E103: The Great Wall of China
Indiana University, Fall 2009

Course Description
"Great Wall" was intended to be a freshman-level introduction to Chinese history through China's interaction with the steppe peoples of Mongolia and beyond. The course spanned the Han through the Ming dynasties (206 BCE-1644 CE). The challenge for me as a teaching assistant was to make obscure material, including primary sources and several complicated scholarly books, intelligible to teenage students who in some cases had never traveled outside of Indiana.

Responsibilities
I ran two sections of about twenty-five students each. There were five papers for the course, which I evaluated on the basis of a rubric and often discussed with students individually. In keeping with the spirit of the freshman general education program, I essentially turned the course into a reading and writing workshop and attempted to draw broader lessons out of each section meeting. My course head and senior TA worked with me to plan the course, establish consistent mechanisms for evaluation, and design quizzes.

Final Evaluations
Qualitative
Q: What did you like most about the instructor?
- "He is so nice, so attentive to his students. He makes it comfortable to participate in class. He stimulates my thinking a lot. He is truly a great instructor."
- "Lectures and readings would confuse me sometimes. Eric helped to clear up how they related to each other and helped them make sense. Without his section discussion, I would probably be lost on this subject."

Q: What could the instructor do to improve the course or his/her teaching effectiveness?
- "It is tough to think of anything to improve. He is my favorite teacher this semester, and he will be a good teacher in years to come."
- "N/A, best teacher I ever had."

Quantitative (scale: "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree")

Prompt	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
Overall, I would rate this instructor as outstanding.	18%	82%
My instructor explains the material clearly.	24%	76%
My instructor stimulates my thinking.	35%	65%
My instructor recognizes when students fail to comprehend.	29%	71%