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GSUPEP: Prison Education Project

Georgia State University at Perimeter College

Training Manual

(Based in Pragmatism and Compassion)



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A Note on Language

Unless otherwise noted, information in this manual that refers to the Georgia Department of Corrections is also pertinent to the United States Penitentiary and the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice.

For simplicity, we have used GDOC for the Georgia Department of Corrections, USP for the United States Penitentiary, and DJJ for the Department of Juvenile Justice.

Information that pertains to the transition centers may differ. While there is a separate section about the transitional centers, please review all information here regardless of where you will be teaching or tutoring.

“Reentry” refers to prisoners’ transition between the prison and the outside community.

“Returning Citizen” refers to a person who will be moving from the prison to the outside community.

We have chosen to use the term “prisoner” rather than “inmate,” but always refer to our students as “students.”

From *University Behind Bars*, University of Washington:
“On Language,” by Arthur Longworth

“I resent being called an inmate. I feel that resentment with all of my being, more as the years go on. A seeming peculiarity that used to puzzle me. After all, I am in prison, surrounded by others who are referred to as inmates, the same as I. Why should I care what I am called?”

It’s not just the term ‘inmate’ that bothers me, but an entire lexicon of false words propagated by those who run the prison. A catalog of misnomers coined with the intent of leading people astray. Terms that rob the objects they purport to describe of their true identities, supplanting them with others—ones that not the people naming them believe, but which they very much would like everyone else to.”

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Introduction to Training

Welcome to the Georgia State University Prison Education Program Faculty. We are excited that you will be teaching with the program.

The information in this document is meant to prepare you to enter and teach in the Georgia and Federal correctional facilities as part of the program. Please understand that we are presenting the following with complete faith that you are a professional educator and that your teaching skills and integrity in the classroom and with your students are unquestionable. However, teaching in a prison is a very different experience than teaching in any other classroom. This document will provide you with some important guidelines.

While every attempt is made to be as comprehensive as possible, questions will arise over the course of your teaching tenure. This makes communication with GSUPEP essential for your personal safety, the success of your class, and the longevity of the program.

The goal is to give you information to help your classes run smoothly and for us all to follow consistent protocols and class structures.

Teaching in the prisons can be an emotional experience, so please reach out to GSUPEP administrators regarding your classes whenever necessary. We will also have semester meetings during which we can share experiences and ask and answer questions.

Always keep in mind that you are a representative of GSU at Perimeter College and that your actions will have a long-lasting effect. You are an ambassador, one bringing education as well as creative and intellectual growth opportunities to a very specific community.

Always keep in the front of your consciousness the awareness that you are teaching in a prison. You may be uncomfortable at times. Teaching settings may not be ideal, and you will have to be adaptable to prison culture, time constraints, and unexpected interruptions.

Top Ten Things to Remember About Teaching in a Prison

1. Be aware of your surroundings at all times.
2. Be flexible.
3. Always maintain a clear professor-student relationship with students.
4. Treat each student equally. Even small actions can seem unequal in the prison environment.
5. Remain polite and professional with all prison employees.
6. Report problems to a GSUPEP coordinator as soon as possible.
7. Do not bring anything unapproved into the facility. Materials should be approved through the program rather than directly through the facility.
8. Do not deliver letters or any other materials from a student to someone outside of the facility.
9. Do not correspond with students outside of the facility.
10. Carefully consider materials and topics of discussion.

The Program

History

In 2015, one of the GSUPEP coordinators, Peter Lindsay, began offering resume writing and enrichment and college-prep courses at the Atlanta Transitional Center. Following that, in 2016, the Georgia State University Prison Education Project (GSUPEP) began through a partnership with the non-profit organization, Common Good Atlanta, at Phillips State Prison in Buford, Ga. After tutoring and teaching informally there, a Perimeter College faculty member taught an English Composition I class to a cohort of 15 students serving time within the prison. The students were granted admission to the college and were expected to meet the same course objectives as in other Perimeter College classes. Students who successfully completed the course earned Perimeter College credit. We have now had two for-credit courses at Phillips, and hope to continue this cohort of students through to their Associate's Degree.

Since the Summer of 2017, we have been teaching pre-college courses at the United States Penitentiary, Walker State Prison, and the Atlanta Transitional Center. We are discussing such programs at Hancock, Lee Arrendale, the Women's Transitional Center, and Metro State Prison. We are also in negotiations to begin a full program at the Atlanta Youth Detention Center in College Park, Georgia in the Fall of 2018.

Mission

GSUPEP creates relationships among the University System of Georgia, the Georgia Department of Corrections, and the Federal Bureau of Prisons. The project's goals include bringing higher education into prisons, supporting reentry into society by those who have been incarcerated, and reducing recidivism. In offering support and opportunity to all students, GSUPEP seeks to promote lifelong learning that strengthens human character, increases understanding of life experiences, and motivates all to engage in productive citizenship.

Goals

- Increase the number of incarcerated students and facilities served.
- Build signature experiences for on-campus students by arranging academic exchanges between classrooms within prisons and those on traditional campuses.
- Work to ensure that incarcerated students can continue their educations when released from prisons.
- Develop the Fellows Program which invites formerly incarcerated men and women to speak to students and the community about their experiences within the prison system.

Preparation

Required Training

In addition to the GSUPEP training and the information in this manual, you will also be required to complete either state or federal training depending on which facility you will be teaching in. After you complete the training, you will eventually be issued a badge which you should wear every time you enter the prison.

Our goal is that you receive the state and/or federal training as soon as possible as you will need this to begin teaching.

Training for the USP (United States Penitentiary) is offered in the evenings at 601 McDonough Blvd. SE. The training must be done annually. Plan to spend 2-3 hours in training. You will have your photo taken that evening for your badge and they will ask for your fingerprints. USP will keep your badges at the facility.

