

QUICK TIPS FOR THE FIRST DAY

The first day is your best and only chance to set the tone for the semester.



Plan ahead.

- Check out the room before class so you know what activities will work.
- Think about professional appearance.
- Plan icebreakers and questions to start class.
- Plan to do more than just hand out a syllabus.
- Plan your supplies, and have a marker or chalk for the first meeting.



Get to know one another.

- Introduce yourself (education, background, research, teaching experience).
- Have students introduce themselves.
- Go to class early to chat with students and put them and you at ease.
- Establish a system to learn student names – name tags, seating chart, etc.
- Do not apologize for being a teaching assistant.



Introduce the subject matter and identify its value and importance.

- What is it? Explain why the subject is important.
- Be enthusiastic and show students why your class matters.
- Hit the ground running with substantial content on the first day.



Set expectations.

- Recommend appropriate amounts of study and homework time.
- Stress importance of turning homework in on time.
- State your expectations about in-class behavior.
- Explore expectations the students have of the teacher and the class.
- Establish the climate for the class (e.g., intense, relaxed, formal, personal, humorous, serious, etc).
- Encourage discussion and active participation.



Provide administrative information.

- Go over the syllabus (if applicable).
- Identify the reading material the students will need.
- Present guidelines for faculty/student communication and appropriate response times.
- Identify the kind of homework that will be involved.
- Provide your office hours, office location, and contact information.
- Inform them how the class grade will be determined.
- Review policies regarding attendance, late papers, make-up exams, etc.
- Establish the electronics policy (laptops, cell phones, iPods, etc.) for your classroom.

Adapted from <http://honolulu.hawaii.edu/intranet/committees/FacDevCom/guidebk/teachtip/firstday.htm>.

For further information, see the [Teaching Resources](#) section of the [GradLife](#) web site.

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