.

Why: The Learning Assistant program is a COS endeavor. This aligns with other changes from UNIV to COS-specific prefixes.

**Does this course cover material which crosses into another department?**

No

**Learning Outcomes:**

This seminar is designed to help students

- Facilitate student learning,
- Draw upon prior knowledge or intuitive knowledge in learning science and math,
- Carefully reflect on your own teaching and your interactions with students,
- Synthesize classroom experiences with central ideas from education research,
- Investigate teaching and learning systematically and scientifically

**Attach Syllabus**[UNIV391\\_new.pdf](#)**Additional Attachments****Staffing:**

Ben Dreyfus

**Relationship to Existing Programs:**

None

**Relationship to Existing Courses:**

Previously taught as a topic under UNIV 391.

**Additional Comments:****Reviewer Comments**



**COS 390:  
Learning Assistant Seminar  
Spring 2023  
Prof. Dreyfus**

**Instructors' Contact Info:**

<i>Professor:</i> Dr. Benjamin Dreyfus [he/him] <a href="mailto:bdreyfu2@gmu.edu">bdreyfu2@gmu.edu</a> Office: Exploratory 1406	<i>LA LA:</i> Annie McAllister <a href="mailto:amcalli@gmu.edu">amcalli@gmu.edu</a>
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**Overview:** This seminar is for all first-time Learning Assistants in the College of Science.

This seminar is designed to help you...

- Facilitate student learning
- Draw on students' prior knowledge or intuitive knowledge in learning science and math
- Carefully reflect on your own teaching and your interactions with students
- Synthesize classroom experiences with central ideas from education research
- Investigate teaching and learning systematically and scientifically

This is also a Mason Impact course ([masonimpact.gmu.edu](http://masonimpact.gmu.edu)), and addresses Mason Impact learning outcomes including:



1. Understand knowledge creation: Students will understand how knowledge is generated and communicated, and how it can be used to address questions or problems in disciplines and in society.
2. Engage multiple perspectives: Students will be able to identify and negotiate multiple perspectives, work collaboratively within and across multiple social and environmental contexts, and engage ethically with their subject and with others.
3. Investigate a meaningful question: Students will use inquiry skills to articulate a question; engage in an inquiry process; and situate the concepts, practices, or results within a broader context.

### **Format and Course Meeting Times:**

The LA seminar will meet once a week (most weeks).

The section meeting times are:

- UNIV391-002: Thursdays 1:30-2:45 pm, Peterson 1109
- UNIV391-003: Fridays 12:00-1:15 pm, Hanover L003

If you need to be absent, please let Prof. Dreyfus know. If you are able to, you can attend the other section that week instead.

On some weeks (Feb 23-24, Mar 9-10, Apr 6-7, Apr 20-21) we will not meet during the regular time, and there will instead be an assignment for you to do on your own time.

Access to MyMason and GMU email are required to participate successfully in the LA seminar. Check the [IT Support Center website](#) for help and information about Blackboard.

### **COVID-19:**

The COVID pandemic still continues. Our seminar is subject to all university COVID policies. The most current policies (which may change during the semester) can be found at <https://www.gmu.edu/safe-return-campus> . However, the university requirements should be seen as a floor rather than a ceiling. As members of a community, we each want to take responsibility not only for our own safety but for the safety of others. Even if some of us may feel that we are not personally at significant risk from COVID, we can also be aware of how our actions impact others, including students who are at higher risk due to various conditions, or students who live with older relatives, or students who work in health-care settings and come into contact with patients. The university strongly encourages all students to get vaccinated against COVID (including all available boosters), and you can schedule a vaccine appointment at [vaccine.gmu.edu](https://vaccine.gmu.edu) . If you have any symptoms, **please stay home** (and we will make sure you have a way to make up what you missed). If you have any symptoms or think you may have been exposed, please get tested (which you can do for free on campus).

We realize that we are not living in normal times (even though many things have seemingly returned to normal). We understand that this continues to be a stressful time for many of you for a number of reasons, and we can't predict exactly how things will develop over the coming months. We all seek to support one another during this difficult time. If issues arise at any point that impact your participation in the seminar or the LA program, please get in touch, and we'll find solutions together.

### **Communication:**

If you email me, I will generally respond within 24 hours. Also, **I am completely away from email every week from Friday evening to Saturday evening**, so if you email during that time, I will not respond until later. I will also be completely away from email on the following days (starting from the evening before): **Thu Apr 6, Wed Apr 12.**

If you want to discuss something in real time outside of the seminar time, just let me know, and we'll set up another time to meet (either online or on campus).

