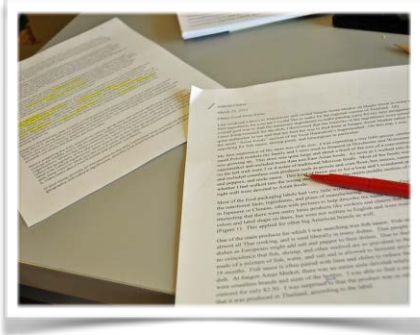

NEWSLETTER

Advice from peers: TA and CA



Credits: Blake Gumprecht

- The biggest challenge I faced for the TA job was that students kept emailing me, asking questions they could find answers for in the course outline, e.g., deadlines and requirements for assignments. This happened even though I had already sent them reminder emails. Another challenge was that some students disappeared suddenly without replying to my email or submitting their assignments. If anyone knows how to deal with these challenges other than being patient, please share it with me!

- You may be assigned with fewer CA hours than the other CA for the same course, but you ended up performing more duties... To avoid such unfair situation, you may want to discuss with the other CA at the beginning of the semester and clearly allocate the duties.
- The teacher could write a good reference letter in the future. Keep that in mind and do a good job.
- Keep a scanned copy of all the hard-copy homework you received, especially after you have graded the homework. In case the students ask for the reason for the grade, you have something to refer to.
- Never hesitate to ask the instructor whenever you are not sure about something. Always CC to the instructor when you reply to students' emails.
- It is really important to define clearly, right from the beginning, the Professor's requirements and expectations in terms of assignments, grading, how to conduct the tutorials, and so on. Furthermore, sometimes the duties of TA and CA can be overwhelming. Thus, it is necessary to organise your time wisely to still keep a good pace with your other work such as your own coursework or thesis.
- Be fair, be professional, and be approachable.
- Before your first tutorial, it's better to tell students what you're going to do and what you want them to do. Clarify the teacher's requirements about this course and your requirements on the tutorial. The arrangement of the tutorial and the evaluation methods are also important for them.
- As tutors, we act as a bridge between teachers and students. A sense of responsibility and patience for work is essential. Conveying and explaining teachers' requirements and students' questions in a timely manner and making good notes can improve work efficiency. Try not to leave emails for the next day.

Conference Tips: Prof. Ruby Yuen Shan Lai¹



Attending conferences is certainly an essential part of academic life and postgraduate studies. You will get the opportunity to present your work and learn about the most up-to-date research in your field. I encourage all of you to attend one international conference each year. To do so, you must keep an eye on the submission deadline for the conference that you are planning to attend. To increase the chance of being accepted, try to align your research with the themes of the panels or sessions. Read the descriptions of the panel carefully and try to structure your abstract accordingly. You can also organize your own panel with your colleagues and collaborators, but that will require more time and preparation. Besides, attending an international conference can be expensive. Remember to apply for conference grant at least one month before the conference and keep all the receipts for verification. If you have overspent your conference grant already, you can explore grant opportunities offered by the conference because some may offer financial support for postgraduate students. If you get accepted by a conference, remember to travel around the city and make the most of it!

PUBLICATIONS

- Olivos, Francisco, Pablo Olivos-Jara, and Magdalena Browne, M. 2020. "Asymmetric Social Comparison and Life Satisfaction in Social Networks." *Journal of Happiness Studies*. ([see the article](#))

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- ✓ Conference submission deadline:
 - 2020 TASA Conference - Australian National University, Canberra ACT, November 23-27th, 2020 - Call for papers opens from February 25th 2020. ([see more informations](#))
- ✓ Job ads:
 - Presidential Postdoctoral Fellowship - Nanyang Technological University, Singapore - Application deadline: March 31st, 2020. ([see the ad](#))
 - Full-time Lecturer – Department of Social Science, The Hang Seng University of Hong Kong. ([see the ad](#))

¹ Prof. Ruby Yuen Shan Lai obtained her Ph.D. from the Department of Sociology, The Chinese University of Hong Kong. She joined Lingnan University as Research Assistant Professor in August 2019.