

Teaching Statement

As a teacher, my twin objectives are to foster curiosity about real-world political dynamics and equip students with the methodological skills to analyze those dynamics scientifically. To accomplish this objective, my teaching philosophy rests upon three fundamental pillars. Firstly, I prioritize the development of students' analytical and problem-solving abilities through writing exercises and data literacy. Second, I cultivate my students' curiosity and participation by fostering inclusive learning environments. Lastly, I aim to inspire teamwork and a genuine interest in their work through project-based and experiential learning approaches.

I have consistently pursued these objectives in instructional roles at Duke University, University of California San Diego, and Universidad de los Andes (Colombia) where I have taught courses at both the undergraduate and graduate levels in English and Spanish. I have also taught modules within continued education programs, helped draft a discussion guide for a [documentary](#) and enrolled at Duke's Certificate in College Teaching. Little did my old first semester self -who was paid statistics tutoring with hamburgers- that I would be able to do all this.

Writing and Data literacy are key to empowering students with the ability to construct well-grounded arguments supported by both theoretical precision and empirical evidence. To achieve this, I prioritize clear explanations of foundational concepts in comparative politics and political economy that enable students to establish a solid analytical foundation. Moreover, I emphasize data literacy among my students, including the skills to effectively read, work with, and communicate findings derived from data. This proficiency equips them with the capacity to locate, interpret, and analyze data from diverse sources, spanning both quantitative and qualitative domains. For example, in one class, I tasked students to find descriptive data about a topic related to rebel governance and human rights. Then, they were asked to build an argument with the data they found. Subsequently, their task involved writing a short memo for a non-academic audience and creating a visual graph to represent the argument effectively.

Inclusive Learning Environment: As an educator, I want to cultivate a safe and inclusive learning environment that encourages students to embrace mistakes as valuable learning opportunities. I also aim to provide an enriching educational experience that empowers students to navigate complex subject matter with an open and critical mindset. To achieve this, I prioritize creating an atmosphere where students feel comfortable seeking support and engaging in meaningful discussions both inside and outside the classroom. Additionally, when constructing my syllabi and designing class materials, I conscientiously select readings (at least 30%) authored by scholars who represent the diverse racial and gender composition of our society. By incorporating these varied voices, I have witnessed an increased level of engagement from students who have expressed their appreciation for the relevance of the assigned readings. I have observed how students incorporate these new perspectives into their final projects, demonstrating their enhanced understanding and ability to discuss diverse viewpoints.

Project-based and applied learning: I believe project-based learning is a transformative approach to foster a learning by doing environment. By immersing themselves in simulations and real-life projects, students cultivate essential teamwork abilities, learn to collaborate effectively,

and strengthen their problem-solving skills in diverse group settings. This pedagogical approach not only cultivates crucial interpersonal skills but also ignites a genuine interest and passion for the subject matter, as students can directly apply what they learn in class.

In line with this approach, I will incorporate ongoing research projects into some of my courses. As a research associate at Devlab, I successfully [led an interdisciplinary team](#) of 18 graduate and undergraduate students in an in-depth investigation on the impact of deportation in both Guatemala and the United States. Throughout the project, students had the opportunity to analyze quantitative data, conduct interviews, and engage in fieldwork. These valuable skills not only enhanced their academic journey but also equipped them for future endeavors, ranging from honors theses to professional careers.

AI in the classroom: I am an avid proponent of the use of artificial intelligence tools in the classroom. In one of my classes, I used Google Translate to translate some articles from English to Spanish so the students who were not comfortable reading in English were able to engage with the class material. As an instructor, I want my students to use these tools ethically and in a way that enhances their research capabilities. For instance, I taught some of my students how to use ChatGPT to debug some of their code when doing graphs in R.

Mentoring I employ a combination of individual and group activities to support my students' development. For individual mentoring, I engage in one-on-one meetings to establish clear goals and create a working plan. To enhance the mentoring of final papers, I find it effective to break the paper into sections, making each section a distinct goal. This approach has proved fruitful during my time at the Ralph Bunche Summer Institute, where students are often overloaded with work yet want to produce good final course papers.

In addition to individual mentoring, I value group interactions. I like my mentees to engage in regular meetings with fellow students to discuss papers at various stages. These gatherings demonstrate the gradual nature of research, emphasizing the time and effort required. Moreover, these discussions help students learn to give feedback, become familiar with diverse research tools, and highlight the importance of effective research communication. Furthermore, the collective component of group meetings fosters new ideas and collaborative projects.

Teaching Interests I am committed to designing undergraduate courses that provide students with opportunities to apply their knowledge to real-world contexts, while graduate courses aim to facilitate the development and advancement of students' individual research agendas. At both undergraduate and graduate levels, I am well-prepared to instruct substantive courses on migration and political economy, as well as introductory courses on Comparative Politics. Additionally, I am enthusiastic about contributing to the department's curriculum by teaching classes closer to my substantive interests like the political economy of Latin America, migration in the developing world, race and representation, and distributive politics. You can find the syllabus for a class on the Political Economy of migration on this [link](#). On the methods front, I can offer specialized courses teaching students how to produce research designs, how to use causal inference to answer their research questions, and how to prepare and conduct fieldwork in other countries with both human subject and archival documents.