Training for GDOC is held in Tifton, Georgia, one hour south of Atlanta, and will take 2-3 hours to complete. You will not have to repeat the training, but you will have to renew your badge annually. GDOC will issue the badge to you, and you should bring it in with you every time you enter a facility. Renewal of badges is on the campus of the Metro State Prison which on Moreland Avenue. We will announce training sessions when we are given the dates

Both GDOC and the USP will run criminal background checks.

Training with GSUPEP is also required. We plan to hold at least one session per semester and will require new teachers to complete the training before entering a facility. Because corrections rules are always changing, we may have to update our training materials frequently. We will send out updated information as we get it, and we may ask those who have already trained with GSUPEP to do additional training if they continue to teach with us over several semesters to give newer information and to refresh the information in your mind. We also encourage those who have already trained to come to any training to share your experiences with newer teachers.

Entry and Environment

No training can ever completely prepare you for your first time entering a prison, and even after years of going in, you will still have profound emotional responses to entering an environment that is meant to deprive and punish. You will have absolutely inspiring and magical classroom experiences, and you will then walk outside to the harsh reminder of free versus not free—and all the complications therein.

Before you enter the facility, empty your pockets of all change, gum, pens, etc. Bring in only your keys, your driver's license, and class materials.

When you enter, you will be searched. You may be asked to pull out your pockets, take off your shoes and shake them, or pull down your socks. The officer may pat you down, and women may be required to pull their bra out away from their skin. This is done for your safety and the safety of others. If you have a search that seems too invasive, please contact the GSUPEP administration.

Your supplies will usually be searched. Make sure that you have approval for everything you take in (this is obtained through GSUPEP only). If you need to take in materials, make sure they are approved and that you transport items in clear containers. Officers need to be able to see inside each box or bag you carry (exception: first day of class when we bring all textbooks and supplies into facility). You may want to purchase a clear backpack for materials, but a clear bin will also suffice.

You are permitted to bring water in as long as it is in a clear bottle.

Prisons are never quiet. Irons gates slam shut. Voices and buzzers frequently sound off, and there is always a set of eyes on you—officers and students and other prisoners. In this controlled chaos, *you must always pay attention*. Always. Do not ever stop paying attention. This is not to suggest that you embrace paranoia, but the more aware and informed you are, the better instructor you will be in the prison classroom, and the stronger impression you will make with students and prison officials.

Please be informed about Georgia and federal prisons. The GSUPEP administration will certainly contact you if there is something you must know, but otherwise, it is smart for you to educate yourself. In the prison environment, ignorance is not bliss. Sign up for Google Alerts and enter such filters as “Georgia Prisons,” “Georgia Corrections,” etc. You are not teaching in a traditional environment, so you must educate yourself. As a teacher who is interested in long-term educational programming for persons in prison, commit yourself to learning as much as possible about the system into which you step.

Everyone you come in contact with should be treated with respect, even the ones who challenge you individually. Do not call the officers “guards”—rather, they are called “officers.” This is important. Be gracious for the help of the officers. If they feel that you respect them and appreciate their efforts on your behalf, you will be contributing to the long-term success of the program. Plus, your classes will go better. These officers can read you—if you project congeniality, they know it. Project contempt and mistrust, and they will know it and treat you accordingly.

You will probably become accustomed to the prison atmosphere and rules, but don’t become so comfortable that you let your attentiveness wane. This is especially true of GSUPEP teachers who have been doing this for a while. If you ever become immune to it, you need to take a break. GSUPEP administration will attempt to rotate the facilities at which you teach because this will make it more likely that you will remain aware of your surroundings.

You may encounter a lock-down or recount situation. (These are explained below.) If this occurs before you get to the facility, you will not be able to enter. Your contact at the facility will either contact you or meet you at the entrance to let you know. If it occurs during your class, you may proceed with class. If an officer asks you to end class, you should do so, and you will be escorted out.

You will have to be flexible when teaching in a prison. If there is a disruption, you may either not be able to teach that day or have to wait to get in. If a disruption occurs while you are there, you may have to cut your class short. We recommend checking your phone before going into the building as your contact may leave you a message about your ability to access the building.

The Students We Serve

As of 2017, there are more than 54,000 men and women housed in 33 GDOC facilities and 7,972 men and women housed in four privately owned/operated facilities in Georgia. These facilities range from work release centers to maximum security facilities. In addition, Georgia houses around 1200 youth in detention centers and over 8500 people in federal facilities.

GSUPEP is currently working with the following facilities:

Phillips State Prison, Gwinnett County, Buford, GA
medium security, men

Lee Arrendale, Habersham County, Alto, GA
mixed security, women

Atlanta Transitional Center, Fulton County, Atlanta, GA
men

United States Penitentiary, Fulton County, Atlanta, GA
medium security, men

Metro Transitional Center, Dekalb County, Atlanta, GA
women

Atlanta Youth Development Center, Fulton County, College Park, GA
young men up to 21 years old

Walker State Prison, Walker County, Rock Spring, GA
medium security, men

How Students are Selected

Wardens make the final decisions about which students can participate in the program. Following are some considerations:

Enrichment Classes (not for credit)—Students are selected based on interest and behavior. Each warden may have different requirements for who can participate in classes, but in general, most require that students should have had no disciplinary infractions in the last 12 months. They may or may not have a GED or high school diploma.

Note: Enrichment courses are not for credit, but help us establish a relationship with the facility and with potential students.

For-Credit Classes—Students must have had no disciplinary infractions in the last 12 months. They must have a GED or high school diploma, place into college level courses on the Accuplacer exam, and be admitted to the college. At the USP, students must be within 12-24 months of release. If there are spaces after these stipulations are met, students who have longer than 24 months left in the sentence may be admitted. Fewer life-without-parole students are permitted to apply. All for-credit students must apply and meet GSU testing and admissions standards.