### **Components of the course:**

***Reading assignments:*** Most weeks, you'll have one or more articles to read before seminar. These articles will generally be from science/math education research. In the same way that advances in science are possible because scientists build on what came before, the same is true in teaching, and so we learn what has already been learned about how students learn best. In the Blackboard course, there will be a folder for each week, where you'll find the articles to read before each seminar, as well as some materials that we'll use during seminar.

***Seminar participation:*** Most weeks, we'll meet in person, and we'll generally have a chance to break into smaller groups and also to meet as a whole group. These sessions will include opportunities to share our successes and challenges as LAs and help each other solve problems, and will also include opportunities to apply the ideas from the reading assignments to our teaching.

***Written reflections:*** There will be two weeks when the seminar will not meet at the regular time, and you will instead write reflections about your interactions with students, in connection with the readings and discussions from seminar (with a different prompt each time). You will post these on Blackboard, and have the chance to respond to other LAs' reflections.

***Final project:*** You will have a choice of three project options: 1) Synthesize what you have learned over the semester and reflect on your teaching experiences, 2) Design and implement an active-learning activity for your students, 3) Investigate a research question about teaching and learning. You may choose to work alone or in a group of up to 4 LAs. During seminar on Apr 27-28, we'll do practice presentations, and have a chance to provide feedback to one another. Then at the end of the semester (date and time TBD, but probably May 8 or 9) we'll get to share what we've been doing with the wider Mason community, and interact with returning LAs, faculty, other students, and other stakeholders.

### **Credits and grading:**

By default, if you are taking 12-14 credits without the LA seminar (so that adding 1 credit will not change the tuition you owe), you should register in the LA seminar for 1 credit, and if you are taking more or less than that, then you may register for either 0 or 1 credit. Any changes to the number of credits must be made by **Monday, January 30**. If you take the seminar for 0 credits, then it will appear on your transcript, but will not count toward your GPA.

We are aware that you are taking lots of demanding classes right now (and, of course, taking all your LA responsibilities seriously), and this is not intended to be one more class where you have to worry about how many points you have. We would make this a pass/fail course if we could, but we can't. So anyone who attends seminar regularly (no more than two unexcused absences) and participates (including in the final project) will get an A. Those who are not attending may get an F.

**Disability support:** All students are entitled to reasonable accommodations to enable them to participate in this class. If you have a disability or other condition that requires accommodation, please contact the Office of Disability Services (<https://ds.gmu.edu>) as soon as possible, and then send me the documentation so that you can receive accommodations.

**Diversity and Inclusion:** As part of the Mason community, we seek to create a learning environment that fosters respect for people across identities. We welcome and value individuals and their differences including race, economic status, gender expression and identity, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national origin, first language, religion, age, and disability.

**Student resources:** For complete information and links to student support resources on campus, visit <https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/knowledge-center/knowning-mason-students/student-support-resources-on-campus/>

In particular, please be aware of:

- **Learning Services** ([learningservices.gmu.edu](http://learningservices.gmu.edu))
- **University Libraries** ([library.gmu.edu](http://library.gmu.edu))
- **Writing Center** ([writingcenter.gmu.edu](http://writingcenter.gmu.edu))
- **Counseling and Psychological Services** ([caps.gmu.edu](http://caps.gmu.edu))
- **Student Support and Advocacy Center** ([ssac.gmu.edu](http://ssac.gmu.edu))

**SEMINAR SCHEDULE** (See the Blackboard site for a more detailed schedule)

Week	Thursday	Friday	Live meeting?	Topic
1	Jan 26	Jan 27	Yes	Introduction to the LA program
2	Feb 2	Feb 3	Yes	Questioning and discussion
3	Feb 9	Feb 10	Yes	Title IX training
4	Feb 16	Feb 17	Yes	Students' ideas about content
5	Feb 23	Feb 24	No	Reflection #1 (asynchronous)
6	Mar 2	Mar 3	Yes	Mental models
7	Mar 9	Mar 10	No	Project proposal (asynchronous)
-	Mar 16	Mar 17	No	SPRING BREAK (no seminar)
8	Mar 23	Mar 24	Yes	Equity and inclusion
9	Mar 30	Mar 31	Yes	Guest speaker: Learning services
10	Apr 6	Apr 7	No	Reflection #2 (asynchronous)
11	Apr 13	Apr 14	Yes	Epistemology and attitudes
12	Apr 20	Apr 21	No	Project work (asynchronous)
13	Apr 27	Apr 28	Yes	Practice presentations
14	May 4	May 5	Yes	Conclusion