

# William John O'Brochta

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## Teaching Portfolio

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# 1 Teaching Philosophy Statement

How do you convince a state senator that your strategy for solving a local environmental problem best represents constituents' needs? I faced this challenge as an undergraduate at a small liberal arts college with established close community ties. To provide a credible answer, I needed to apply political science theories and concepts, to collaborate with a diverse team of students all working to develop an answer, and to deliver a relevant public policy proposal. The state senator did not end up implementing our policy proposal, but throughout that political science course I learned the tools necessary to be what I call an "applied political scientist." My teaching philosophy is to guide students, no matter their level of background knowledge, through the process of becoming an applied political scientist so that they can utilize political science literature, theories, and research methods to solve current and future community problems. To me, applied political science has three components: disciplinary skills, collaboration, and public policy focus.

Students in my courses learn about political science by developing the key disciplinary skills of critical thinking, research, and writing. I value learning by doing, so I guide students through the political science research article writing process as a way to develop these skills. My courses are structured to introduce students to each component of this process, from identifying research questions to writing up results sections and presenting their work, and then to ask students to practice these components by completing their own research assignments. In my upper-level *Participation, Development, and Stability* course, students develop these skills in class-long workshops and then complete parts of a scaffolded research article assignment throughout the semester. My approach to large introductory courses like *Introduction to Comparative Politics* is more flexible: students still engage with each part of the research article writing process, but they complete a substantial portion of this work during small group activities in class. For me, the key is that students are fully welcomed into the world of political science, that their work uses the same tools and engages with the same literatures as do journal articles written by career political scientists, and that their development of these skills enables them to tackle public policy problems. With this approach, disciplinary skills are widely applicable to non-majors and to myriad career paths.

Collaboration is the cornerstone of effective applied political science. Impactful public policy solutions require a diverse team of experts working together toward a common goal. I work to build a classroom environment where both specialization and collaboration facilitate equity and inclusion. When students engage with the research article writing process they choose their own topic of interest, usually related to a public policy problem they care deeply about. In my *Representation, Identity, and Dissent* course, I give students space to reflect on their topic through free form online blog posts. Blogs provide an opportunity to ensure that personal connections to content are valued. I then, for example, take a Chinese student choosing to study repression and a football player examining inequities in sports hiring and ask them to collaborate with one another. Collaboration involves opportunities to improve student writing through small group discussions and peer review. Small groups are then responsible for promoting the work of their members, culminating in a gallery walk around the classroom where students learn about their colleagues' valuable ideas. This system of collaboration reflects my fundamental belief that everyone, regardless of course level or

major, has valuable contributions to make to student learning.

Public policy applicability makes political science relevant to students and to the local community. I emphasize the public policy relevance of my courses through research-based policy simulations and local community engaged projects. For example, in *Political Protest and Violence* the classroom turned into a summit when student representatives of a European nation debated protester rights with Chinese representatives while the class acted as reporters, writing draft newspaper articles on the proceedings. Through these simulations students learn negotiation tactics, briefing paper writing, and public speaking skills, all of which are immediately applicable to a wide variety of careers. I partner with local community organizations to create experiential learning opportunities that address their current needs. Students in *Representation, Identity, and Dissent* applied their knowledge of effective political advocacy tactics to develop training materials for an organization providing jobs to underserved high school students. Students worked in teams to carefully think through how theories of representation translated to helping youth advocate for issues they cared deeply about. Community engaged pedagogy provides an excellent opportunity for students to learn from community members with diverse backgrounds and perspectives and to intentionally engage in discussions highlighting the disproportionate impacts many public policies have on people who are underserved. Even simple activities like asking students to learn about the demographic composition of their home community and to attend course-related community events often uncover privileges and biases about which students may be unaware.