Our Students and Prison Culture

The students we serve are not easily definable outside of their incarceration. They are incarcerated because the judicial system placed them there, but that is not the sum total of their lives. As Bryan Stevenson tells us in *Just Mercy*, “Each of us is more than the worst thing we’ve ever done.”

Our students may be addicts, they may have learning disabilities, and they have committed crimes: some violent and some non-violent. For the most part, they are not from economically privileged families, and many have suffered myriad forms of abuse. They are mothers, fathers, children, aunts, uncles, grandparents. They are people. Within the prison, they are culturally and intellectually starved. The prison system is structured on punishment; therefore, they are controlled in almost every aspect of their lives. Even the number of people who are allowed to visit them is restricted, and some haven’t had a visitor in years.

Some students are indigent. This means is that they have no money to purchase things from the prison store, which makes them susceptible to all kinds of abuse. If a prisoner has no money to buy stamps, tobacco, or hygiene items, in order to get those things, he/she must barter with other prisoners (or other prison personnel) to get them. Exchange currency varies widely, but could include running errands, doing laundry, or providing protection or sex. You must be careful and controlled in what you give out to your students as even things as simple as pens and paper are privileges in prisons and can be used to gain status or favors.

There is a highly organized culture and structure of power and manipulation within prison. This is not just between prison officials and prisoners, but also among the prisoners themselves. Physical, mental, and sexual abuse is rampant.

Most of our students feel as if they do not matter, that they have been forgotten. Our classes help remind or awaken them to the fact that they do matter and that they can succeed at getting an education. They can learn to complete math formulas, write history papers, or read complex literary texts and discuss them. This element of learning and discovery is extraordinary, and because of this positive learning space, you can become a target for manipulation.

Always be aware that the prison system instills manipulation as a means of survival. You are not immune to this manipulation. In fact, you will probably become a target because you are not part of the system. That is why following the rules of this program is so important.

Prisoners are, for the most part, powerless within the facility, which is why some will try to establish control in the classroom. You must always maintain leadership and control—this is not to mean you should develop control freak tendencies, but do not let one person dominate the class. This also requires that you keep a clear line between you and your students—you are an educator, not a friend. This can become complicated because you are going to want to help these individuals—it is our human nature to want to do so, and even though the educational experience you will have with these students is likely to be remarkable, you must always keep in mind that you are in a prison and that the students are there for doing something that our justice system has deemed wrong.

Our students can take advantage of kindness; they may try to push you to give them more paper, more pens, more hand-outs. Be very aware of what you do for and give to your students. What you do for one student, you must do for all students. Do not let them guilt you into doing more than what the GSUPEP administration supports. Doing more than is allowed jeopardizes the understanding of prison officials and GSUPEP.

The prison environment is full of dynamics that are not familiar to most of us. Act with care. Do not give students any reason to confront the warden or the officers about your actions. If in doubt or if a situation seems to be developing, please contact a GSUPEP administrator.

Students' Personal Information

We suggest that you avoid looking up students' criminal history. Certainly do not ask for it or initiate a conversation about it with them. Do not use it as a topic for class material.

Students may want to reveal to you the reason for their incarceration. If this is the case, avoid asking further questions or giving an opinion about the crime or about the legal system. Simply listen or, if you feel uncomfortable, cut the conversation short. Remember that many of these students see very few people and may want to confide in you, but they may also want to gain your sympathy and extra attention which can affect the balance in the class.

Do not share your personal information with your students. This includes things that might be part of a conversation. For example, we suggest that you refrain from talking about your family,

where you live, where you go on vacation, etc. Talking about these things can develop a more friendly relationship than we should have with students in correctional facilities.

Transitional Centers

Transitional centers serve as a bridge for re-entering citizens from the prison to the larger community. They complete their sentences in these centers. During this time, they have jobs, but live at and follow the rules of the center.

Because these men and women have jobs, the classes we offer are generally in the evening and include such things as literature discussions, math tutoring, resume development, finance instruction, and continuing education with GSU. Our ultimate goal is to offer for-credit classes in these facilities.

You may find that the atmosphere in the transitional center is more relaxed than that of the prisons. When you enter, you will be asked to provide identification, and you will pass through a metal detector, but you will probably not be searched. Please do not bring in cell phones, and check the list provided in this document for other things that you should not bring.

While the atmosphere is more relaxed, you must still remain aware of where you are. The people in the center have been chosen to be there based on things such as good behavior, but they are still carrying out sentences. Therefore, adhere to the dress and conduct requirements explained in this document. It is better to be on the safe side when choosing appropriate attire, actions, and materials.

Outside contact with students from transitional centers is strongly discouraged. If students would like to know more about applying to GSU at Perimeter College, you may bring them materials and the contact information for one of the GSUPEP administrators.

Remember that, regardless of the facility in which you teach, you should always adhere to the rules in this document as they pertain to the representation of the program.

You can find more information about the purpose of the centers at <http://www.dcor.state.ga.us/Divisions/Facilities/Transitional>

Dr. Peter Lindsay is the contact for the Atlanta Transitional Center for men.

Objectives as Educators

GSUPEP is an academic program based on all GSU and USG requirements, policies, and curriculum. We are not a program trying “to get one over on the man.” We have a positive partnership with the GDOC and USP that is dependent on a history and expectation of a clear focus: to educate people.

Program Focus

- You are not responsible for someone’s transformation through education. Just as in a traditional classroom, our students are in charge of their own knowledge and personal development.
- We are not social activists focused on dismantling the system. You will certainly see things that upset you, but you must remain clear and honest with your intentions. If you need to discuss something troubling about prisons, do this with the GSUPEP administration, unless it is an immediate emergency. If you do deem this an emergency, report it to your facility administrator (warden, reentry coordinator, etc.) as soon as possible. Any time you have a dialogue with a prison official about your class, communicate this information to one of the GSUPEP administrators.

