Dear students,

I hope this finds you well, and that you have had a fruitful semester thus far.

As a member of the University and College Union (UCU), I will be participating in the industrial action scheduled for the 1-3 of December. This means that I will be unable to [hold office hours/tutorials/etc] during this period as they fall within my capacity as a member of teaching staff.

Because I believe it’s important for you to understand why I (along with many other tutors and staff members) will be striking, I thought it might be helpful to draw your attention to a handful of the issues that PhD [or Guaranteed Hours] tutors currently face and which the strikes are aimed at alleviating:

* Around half of teaching-only staff and 68% of researchers are employed on fixed-term contracts, while many more have contracts which are dependent on funding. Basically, we don’t have job security – when our 1- or 2-year contracts end, regardless of how well we’ve done, we’re not guaranteed our position as teachers in the following academic years. This is known as ‘casualisation’ or ‘precarity.’
* 42% of staff on casual contracts have struggled to pay household bills, while many others struggle to make long-term financial commitments like buying a house. Staff in higher education are not guaranteed a living wage, and tutors in particular often take on second- and third- jobs to make ends meet on top of teaching and completing our doctoral dissertations.
* Unpaid work and overload are common, particularly for guaranteed-hours tutors (meaning me and your other seminar tutors) who frequently work far more/longer hours than we are paid for and perform job duties and responsibilities outwith our contracts. Fairer contracts and fairer pay are a key aspect of the upcoming industrial action.

For further information on why the UCU is striking, please follow [this link](https://www.ucu.org.uk/hedisputes). To see EUSA guidance and UCU strike support, please follow [this link](https://www.eusa.ed.ac.uk/news/article/ucuballotresults).

If you have any questions, please do feel free to contact me outwith the days of the strike. I will not be able to respond to student queries on the 1st-3rd December.

Warm regards,

[Your name]