I use assessment best practices to evaluate the effectiveness of how I teach applied political science and to adapt my teaching practices both across courses and over time. For example, when I learned through mid-semester surveys and “ticket out” assignments that students in my *Immigration, Identity, and the Internet* course were relatively unfamiliar with developing hypotheses, I devoted additional time in class toward this topic and paid special attention to hypothesis development in subsequent assignments. Students were encouraged to use their final case study assignment to provide evidence supporting their hypotheses. A majority of students eventually chose to structure their case study in this way, saying that the added support on hypothesis development increased their comfort. Additionally, I implement scholarship of teaching and learning practices to assess key student learning objectives. I show that students in my *Introduction to Comparative Politics* course do learn applied political science skills. Pre- and post-test surveys and evaluations of assignment rubrics demonstrate that students’ disciplinary skills significantly improve as a result of taking the course. Further, the community partnerships that I employ in my courses improve students’ willingness to work with others and their understanding and appreciation of diversity.

My applied political science philosophy is adaptable, and I am continuously working to improve my teaching pedagogy. Current projects consider how applied political science is best taught online, ways to facilitate equity and inclusion through community partnerships, and considering new approaches to my applied political science model like class coauthored work. Applied political science may not convince state senators to change their policy priorities, but it does empower students to apply their learning to solve current and future public policy and career-related problems.

## 2 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement

As I walk to one of my favorite sections of the library, I pass a portrait of a prominent professor, one of two portraits of African Americans out of the almost one hundred on campus. Inequality and exclusion are built into the university experience. Instructors are responsible for not only providing an inclusive classroom climate, but for leading efforts toward equity and inclusion. I promote equity and inclusion in three stages: tailoring support to individual students, building a collective applied political scientist identity, and expanding students' perspectives through community engaged partnerships and projects.

Students enter my classroom with a wide range of backgrounds and experiences. My first step is to assess students' backgrounds and to ask them directly how I can best support them. I do this by assigning pre-course surveys and then taking up class time to meet with students either individually or in small groups at the beginning of each semester. From these meetings, I learn a bit about each student's strengths and I set a tone that encourages students to build and maintain connections with me. Students from diverse backgrounds may need additional support structures that can help address inequalities and better integrate them into the course. These structures should be collaborative and personal. When I mentor students, my aim is for us to work together to develop a plan that we can implement together. For example, when teaching a student whose first language was not English, we identified sentence structure as an area where she needed help and worked on revising one paragraph of her written work each week. My initial accessibility and openness toward meeting and getting to know students translates into an improved ability to support student learning throughout the semester.

When individual students are equitably supported, the classroom is more conducive to learning. Adding in inclusive teaching strategies and representing diverse scholarly voices also helps. Yet, I think about equity and inclusion in the classroom as promoting a deeper, mutual understanding between students that transcends a single semester's course. One of my course goals is to encourage students to develop a collective, applied political scientist identity. We know from research — including my own — that establishing a common identity among a diverse set of individuals promotes diverse friendships and increased tolerance. Therefore, I structure my courses to facilitate collective identity formation in a way that incorporates diverse perspectives. Students are challenged through reflective blogging and research activities to investigate topics in political science that they are deeply and personally invested in — these topics often revolve around life experiences, including experiences with diversity and inclusion. After working individually, I ask students to develop and apply each others' ideas collaboratively. For example, my policy day simulation activity requires student groups to incorporate policy issues and proposals from each group member in a way that respects each idea's original intent. Integrating both individual and collaborative work in a supportive environment creates common bonds among students and helps to build collective identity.

My recent leadership toward equity and inclusion has involved local community activities and projects. Community engagement both asks students to work alongside people with diverse backgrounds and life experiences and challenges them to better understand their own values, beliefs, and priorities. However, community engaged projects can perpetuate inequal-

ity if students gain knowledge from community partners without contributing meaningfully to improve their community. I tackle this potential power imbalance head on. My community partnership in *Representation, Identity, and Dissent* was built from several years of experience volunteering with a local youth jobs program, working with staff to identify ways in which my class could contribute to their program, and setting up activities that promoted mutual exchange and benefit. The fact that this course took place online presented further challenges. Students could not visit key community sites, so I used online mapping tools and videos to introduce community perspectives. Even small community activities, like asking students to learn more about the demographics of their community and to attend community events, can effectively expose them to difficult conversations about inequality and access to services. Including the community in my courses also pushes students to become more involved in the community and introduces them to a number of relevant local community organizations. I ask students to interview members of local community organizations as an opportunity for them to be exposed to ongoing conversations about access, inclusion, and equity to which students can contribute. My community activities and projects are designed to be broadly transferable to a multitude of contexts.