In general, we ask that, unless there is an emergency, you first communicate problems to the GSU program rather than to a prison employee.

- Do not underestimate how important your presence is to your students. The best thing you can do for them is to share your love of learning; however, building personal relationships with prisoners puts the program at risk. Keep in mind that, in this setting more than in others, you are an educator, not a friend.
- If you have any conflict of interest, you must disclose that to GSUPEP administrator prior to classes starting. An example would be that you cannot teach for GSUPEP and simultaneously be working on a documentary about Georgia prisons. The GDOC and USP could potentially stop our access to facilities for teaching if anyone perceives that we have motivations other than teaching.

Academic Expectations

Because these students are students of GSU and the University System of Georgia, they should be treated the same as any other students. Hold them to the same standards both academically and behaviorally. It may be tempting to be less stringent because of their situation, but remember that we aren’t doing them any favors if they leave our program unprepared for future classes.

Showing students preference or special allowances can create a dangerous power-play. This is why grading must be handled with attention. Please explain your grading system in your syllabus and on the first day of class. You might remind them that you are a professional, and that you can determine the quality of work based on the work, not on personal feelings. You may want to state this again when returning the first assignment.

Tardiness and Late Work

Students in correctional institutions may encounter obstacles in getting to class or in accessing materials. The reasons may vary based on prison protocol, disruptions, or other occurrences in the institution. While all of our students—both inside and outside of facilities--face obstacles, we suggest taking the prison setting into consideration when creating your policies.

If a student has consistent problems with punctuality and submitting work, and you feel unable to resolve them, speak with the Reentry Coordinator or with a GSUPEP administrator. He/she may be able to shed light on what is happening with an individual student, or may deem the student unable to continue in the course. Remember that this is the same for all of our students, whether or not they are incarcerated, so do not let things go too far because of the setting.

This might take you some time to figure out, but always keep in mind that you must be fair to each student. We understand that, of course, you are fair, but in the prison setting, it is especially important that all students know that each of them is being treated exactly the same. If an allowance is made for one student, it must also be considered for another student.

Syllabus Requirements

Your syllabus should be very clear and strictly adhered to. If you've stated it in the syllabus, it must be enforced uniformly for all students. Most of these students have never seen a syllabus, have not followed an academic schedule, and do not know what academic honesty is. Do not underestimate the importance of explaining all of these things.

While your syllabus should be much the same as the one you use for traditional students, we ask that you refer to Appendix A for additional inclusions.

You may want to build into your syllabus the flexibility you need to cover all topics as classes may be cut short or canceled. We will try our best to have these classes made up. In some facilities, another day may be designated for missed classes.

Never put your personal information on the syllabus. This includes your office phone number and your GSU e-mail. All outside communication from students must come through the GSUPEP office, so you may list that number and address.

As of now, Disability and Health Services will be taken care of by the facility. If you have questions about this, please feel free to contact a coordinator.

Office Hours: We would like for all professors teaching for-credit courses to set up one hour each week as an office hour for the students. This will have to be worked out in advance with the facility and can back up to your class. This will not always be possible, and as facilities improve their technology, virtual office hours are encouraged.

Course Content

1. Discussion of religion and faith as part of history, literature, art, etc., is fine, but do not engage in conversations that associate any kind of value-judgment on faith or spiritual belief.

Religious faiths in prison are a huge and important part of the culture. Were it not for faith-based organizations, there would be almost no outside support or mentoring to incarcerated individuals.

2. Do not ask students about their crime/criminal past, and do not use this as a topic for any class discussion or writing assignment.
3. Use the term “out of class work” or "assignment" rather than as “homework.”
4. Do not discuss prison politics with your students. For example, you may ask when meals are offered, but do not engage in a conversation that criticizes an officer, the system, the facility, an administration official, or another prisoner. If a student says that Officer X is being unreasonable, do not engage.
5. If you have doubt about something you’d like to do in class, consider another option, at least until you have contacted a GSUPEP administrator. Generally speaking, if you question what or how you are approaching a topic, and there is another equally effective way to approach it, then you should go with the latter. While these students should get the same sound experience that your on-campus students do, you may simply have to approach the material differently.

Classroom Logistics

All materials carried into a prison must be approved by the warden in that prison. GSUPEP will take care of submitting those materials for you. We will need a general outline, syllabus, books, all reading materials, and calendar approved by the warden *before the course begins*. Week to week changes in reading may happen, and those changes should be reported to GSUPEP

administration who will contact the warden for you to get approvals for changes in reading materials.

Copies can be made in your department or with GSUPEP.

Technology varies among facilities. We are currently working toward making technology available in all facilities but, in the meantime, make sure that you understand what your assigned facility has before planning.

In order to give dignity to our students, we recommend that you use simple paper name tents the first few weeks until you learn their names. Referring to students by their last names only is a good idea to practice as it shows respect for the students and helps to maintain professional boundaries between teachers and students.

Codes of Conduct

Students should be following all GSU codes of conduct. You will find that code of conduct here: <http://codeofconduct.gsu.edu/> (See also Appendix B.)

If a discussion becomes heated or there is tension in the class, take a break. You might remind them about mutual respect, how to have an inclusive conversation that requires an open mind, etc.

Course Updates, Evaluations, and Teaching Load

First Three Weeks: When teaching your first class, we ask that you update the GSUPEP administration to inform us of class progress, dynamics, and process of entry and exit into the facility. Please do this for the first 3 weeks by e-mailing a short summary to the designated coordinator. Of course, if you have questions or need assistance, you are always welcome to call or e-mail.

Class Observations: A GSUPEP coordinator will conduct one class observation for each professor each semester. That observation is to assist the faculty in working in a prison setting and to give additional credit to the professor for his/her willingness to work inside for GSUPEP. We will document the observation and give it to you for use in your annual observations.

Teaching Load For credit classes will count as part of your teaching load. Enrichment classes will not be considered in your course load but are considered service to the college.

