



## On Course: A Week-by-Week Guide to Your First Semester of College Teaching

By James M. Lang

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### On Course: A Week-by-Week Guide to Your First Semester of College Teaching By James M. Lang

You go into teaching with high hopes: to inspire students, to motivate them to learn, to help them love your subject. Then you find yourself facing a crowd of expectant faces on the first day of the first semester, and you think “Now what do I do?”

Practical and lively, *On Course* is full of experience-tested, research-based advice for graduate students and new teaching faculty. It provides a range of innovative and traditional strategies that work well without requiring extensive preparation or long grading sessions when you’re trying to meet your own demanding research and service requirements. What do you put on the syllabus? How do you balance lectures with group assignments or discussions? and how do you get a dialogue going when the students won’t participate? What grading system is fairest and most efficient for your class? Should you post lecture notes on a website? How do you prevent cheating, and what do you do if it occurs? How can you help the student with serious personal problems without becoming overly involved? And what do you do about the student who won’t turn off his cell phone?

Packed with anecdotes and concrete suggestions, this book will keep both inexperienced and veteran teachers on course as they navigate the calms and storms of classroom life.

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### Editorial Review

#### Review

I wish I'd had this book when I began teaching. Lang's countless practical suggestions could help everyone from the new teaching assistant to the most senior professor. He challenges us to be better, more creative teachers. At the same time, his description of the strains in learning to teach?especially the anguish we can go through when grading?are both funny and comforting. (Paul Umbach, University of Iowa)

James Lang's *On Course* is a marvelous book, full of wisdom, wide-ranging and well-synthesized research, and honest advice about what to do, what not to do, and how to get yourself out of many a pickle through knowledge, cleverness, and courage?all qualities that are in the book itself. The book clarifies, demystifies, and inspires. (Emily Toth, author of *Ms. Mentor's Impeccable Advice*)

Briskly moving through the basics, [Lang] tackles the hard questions...with humor and insight... *On Course* is a vital resource for educators, even those who don't fit the first-year college-teaching market. My copy is dotted with notes about new ideas to try out in my lecture class this fall. Happily though, I took away from Lang's guidebook much more than techniques. (Barbara J. King *Bookslut*)

If you are looking for a [college teaching] job, get a head start by buying and reading this book. If you already have one, your teaching still stands to gain much from it. (Greg Garrard *Times Higher Education Supplement* 2008-09-04)

#### About the Author

James M. Lang is Associate Professor of English at Assumption College and former assistant director of the Searle Center for Teaching Excellence at Northwestern University.

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