I cultivate diversity, equity, and inclusion using evidence-based practices. First, I have several years of experience mentoring students from different backgrounds within academia and more than a decade of experience mentoring youth in community organizations. I have been selected to lead mentoring efforts for both undergraduate and graduate students at the department and university level. Second, my research investigates how diversity impacts perceptions of, attitudes about, and collaboration with others. Using interviews, surveys, and experiments, I show that relationships are important for determining tolerance. This is good news: it means that interventions that encourage students to collaborate with one another are likely to succeed in promoting a collective identity. Additionally, pre- and post-test surveys implemented in my *Introduction to Comparative Politics* course show that students' identification as social scientists increased, a result consistent with establishing an applied political science identity. Third, my community engaged activities and projects significantly increase student understanding of different perspectives and their ability to work with people from different backgrounds. Qualitative reflections and pre- and post-test surveys in my *Representation, Identity, and Dissent* course demonstrate that even small community engaged activities produce meaningful improvements in students reported attitudes toward inclusion and diversity-related issues.

My work supporting students, building collective identity, and establishing community engaged partnerships is ongoing. I view supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion as a process of constant evolution and improvement. Beyond opportunities for students to get involved with my own research on identity-based representational inequality, I plan to continue and to strengthen my collaborations with students by creating a mentoring group where students can explore representation and identity-based inequality. I envision that students will be involved in various ways, from conducting independent and collaborative research to exploring connections to ongoing public policy issues. I also want to continue to strengthen my work on community engaged pedagogy as a way to increase equity and inclusion. While I cannot change the composition of campus portraits, I work intentionally to cultivate equity and inclusion in my classroom, on campus, and in the local community.

### 3 Teaching Experience Summary

Below I provide a summary of my significant teaching experiences. Further details regarding each experience can be found in my Teaching Reflections document ([click here](#)). Full university course evaluation documents are also available ([click here](#)).

Course	Semester	Role	Description	Highlight
Participation, Development, and Stability ( <a href="#">click for syllabus</a> )	Ant. Summer 2021	Instructor	300 level online seminar taught with synchronous and asynchronous components. Designed for 30 students. Development institutions and behavior including IR perspectives and American public policy. Considers intersection with conflict and security studies.	Short research article assignments accessible for medium sized courses with peer and self-review components. Community development project grounded in development theory. Group quantitative analysis project including information literacy emphasis.
Representation, Identity, and Dissent ( <a href="#">click for syllabus</a> )	Summer 2020	Instructor	300 level online seminar taught with synchronous and asynchronous components. 12 students. Integrated diverse literature on identities (ethnicity, gender, region, religion) and different forms of action (representation, protest, civil war, decentralization) into a cohesive course. Major community engagement project.	Asynchronous interactive blog component. Legislative policy-making simulation with research based briefing paper and interviews with community members. Student-led project partnering with a community organization to develop training to teach local youth about identity-based discrimination and how to contact their representatives about their concerns.
Introduction to Comparative Politics ( <a href="#">click for syllabus</a> )	Summer 2019	Instructor	100 level seminar with non-traditional high school students and non-majors; fulfills major requirement. 9 students. Introduced substantive comparative politics topics, writing skills, political data and methodology.	Redesigned the course. Guided students through the process of writing their own research article. Taught basic data science skills and provided an introduction to all subfields in political science. Emphasis on peer review and active, group based learning. Readings from diverse authors, regions, and approaches with reflective journals.