Representing GSUPEP

We are able to do educational work in the prisons because of a great amount of administrative work and building of trust between GSUPEP and facilities of the USP and the GDOC; therefore, we must be mindful of how we talk about the program. Always keep in mind that you are an ambassador for GSUPEP and for the education for people in prison.

While you are teaching with GSUPEP, we respectfully ask the following:

In prisons:

1. Be positive and kind with all officers and personnel. Always put positive educational experiences at the forefront of your communication goals.
2. Represent the goal of our program as offering quality educational experiences to individuals who want to learn and be active in their own lives.
3. Be aware that everything you do within the prison is under great scrutiny by prison officials.
4. Do not ever challenge an officer. Whatever they say at that moment is right. If there is a conflict, wait until you leave the facility, and call a GSUPEP coordinator to discuss it.
5. If an officer tells you class is over, you are obligated to pull your class to a close right away. If you are asked to end the class, there is probably a good reason.
6. Do not complain to anyone inside a prison about the behavior of another. For example, do not say something negative to another officer about one of their own. The same applies to students. Do not talk negatively about one student to any other student, and do not tell your students negative things about officers or prison administrators.

In public:

1. If you are approached about giving any public statement about your experience with the program, please do not do so until you contact a GSUPEP Coordinator.
2. Direct interested people to a GSUPEP Coordinator for more information or to the webpage.
3. Review all statements with a GSUPEP Coordinator before they are made public.
4. When speaking outside of the prison, be a positive voice for GSUPEP, not a liability.
5. Do not ever use a student's full name in public. This is a confidentiality regulation. When talking to those outside of the program, you should use only the student's first name.

GSUPEP Policies and Information

Safety for Instructors and Students

Your safety is a primary concern. These rules and suggestions are not meant to impede your academic or creative presence in the classroom or to question your integrity. They are meant to help you stay safe within the prison environment and to support the longevity of the program.

The facilities will do all the things in their power to ensure your safety while you are there, but there are no guarantees. Since GSUPEP's inception, there has never been an incident where a GSUPEP personnel's safety has been at risk, but that does not mean that you should not always be alert and mindful.

Escorts: If you have an escort, stay with him/her when you are walking to and from your classroom. Facilities vary on whether or not this is required. It is best not to talk with any prisoners during this process. If you are walking down a hall and a former or current student greets you, of course, you can say hello back. You may also say hello to others who say hello first, but do not be overly friendly.

Outside of the Classroom: You may be at the prison during a time of transition such as lunch. This means that you may pass a line or group of prisoners waiting. You may also pass prisoners in the yard or as they are working. This can be disturbing, especially the first time. Know that they will naturally be curious about your presence as they don't often see people other than prison personnel and will often stare and say hello. If someone greets you, you might smile and return the greeting, but do not engage in more conversation than that. We're not promoting being rude, but we also don't want to start conversations that can be misunderstood. If you are walking and you become unsure of something, get the attention of the person who is escorting you.

You are most likely to find that your students will be on the look-out for you. They know the culture and when things are going on. If a prisoner tells you to be aware of something, say a brief thank-you, and if you need to, talk with an officer about the issue if it concerns something urgent. Otherwise, get in touch with a GSUPEP coordinator so the situation can be addressed.

Counts: Prisons do frequent counts of inmates. If a count is off or is taking longer than expected, some students may be late, or you may be asked to begin class late.

Lockdown: It is possible that you will encounter a lockdown while you are teaching. Lockdowns occur for various reasons such as medical emergencies, counts that are off, or violence somewhere in the facility. If a lockdown occurs while you are conducting class, continue class until an office indicates otherwise. Adhere to all officers' instructions. Officers and prison officials are there to keep you safe. If the situation is unsafe, they will escort you out.

Questionable Behavior: In general, unless in the case of an emergency, we would like GSUPEP to be your point of contact if you observe anything within the facility that is inappropriate.

If you observe offensive behavior in class, hand a note to the officer that states: *Student _____ is acting inappropriately. Please have them removed from class immediately.*

PREA: Prison Rape Elimination Act. This covers even the smallest indiscretion. Do not form relationships outside the normal and expected teacher-student dynamic.

GSUPEP's PREA Policy: If a student or anyone else discloses to you that they are being sexually abused, you are to go directly to the warden or deputy warden's office as soon as you leave the class. If these individuals are unavailable, ask to speak with highest person in command who is available.

You might have to ask your escort to take you there. If they ask the problem, you should say that you have a private urgent matter that needs to be disclosed to a warden.

If you make such a report, you will contact the GSUPEP director as soon as you leave the facility and are able to have cell reception.

Facility Rules are Final. If, after this training, you get to a facility and are informed of something other than what we have gone over, agree with the officer, and then inform GSUPEP administration so that we can make appropriate changes.

GSUPEP Rules and Expectations

I. Correctional Facility Practices

- A. Arrive for class at least 15-20 minutes or more prior to the start time of your class. This will allow time for the facility to get you cleared for entry and escort you to class.
- B. If there is a lock down at the prison, you might have to wait. Usually, someone will be able to give you an idea about when you might be able to enter. In rare instances, your class may be cancelled due to a situation in the facility. If so, please contact GSUPEP as soon as possible to let us know.
- C. Have your valid photo I.D. when you enter the prison. Without it, the facility will refuse your entry.

II. Late Arrival or Canceling Class

Fulfillment of teaching obligations is essential to our reputation in the prison and to SACS regulations. Not following this policy could put GSUPEP in jeopardy. If you are late or have to cancel class, please follow the protocol below:

- A. Call your contact at the facility.

