

Statement of Teaching Philosophy

As an assistant professor, I am prepared to teach undergraduate and graduate courses in Comparative Politics, International Relations and Middle Eastern Politics. I have served as a teaching instructor for undergraduate courses in Comparative Politics (Politics in Africa), International Relations (Human Rights) and Middle Eastern Studies (History of the Middle East) at Princeton. I also co-taught an introduction to writing course and tutored incarcerated students with Princeton University's Prison Teaching Initiative (PTI).

The primary goal of teaching political science is to help students apply our discipline's theories and navigate its debates when trying to understand politics. Student engagement with the course material, their peers and instructors is fundamental to this objective. My teaching philosophy promotes student engagement through three principles: 1) Clarity, 2) Flexibility and 3) Inclusivity.

Comprehension catalyzes student engagement. Students must grasp the course material if they hope to apply it in their studies and day-to-day lives. I structure my discussion sections around contextualizing, contrasting and debating the week's assigned readings. I like to draw out arguments on the whiteboard. I hand out outlines, maps and links to online materials to make the assigned readings more accessible. Students are more likely to retain course material when they participate in class discussion. When guest-lecturing on social movements, I asked students to volunteer their thoughts on how the discipline's canonical theories on collective action related to ongoing campus efforts to rename the Woodrow Wilson School. Connecting theory to students' lived campus activism made for a livelier, more tractable lecture on social movements. I also vary between lecturing and more participatory learning activities like debates and role-playing scenarios. When teaching on electoral clientelism for an undergraduate course on African Politics, I asked students to use insights from the week's readings and pitch electoral strategies to an imaginary incumbent and opposition candidate.

Pedagogical flexibility is central to student engagement. My students bring a diversity of experiences, aptitudes and assumptions to the classroom. Adapting lesson plans and teaching styles to students' strengths and weaknesses is essential to helping students understand and dialogue with the course material. Student feedback is paramount to my teaching philosophy. For example, I remember racing through the syllabus on my first day as a Prison Teaching Instructor. After a few classes and one-on-one meetings, however, my co-instructors and I realized that we assumed our students knew how to use our syllabus. For most, however, our introductory writing course was their first exposure to higher education. We adjusted our next class' lesson plan to collectively walk through the syllabus and answer questions. For my undergraduate courses, I collect student feedback through weekly reading responses and mid-course student evaluations. Thanks to mid-course evaluations, I discovered that almost all of my students in my Human Rights class wanted more discussion on current events during section. I then started every section in the second half of the semester by asking students to introduce and explain a major event from the week's news cycle. Not only was this a good icebreaker, many of these conversations naturally extended in to that week's course topic.

Fostering an inclusive learning environment is a third pillar of student engagement. I value a "step up and step back" approach to student participation. Listening and deference are just as integral to students' participation grades as the comments they make

in section. I also like to shuffle student and instructor seating arrangements throughout the semester. This disrupts routine and helps students in the back of the class participate. Students are also required to email me a question about the week's readings the night before section. This forces every student to have something to contribute to discussion in section. I still cold call quiet students; but I reach out to them privately to ask if there is anything I could be doing to help them participate. Finally, I grade all tests and assignments blind. All these techniques prevent biases developed in and out of the classroom from undermining my students' academic potential.

My teaching philosophy stems from teaching a variety of courses to a diversity of students. I served as a teaching assistant for courses in different subfields (Comparative Politics, International Relations), departments (Political Science, Middle Eastern Studies) and institutions (Princeton University, Alfred Wagner Correctional Facility).

My teaching evaluations suggest that students value my teaching philosophy. I averaged 4.3 out of 5.0 for three Princeton courses (50+ students) where I served as teaching assistant. My evaluations were consistently higher than the department's mean. My teaching evaluations are available upon request.

I am prepared to teach at the undergraduate and graduate level. My teaching interests mirror my research interests. In addition to leading introductory courses in Comparative Politics and International Relations, I can teach Middle Eastern Politics. Having lived in and studied the region as an undergraduate, I understand how a multi-disciplinary syllabus can captivate students' interests in the Middle East. I can also lecture on the Comparative Politics of Development. My research on trade politics, gender politics and the informal economy, in addition to graduate school coursework, anchors my familiarity with old and new debates on the politics of economic development. Lastly, I value graduate student professional development. I co-organized the Middle East Political Economy research café for the 2018 American Political Science Association (APSA) annual conference. This forum brought junior and senior scholars into a constructive dialogue about studying the region's political economy. In addition to providing networking opportunities, this research café was a sounding board for incipient research ideas and best practices for conducting fieldwork in the Middle East.