What is a Writing Mentor?

Mentors are English MA students (and in five cases, PhD students who are working as both apprentice and mentor) whose primary duty is to help every English 100 student in your course do as well as he or she can. In the Fall 2010 semester, we will have 20 mentors assisting faculty in courses.

Mentors can help you augment your teaching in a variety of ways, as detailed in the pdf document, "Fifty Ways to Use Your Mentor." Mentors provide both an assistant and teammate in teaching English 100. In addition to attending all classes and taking notes on how they might help individual students perform well on assignments, in many cases mentors have helped faculty run in-class discussion groups and manage peer review. In some cases, mentors try their hands at teaching a class session. For instructional faculty, mentors have thus provided valuable assistance in the classroom, all the while helping us renew and adapt practices (not to mention manage to connect with eighteen-year-olds). For mentors, this initiative offers them invaluable classroom experience as well as the benefit of an experienced instructor's knowledge and pedagogical practices.

Mentors are NOT TAs in the traditional sense—they do not grade, nor should they record your grades or function otherwise in any way that makes it seem that they are evaluating students. They SHOULD be integrated as much as possible into responding to students' writing—and to the many other aspects of the writing process that can help students move towards full authorship. Evaluations of the mentoring by faculty to date have been extremely positive.