- i) You are responsible for having the contact number for the facility where you teach.
 - ii) Speak with the person who supervises your class (or the warden's secretary or the shift supervisor is).
 - iii) Ask them to announce that the class has been cancelled.
- B. Call a GSUPEP Coordinator.
- i) After you let the facility know, call and/or email the GSUPEP administration to inform us.
 - ii) In order to meet SACS requirements, you may need to make up the missed class.
- C. If you know ahead of time that you are unable to make a class, inform GSUPEP administration so that arrangements can be made to extend the class or to find a substitute.

III. Communicating with Prisoners

A. Gifts

- i) Do not accept anything from a prisoner. The one exception is if your class gives you a card, but they cannot give you gifts.
- ii) It is difficult to turn down a gift, but accepting one creates a potentially unhealthy dynamic not only for you and your students but also among prison staff and students. For example, if someone gives you a keychain they made for you, then others will perceive that as a solicitation for special recognition.

An easy response to a student wanting to give you something is simply to state that it goes against GSUPEP policy.

B. Letters

Do not accept letters from or for students or other prisoners. This includes personal letters to you and letters that they would like for you to mail. Mailing something that does not go through the prisons' screening system is illegal.

You are to have no outside communication with any student while they are your students or while they are still incarcerated. Please request that ALL correspondence after the class come through the GSUPEP office. This will serve as a filter for individuals who might want to pursue friendly communications with you. This means that no other address should be on your class syllabus except that of the GSUPEP office.

You will have students who do not ever get visitors. With the exception of officers or other prison administrators, you represent the one person from the outside world that they see and have interaction with. This means that some students will form very strong bonds with you. On the one hand, this shows how much the class means to the students; on the other hand, it may invite prisoners to want to communicate with you inappropriately.

C. Social Media

Please do not friend or follow any of our students, their friends, or their families on any social media platform. People in prisons are not supposed to have access to social media, but it sometimes still happens, and/or their families may set up accounts for them. These are dangerous pitfalls for us, and there have been recent cases of programs getting removed from prisons for teachers following such accounts. If you choose to have a relationship with our students or their connections, the GDOC can have you removed from the list of people eligible to enter the prisons permanently. If you feel that you cannot strictly adhere to this policy, please do not teach with us.

IV. Confidentiality

Do not under any circumstance use your students' full names outside of class. If you have need to talk about a student academically with another GSU office, talk with GSUPEP about how to handle such discussions. Never discuss a student with news media, on social media, or with anyone outside of GSU.

V. Course Materials

- A. This cannot be stressed enough: please bring in ONLY materials that have been approved. If you want to take in paper or pens or books that we have not purchased, you need to clear this with GSUPEP administration. Please do so through e-mail.
- B. Students may try to manipulate you to get more supplies. Please inform them that they are given what the program is able to provide. If each instructor gives things outside the basics that we provide, it sets a precedent that could put future instructors in a bind. If you need something for your class, please let GSUPEP administration know, and we will see what we can do.
- C. Be aware that many things can be used as weapons. Make sure that whatever you bring in with you, you also take out.

VI. GSUPEP & Health

- A. Prisons are high-risk facilities for the transfer of germs and diseases. If you are sick, you should not go to the facility, as you are bringing sickness in.
- B. We recommend regular TB testing and vaccinations for the flu and hepatitis.
- C. Consider keeping a small bottle of Purell in your car. If you can find alcohol-free sanitizer in a clear bottle, you can take that inside with you.

IX. Recommendation Letters

- 1. GSUPEP does not permit faculty to write letters of support for students. If a student asks for a letter for their parole board or other such recommendation, you must say no. We understand that this is difficult, but it is an important policy. If a student asks, you may tell him/her that it is against the program's policy to write letters of recommendation. You can, however, write academic letters of support to other academic institutions.

X. General Points

1. Despite the attempts of your students to convince you otherwise, GSUPEP does not provide end-of-the-class parties. There are absolutely no exceptions to this.
2. Do not touch students as this behavior can be misinterpreted. The GDOC will instruct you that there should be no contact at all. For GSUPEP, shaking hands is fine.
3. All requests, questions, etc. must be cleared through GSUPEP administration as it is important that the facility get all correspondence from one point person. Do not seek permission on your own with your host facility.
4. If ever in doubt about ANYTHING, please call and contact us.

State and Federal Regulations

Our program has a strong but still developing relationship with the GDOC and the Atlanta US Federal Penitentiary. This dynamic is made possible by carefully developed professional relationships. GSUPEP is welcomed into facilities to offer classes because of the incredibly high standard of the courses, individual character, and behavior of instructors.

To work within each facility, there are many rules and regulations that are, by default, our rules too.

Overall, you should dress conservatively. Following are specific restrictions for GDOC; you should also follow these for the USP.

GDOC Dress Code Regulations

See Policy 104.48 of employee handbook, pg 1.

http://www.gdcjobs.com/NewHire/pdf/SOPs_10-31-2017.pdf

Men

The following items of clothing are NOT allowed:

1. Khaki or white clothing
2. Scrub type garments
3. Tank tops, muscle shirts, or sleeveless shirts
4. Shorts or tight fitting trousers with elastic type fabrics. All trousers must be at least ankle-length.
5. House shoes, shower shoes, beach shoes, or open-toed shoes
6. Tight fitting clothes
7. Jeans
8. Hats or caps

You must wear a complete set of undergarments (boxers or briefs).

Women

The following items of clothing are NOT allowed:

1. White or any light colored clothing that appears white
2. Scrub type garments
3. Button ups, wrap around, sheer or see-through fabric dresses and skirts
4. See-through blouses and sleeveless tops
5. Sundresses, tank tops, halter tops, low-cut blouses or sleeveless shirts
6. Shorts, spandex, leggings, or stretch pants
7. House shoes, shower shoes, or beach shoes or open-toed shoes
8. Sheer, see-through pants
9. Dresses or skirts that are 2" above the knee or that have high slits in the back or on the sides

10. Tight fitting clothes
11. Jewelry.
12. Hats, caps, scarves.

You must wear a complete set of undergarments (bra and underwear).

