The History Department Guidelines for Graduate Instructor Absences

Exceptional circumstances sometimes necessitate missing your class. In some cases you can plan for the absence, in others there might be an illness or a sudden emergency. It is the responsibility of the graduate instructor, if necessary with the assistance of the GIS (Matine Spence) to arrange coverage of missed classes.

- **Planned absence.** In the case of a planned absence (for example, to attend a scholarly conference), you should consult ahead of time with the GIS about why, when, and for how long you will be away, and what alternative arrangements you are making for your students' instruction.

- **Emergencies.** In the case of an illness or family crisis, contact the GIS as soon as possible by telephone or email with the following information: your class’s meeting time and place, when you think you expect to be able to return to the classroom, who might be able to cover for you, and how to reach you while you're out. Do not assume that the message has gotten through until you get a reply from the GIS.

If you cannot reach the GIS and the class is imminent, call the History office (335-2299) so that a cancellation announcement can be posted on the classroom door. Then continue your efforts to reach the GIS or the Issues Supervisor. **Note:** the Department has access to funding to hire a substitute instructor if you will be absent for more than a day or two.

What kinds of occurrences warrant absence from the classroom are often matters of judgment. Faculty members regularly make the same judgments themselves, and you should not hesitate to ask the Issues Coordinator or the professor for whom you are a TA for advice. The COGS agreement specifies your right to a limited number of days of paid leave and to paid sick leave, family illness leave and bereavement leave (see the COGS contract at [http://www.cogs.org/contract.htm#ArticleXII](http://www.cogs.org/contract.htm#ArticleXII)). In any case, remember that your primary professional responsibility is to your students and their education – students lose out when instructors miss classes.

It is wise, in planning your course, to identify a relevant video or DVD in the Main Library’s collection in case of emergency, or perhaps keep one on hand in your office. Consider also building a support group among G.I.s teaching similar courses so that you can cover for each other if the need arises. Remember, too, that ICON maintains a class list so you can email your students to reach them in the event of last minute emergencies or cancellations.

Finally, regarding makeup sessions for missed classes *The Handbook for Teaching Assistants* (Office of the Provost) states that: “The teacher is responsible for meeting classes at the scheduled time and for ending classes at the scheduled time. When extra class sessions or make-up classes are needed, they should be scheduled to accommodate all students so that no student is penalized because of conflicts with other scheduled academic or professional commitments.” See [http://www.centeach.uiowa.edu/TAhandbook.shtml](http://www.centeach.uiowa.edu/TAhandbook.shtml) for more information.