Course	Semester	Role	Description	Highlight
Immigration, Identity, and the Internet ( <a href="#">click for syllabus</a> )	Fall 2018	Co-Instructor	400 level seminar; fulfills writing intensive requirement. 20 students. Draws on American and comparative politics literature, contemporary pieces, and cross-disciplinary sociology and anthropology work.	Team taught. Redesigned course to scaffold writing assignments and to introduce new literature. Local policy simulation with qualitative interviews. Incorporated active learning and reflection. Individual writing tutorials with students. Reflective reading journals.
Political Protest and Violence	Spring 2018	Assistant in Instruction	300 level seminar and lecture; 50 students. Cross-disciplinary material from political science and sociology on individual and group-level motivations for protest participation and factors that make protests turn violent. Readings from American and comparative politics. Focus on formal theory methodology.	Taught one-third of the course. Redesigned course material and exam. Implemented group project. Taught media literacy. Mentored students on final paper assignment.
Research Workshop	Fall 2019, Spring 2020	Assistant in Instruction	Required third-year graduate student course. Workshop for third-year paper (like Master's theses), grant proposals, and dissertation proposals.	Provided critical feedback on writing, ideas, and methodology to complement instructor's feedback. Mentored individual students in the research process.
Party Politics	Spring 2020	Assistant in Instruction	Elective graduate student course. Contemporary readings related to comparative party politics.	Led writing workshops on research article writing topics. Provided critical feedback on writing, ideas, and methodology. Mentored individual students in the research process.
Introduction to Comparative Politics	Spring 2019	Assistant in Instruction	100 level lecture fulfilling major requirement. 100 students with discussion sections. Introduces the discipline and major topics in comparative politics.	Designed discussion section lesson plans for undergraduate discussion section leaders. Led team meetings reviewing lesson plans and assessment of lesson plan effectiveness. Mentored discussion section leaders on basic teaching skills.
Theories of Social Justice	Fall 2017	Assistant in Instruction	300 level lecture; 50 students. Political theory course introducing key perspectives on social justice.	Implemented exam improvement program in response to student performance on the first exam, which significantly raised students' grades and improved morale. Mentored students on theoretical paper assignment.

## Additional Teaching Interests

- Research Design and Methods ([click for syllabus](#)): Students write their own research article including data analysis. Emphasizes advanced theory development and research design. Provides an introduction to both qualitative and quantitative research methods.
- South Asian Politics: Takes a practical, evidence based approach to studying politics in South Asia. Many important topics are difficult to study in South Asia because of the complexity of and the difficulty in obtaining appropriate data. Examines the politics of development in the South Asian region through these data problems in order to help students develop data driven policy solutions to political issues.
- International Interventions in Civil Conflict: Bridges international relations and comparative politics literature to study the interaction between the international community and local leaders during civil conflict. Relies on a semester-long simulation where students take on the roles of either international or local actors during a civil conflict.
- Introduction to Formal Theory: Provides an introduction to rational choice and prospect theory with a focus on reading and interpreting simple formal models. Frequent use of simulations and games to make course concepts applicable and relevant. Not a course in mathematics, students will learn how formal theoretic logic can help to explain political phenomena.
- Meta-Analysis for Social Scientists: Introduces meta-analysis techniques for social scientists. Students will collaborate with me to conduct a meta-analysis on a topic of their choosing.
- Experimental Design: Teach basic aspects of designing an experiment and conducting experimental data analysis. Course will be designed around a collaborative effort to conduct an experiment as a class using an online survey panel.



## 4 Summary of Teaching Evaluation Record

In what follows, I provide a sample of quantitative and qualitative feedback I have received. Additional details can be found in my Teaching Reflections document ([click here](#)). I seek out and value feedback as a tool to help me improve my teaching. These evaluations take many forms including frequent “ticket out” assessments of a particular day’s teaching, self-administered midterm and end-of-course surveys, informal conversations with students, and university course evaluations.

Quantitative measures come from university-administered end-of-semester surveys, and those presented here are from courses where I had a significant instructional role. In all quantitative evaluation measures, I received among the highest scores.

### Representation, Identity, and Dissent, Instructor (Summer 2020)

5 is the highest score		
	Mean	Median
Learning	4.57	5.00
Organization	4.68	5.00
Enthusiasm	4.77	5.00
Individual Rapport	5.00	5.00
Classroom Environment	5.00	5.00
Technology Effectiveness	4.91	5.00