US Penitentiary

In addition to the above list, the USP asks that you not wear jeans or clothes that are khaki, yellow, orange, red, or military in style.

As a general rule, if you question what you will wear, choose something else.

Other GDOC Regulations

See Policy 104.47 of employee handbook, pg 18.

http://www.gdcjobs.com/NewHire/pdf/SOPs_10-31-2017.pdf

1. No hats, caps, scarves, headbands, sunglasses (except prescription), electronic equipment, wigs (except prescribed by a doctor or with the approval of the Warden), jewelry (except wedding set/bands) and no medication (except life sustaining medication from a doctor) will be allowed.
2. The below list of items are NOT authorized under any circumstances:
 - drugs (to include any over-the-counter medications)/alcohol
 - tobacco products
 - matches/lighters
 - jewelry
 - money
 - weapons
 - purse/briefcases/duffel bags
 - additional clothing items
 - cell phones/beepers
3. You must have a valid driver's license or other official photo identification to enter a facility.
4. Do not step onto prison grounds under the influence of any illegal drugs or alcohol. You will be arrested. Do not have any illegal drugs or alcohol in your car. You will also be terminated from GSUPEP.
5. All prison property is under video surveillance.

US Penitentiary/US Department of Justice Personal Conduct Policies

Source: Standards of Employee Conduct Program Statement, p. 6

See also https://www.bop.gov/policy/progstat/3420_011.pdf

Note: While there are guidelines for the USP, please follow them for all facilities.

PERSONAL CONDUCT

Employees are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that contributes to the orderly running of Bureau facilities. Some types of behavior cannot be tolerated in the Bureau:

a. Alcohol/Illegal Drugs. The use of illegal drugs or the abuse of any drug, including prescription-controlled substances, is strictly prohibited. Illegal drugs include, but are not limited to:

- Marijuana.
- Cocaine.
- Ecstasy.
- Heroin.
- Amphetamines (“speed” or “crank”).
- Lysergic Acid Diethylamide (LSD).

Use of alcoholic beverages or being under the influence of alcohol while on duty or immediately before reporting for duty are prohibited. Employees are subject to disciplinary action if found to possess a .02 or greater blood alcohol content while on duty.

b. Sexual Relationships/Contact With Inmates.

Employees may not allow themselves to show partiality toward, or become emotionally, physically, sexually, or financially involved with inmates, former inmates, or persons known (or who should have been known based on circumstances) to the employee as a family member or close friend of inmates or former inmates. Chaplains, psychologists, and psychiatrists may continue a previously established therapeutic relationship with a former inmate in accordance with their codes of professional conduct and responsibility. P3420.11 12/6/2013 7 Bureau staff may not serve as program volunteers in religious services and educational programs. Under no circumstances are staff volunteers authorized to participate in inmate programs on a regular or occasional basis. An employee may not engage in, or allow another person to engage in, sexual behavior with an inmate.

There is never any such thing as consensual sex between staff and inmates. Title 18, U.S. Code Chapter 109A provides penalties of up to life imprisonment for sexual abuse of inmates where the force is used or threatened. Sexual contact is defined as the intentional touching of the genitalia, anus, groin, breast, inner thigh, or buttocks with the intent to abuse, humiliate, harass, degrade, arouse, or gratify the sexual desire of any person. Penetration is not required to support

a conviction for sexual contact. All allegations of sexual abuse will be thoroughly investigated and, when appropriate, referred to authorities for prosecution. Employees are subject to administrative action, up to and including removal, for any inappropriate contact, sexual behavior, or relationship with inmates, regardless of whether such contact constitutes a prosecutable crime. Physical contact is not required to subject an employee to sanctions for misconduct of a sexual nature.

c. Additional Conduct Issues.

An employee may not offer or give to an inmate or a former inmate or any member of his/her family, or to any person known to be associated with an inmate or former inmate, any article, favor, or service that is not authorized in the performance of the employee's duties. Neither shall an employee accept any gift, personal service, or favor from an inmate or former inmate, or from anyone known to be associated with or related to an inmate or former inmate. This prohibition includes becoming involved with families or associates of inmates.

An employee may not show favoritism or give preferential treatment to one inmate, or a group of inmates, over another. Consistent with policies and regulations:

- An employee may not use brutality, physical violence, or intimidation toward inmates, or use any force beyond what is reasonably necessary to subdue an inmate. P3420.11 12/6/2013 8
- An employee may not use physical violence, threats, or intimidation toward any person visiting a Bureau work site or toward fellow employees. In their official capacity, employees may not use profane, obscene, or abusive language when communicating with inmates, fellow employees, or others.

Employees shall conduct themselves in a manner that will not be demeaning to inmates, fellow employees, or others. The above requirements also apply to situations where there is a nexus between the employee's conduct and his/her position. An employee who becomes involved in circumstances as described in this section, Section 9 (or any situation that might give the appearance of improper involvement with inmates or former inmates or their families, including employees whose relatives are inmates or former inmates) must report the contact in writing to the CEO as soon as practicable. (This includes, but is not limited to, telephone calls or written communications with such persons outside the normal scope of employment.) The employee will then be instructed as to the appropriate course of action. Exempted program officials must obtain prior approval to communicate with former inmates, their family members, or associates. All communications must occur from an institution setting.

Employees must avoid situations that give rise to a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest (see Section 2, Definitions). Employees shall not participate in conduct that would lead a reasonable person to question their impartiality. 6.

RESPONSIVENESS

Inattention to duty in a correctional environment can result in escapes, assaults, and other incidents.

Employees are required to remain fully alert and attentive during duty hours. Because failure to respond to an emergency may jeopardize the security of the institution, as well as the lives of staff or inmates, it is mandatory that employees respond immediately, effectively, and appropriately during all emergency situations. Employees are to obey the orders of their superiors at all times. In an emergency situation, carrying out the orders of those in command is imperative to ensure the security of the institution. P3420.11 12/6/2013 9 7.

ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES Illegal activities on the part of any employee, in addition to being unlawful, reflect on the integrity of the Bureau and betray the trust and confidence placed in it by the public. It is expected that employees obey not only the letter of the law, but also the spirit of the law while engaged in personal or official activities. Should an employee be charged with, arrested for, or convicted of any felony or misdemeanor, that employee must immediately inform and provide a written report to the CEO. 8.

INTRODUCTION OF CONTRABAND Per 28 CFR § 500.1(h), contraband is defined as “material prohibited by law, or by regulation, or material which can reasonably be expected to cause physical injury or adversely affect the security, safety, or good order of the institution.” Introducing or attempting to introduce contraband into or upon the grounds of any Federal correctional institution, or taking or attempting to take contraband out of it, without the CEO’s knowledge and consent, is prohibited.

Staff may bring personal items into or upon the grounds of an institution, unless otherwise prohibited by the Warden. Such items must remain in the possession of the employee, and /or be secured away from inmates, and disposed of properly when no longer needed. Consult the Program Statement Staff Entrance and Search Procedures for additional requirements.

OFFICIAL INVESTIGATION It is not the policy of the Bureau to routinely search employees or their property; however, the Bureau retains the right to conduct searches of employees when such a search is believed necessary to ensure institution security and good order. Searches are conducted in accordance with the Program Statement Staff Entrance and Search Procedures. Representation will be afforded to staff in accordance with the Master Agreement and Title 5. During the course of an official investigation, employees are to cooperate fully by providing all pertinent information they may have. Full cooperation requires truthfully responding to questions and providing a signed affidavit if requested. Any employee who fails to cooperate fully or who hinders an investigation is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including removal. P3420.11 12/6/2013 10 In official investigations conducted by the Bureau of Prisons, an employee will be provided a copy of his/her signed affidavit upon request, absent rare or exigent circumstances. If this occurs, staff will be given the opportunity to review prior affidavits before giving another affidavit. Employees must respond truthfully and in a timely manner to requests for information related to their background security investigation. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary

action up to and including removal. Form BP-A0194, Warning and Assurance to Employee Required to Provide Information, will be provided upon request to the employee who is the subject of the investigation.

Closing Thoughts

We are excited that you have expressed interest in teaching for GSUPEP. Please know that we respect you as a professional with integrity, and that the previous information is meant solely to outline how teaching within a correctional facility can be different than teaching a traditional population.

The rules in this document are in place for reasons. They are not arbitrary, nor are they conceived without great consideration. If you believe that these are not reasonable for you to follow, you must let GSUPEP know immediately so alternate plans can be made for your class. Your ability work within the parameters of these facilities will impact future teaching possibilities with the program.

We hope that you will find this work as rewarding and important as we have. Teaching in a prison, despite its challenges, can be one of the most satisfying experiences in your career. The classes you teach and the students you encounter will be likely to refresh your commitment to teaching and to carry over into all of your classes. It is truly a learning experience.

We hope to do amazing things together. You have chosen to be a part of this community. You have signed up for some really demanding work. We are thrilled to have you as long as we are working together for the betterment of this program and the students we serve.

Appendix A

Syllabus

Contact information must be listed as the GSUPEP office. Please do not give out your personal address or e-mail nor your campus phone number, address, or e-mail. Following is the contact information:

GSUPEP
Georgia State University
Perimeter College
Decatur Campus
3251 Panthersville Road
Decatur, GA 30034

Please include the following in your syllabus:

1. The Perimeter-GSU logo (if you need it, we can email it to you)
2. A section noting that you will not have any contact with students outside of the facility
3. This statement--"Each of our students is considered an individual, not a number or a conviction. In our classrooms, we will refer to each other by last name. Address professors in a professional manner (Professor, Ms/Mr, Dr.)"
4. Clear and specific grading guidelines
5. Academic Honesty Policy
6. Program mission statement:

GSUPEP creates relationships among the University System of Georgia, the Georgia Department of Corrections, and the Federal Bureau of Prisons. The project's goals include bringing higher education into prisons, supporting reentry into society by those who have been incarcerated, and reducing recidivism. In offering support and opportunity to all students, the GSUPEP seeks to promote lifelong learning that strengthens human character, increases understanding of life experiences, and motivates all to engage in productive citizenship.

7. GSU Behavior Policy:

Disruptive student conduct is student behavior in a classroom or other learning environment (to include both on and off campus locations), which disrupts the educational process.

Disruptive class behavior for this purpose is defined by the instructor. Such behavior includes, but is not limited to:

- verbal or physical threats
- repeated obscenities
- unreasonable interference with class discussion
- making or receiving personal phone calls, text messages or pages during class
- excessive tardiness
- leaving and entering class frequently in the absence of notice to instructor of illness or other extenuating circumstances
- persisting in disruptive personal conversations with other class members

For purposes of this policy, it may also be considered disruptive behavior for a student to exhibit threatening, intimidating, or other inappropriate behavior toward the instructor or classmates outside of class.

We will also hand out a policy contract for them to sign on the first day of class. You may add to your syllabus any specifics that you deem necessary.

Appendix B

First Day of Class

A GSUPEP administrator will accompany you to the first class. We will distribute books, do a short introduction to the program, and give directives for behavioral expectations.

We will also distribute the behavioral expectations form for their signatures.

After our introduction, it is likely that we will stay for the first class.

You may want to begin by having students make a name tent.

Here are some things that need to be established/completed on the first day:

1. Student questionnaire.
2. Review of syllabus and schedule.

Take this time to outline your expectations of the class.

I have read the GSUPEP training manual, and I understand my responsibilities entering and teaching in prisons.

_____ completed the GSUPEP training on _____
(name of teacher) (date)

GSUPEP Administrator

Faculty Member