- “Professor O’Brochta was phenomenal and just a joy to take a class with him. He is very quick to respond, goes out of the way for his students, is adaptable, and gives very helpful feedback. He does everything in his power to help you understand and gain something from the course material and truly cares about the course and his students. The course is incredibly topical and does a great job of relating material to present day. It also does not matter what your educational background is, as my class was filled with students from all areas of study and we all kept up.”
- “This professor is so enthusiastic and knowledgeable. Instead of grading harshly, this professor takes a genuine interest in improving the skills of his students by offering in-depth comments and feedback.”
- “This course gave me invaluable experience in conducting political science research, and learning how to do social science research more generally. It also got me thinking about how different social movements require different elements of collective action and the emphasis of different identity-based characteristics. I will certainly apply this new knowledge of research methodologies, identity, representation, and dissent to future classes. I will also remember to engage with my community to make real change! Thanks so much for an awesome class!”
- “I’ve learned so much throughout these five weeks, it is hard to pick one thing. I think one element that I had not previously had experience in though is the elements

involved in the research paper. This process has been so helpful for me and I genuinely enjoyed constructing each of the elements to my paper. While I know that my first research article still has room for improvement and growth, I'm excited to bring the skills I gained from it to future classes. Thank you again for all of your feedback and support. I really appreciate it."

- "As someone who came into this course hesitant about political science, especially writing the research paper, I have a new found confidence and desire to explore different subjects to broaden my point of view. I really enjoyed and appreciate your style of teaching and the way you allowed us all to tailor our content through the RQ to personal interest. This kept me continually engaged, something that is not always the case with my other courses."

### Introduction to Comparative Politics, Instructor (Summer 2019)

5 is the highest score		
	Mean	Median
Learning	4.58	5.00
Organization	4.58	5.00
Enthusiasm	4.72	5.00
Individual Rapport	4.92	5.00
Classroom Environment	5.00	5.00

- "William is pedagogical prodigy. He has consistently demonstrated an unusually strong ability to teach and more importantly has the passion and drive to constantly improve himself. His teaching even exceeds many of my previous, tenured professors. William would be an incredible addition to any department. His presence should be viewed not as a cost but as a high dividends investment."
- "William does truly respect everyone and gives everyone opportunity to bring up his or her idea to the class."
- "This is the first politics related class that I have ever taken, and it was something I enjoyed doing, as well as actually learned a lot from. I became better at managing a heavy work load. I learned about what questions to ask and how to be more thorough when explaining something."
- "This has been the most rewarding political science course I have ever taken. William did a really good job of teaching and reinforcing [how to read and analyze articles]. I thoroughly enjoyed writing my article, as it was a very rewarding experience. This is the first political science course where I felt like a political scientist."
- "William was always on time grading and up front on what he expected of us. More political science classes need to use the canvas weighted grading system he used and updated daily. We were never kept in the dark with how we stood in the class and more professors and courses should take William's example."

### Immigration, Identity, and the Internet, Co-Instructor (Fall 2018)

5 is the highest score		
	Mean	Median
Clarity	4.67	5.00
Pace	4.62	5.00
Preparation	4.86	5.00
Time Management	4.71	5.00
Effectiveness	4.62	5.00
Availability	4.86	5.00
Classroom Environment	4.76	5.00

- “This truly is a writing intensive course but the feedback given will really help you improve your writing.”
- “It’s a lot of writing, but take your time with the assignments, you’ll learn a lot from them.”
- “The professors are amazing.” “Professor Parikh and William are both incredibly well informed on the issues.” “Professor Parikh and William are both really passionate and knowledgeable about the subjects being taught.”
- “Teachers also actively sought out feedback from students both at the beginning of the semester and in the middle and were always willing to meet for appointments.”
- “My favorite part has been the interactive activities that we do in class - they really help to engage me and bring to life the concepts we’ve been learning about.”
- “The conversational style of class allowed me to feel very comfortable talking to the professors.”

### Political Protest and Violence, Assistant in Instruction (Spring 2018)

5 is the highest score		
	Mean	Median
Clarity	4.54	5.00
Pace	4.81	5.00
Preparation	4.96	5.00
Time Management	4.92	5.00
Effectiveness	4.88	5.00
Availability	5.00	5.00
Classroom Environment	4.92	5.00

- “He had interesting lectures that he clearly know the information for and was really engaged in the class. He was always helpful when asked questions and was willing

to talk about his own experiences with collective action, which was really nice. He's definitely one of the best AIs I've ever had."

- "He was an awesome AI! His lectures were well structured, and it was easy to take notes. The activities in class he led were helpful for applying concepts we were learning about as well as engaging... He made the material we were learning about interesting, and I appreciated the effort he put into helping students."
- "William has been incredibly helpful and dedicated to the class. I was super impressed with how much he knew about the material, but also how invested he was in teaching it."
- "...remarkably good at lecturing given his age/experience. Clearly very smart and capable."
- "William was extremely helpful and responsive for both exam reviews and group projects."
- "William was a great TA and was readily available for answering questions and such outside of class hours."
- "He encouraged students to seek out his office hours for extra help. I attended his office hours and he provided constructive advice for the final paper and project."
- "I consulted with him about my final paper and he gave me very thorough and thoughtful feedback, which I greatly appreciate."
- "William (the TA) was amazing and extremely helpful. Very willing to meet with students and responds to emails very quickly."

### Research Workshop, Assistant in Instruction (Fall 2019, Spring 2020)

5 is the highest score		
	Mean	Median
Clarity	5.00	5.00
Pace	5.00	5.00
Preparation	5.00	5.00
Time Management	5.00	5.00
Effectiveness	5.00	5.00
Availability	5.00	5.00
Classroom Environment	5.00	5.00

- "You did a great job and I appreciate your comments."
- "He was very thoughtful about comments and gave good feedback on papers."

## **Party Politics, Assistant in Instruction (Spring 2020)**

No quantitative evaluations due to the coronavirus crisis.

- “I wanted to thank you for the considerably helpful comments. I’d love to continue my research on this subject, and in doing so, I believe your comments will immensely help me! So thank you again!”
- “William is very helpful in organizing group discussion.”
- “William was a great AI with a great insight. His suggestions in paper discussions were spoton and very helpful. He was accessible and ready to help with giving feedback.”

## **Introduction to Comparative Politics, Assistant in Instruction (Spring 2019)**

My time as an Assistant in Instruction for this course involved developing curriculum for undergraduate teaching assistants to deliver in discussion sections. Here I present evidence of teaching effectiveness based on conversations with the undergraduate teaching assistants and the instructor.

- Undergraduate teaching assistants reported that students felt that section time was more effective and more focused because of the structured activities provided in section.
- All lesson plans developed in Spring 2019 were again used to teach students in this course in Spring 2020.
- The course instructor was pleased with how well the lesson plans worked and the varied pedagogical techniques used to teach comparative politics topics in each lesson plan.

## **Theories of Social Justice, Assistant in Instruction (Fall 2017)**

The instructor for this course asked me only to grade exams and mentor students on their final theoretical paper. After low student performance on the first exam, I volunteered to create an exam improvement program that taught students how to write their answers more clearly and effectively. The student comments reflect their initial challenges with the exam and the success of this program.

- “I thought he was a very good TA. He’s very friendly and always made it clear when he was available to speak to during office hours. Again, I felt the grading procedures for the course exam were a bit overly harsh, but everything was returned to us promptly.”
- “He was very nice! Grading was super clear and helped me do better on next exam. Was available to talk and was great.”
- “The first exam was a little wishy washy, but after the first exam William really helped us to understand specific expectations for future exams!!”

## 5 Center for Teaching and Learning Recommendation



Washington University in St. Louis

CENTER FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING

September 10, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

I am delighted to write in support of William O'Brochta's outstanding teaching record. Having supported William through his professional development in teaching at Washington University in St. Louis, I write with the utmost confidence that William is an excellent teacher who will be a strong addition to your department.

I first met William while he was working towards completing the Teaching Citation program, a professional development program co-administered by the Graduate School and the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) at WashU. This program is geared towards providing formalized training in pedagogy to graduate students. It emphasizes the practice of scholarly teaching, which draws on evidence-based classroom strategies suggested by current educational research and that prioritizes metacognitive reflection. In finishing the program, William went well beyond the baseline requirements, participating in twelve workshops (e.g. "Collaborative Learning in Groups," "Incorporating Active Learning into Lectures," and "Motivating Student Learners"), and documenting three teaching experiences that he completed along the way through self-reflection, student feedback, and teaching observations. That William would choose to add to his significant workload and rigorous disciplinary training in order to ensure that he became an academic skilled not only in disciplinary research, but also in pedagogical practice, demonstrates his enduring commitment to effective college teaching throughout his graduate education.

In my role at the Center for Teaching and Learning, I frequently observe and provide feedback on teaching for graduate student instructors, as well as faculty. This summer, I was able to observe video of William teaching in his course, Political Science 3171: Representation, Identity, and Dissent. I'll say at the outset here that teaching an accelerated summer course that meets virtually five days a week, especially during a pandemic, is no easy feat. I found William's pedagogical plan however to be more than up for the task at hand. I was impressed at the ways in which William managed to engage his students early and often in large group discussion via Zoom, particularly in how he began with local examples (e.g. Fossil Free WashU Sit-ins, the Ferguson Uprising), which allowed students to bring their own experiences and expertise to the class discussion, before extending the conversation to less familiar contexts and issues. Throughout the discussions that I viewed, many different students added their voices and contributed as the class built knowledge together, an outcome of the kind of classroom community that William built despite the challenging teaching circumstances.

Another element that stood out in William's teaching over the summer was the highly effective structured small group work that students participated in in his course. For example, in one lively activity, students practiced putting together brief policy proposals, then renegotiated their proposals, voted on them, and finally worked in new small groups to implement plans for enacting the proposals that passed during the class vote. They worked collaboratively and cooperatively to discuss, research, write, deliberate, and strategize in a single session. Throughout, William expertly managed moving students in and out of small groups, providing directions, and offering guidance for those who were stuck. Students finished the activity with a ticket out that gave them the space to reflect on how that activity influenced their understanding of policy making, as situated in a particular geographical context. William did not just talk to his students about making policy, instead he gave them the opportunity through this meaningful, structured simulation to actually take part in the process.

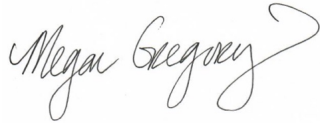
William exhibits not only the characteristics of a skilled instructor, but also the potential to be a leading voice in the field of disciplinary pedagogical research. As part of his participation in the Center for Teaching and Learning's program, William designed a scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL) project that he then implemented in one of his courses. In the project, "Writing a Research Article in an Introductory Political Science Course," William identified a particular disciplinary challenge: how to empower students in learning to write like political scientists in introductory political science courses. He reimaged a course structure and series of exercises that would provide a rich, scaffolded introduction to article writing for his students. He implemented his project with great success during his Summer 2019 section of Introduction to Comparative Politics and presented this research soon after at a disciplinary colloquium on teaching. Since then, William has engaged in further SoTL research, examining how to effectively integrate small scale community engagement opportunities into comparative politics courses. William shows in his work that even small scale, community-engaged activities built through partnerships with the local community in comparative politics courses can help students develop a more deeply grounded understanding of course material, promote civic-mindedness, and forge potentially lasting bonds between students and the local community. His research in this realm is on the cutting edge of pedagogical scholarship, as more universities, particularly those in urban areas like St. Louis, seek to build bridges between their students and the communities surrounding the university.

William has also been an active participant and leader in conversations about teaching in the wider academic community at WashU through his participation in the Center for Teaching and Learning's Graduate Student Advisory Council (GSAC). As the CTL staff liaison for this group, I observed William's terrific leadership and organizational skills during his three years on the Council. GSAC members serve two particular functions in the university community: first, they provide input to the Center's programming for graduate students, and secondly, they host a series

of pedagogy events open to all graduate students on campus. During his time on the Council, William worked with other members to increase outreach for community events. He also organized a number of successful sessions, including a panel discussion on “Integrating Community Engagement into Your Teaching” where he moderated a conversation between graduate students and representatives from The Gephardt Institute for Civic and Community Engagement. Through hosting this event, William promoted awareness of the kind of community engagement work that happens in his courses to instructors from across the university.

In summary, it is clear to me that William has a very bright academic future ahead and that he will be an exceptional addition to a political science department committed to educational excellence. I have no doubt that he will excel in his teaching responsibilities and contribute greatly to both pedagogical discussions on campus and those happening across your discipline.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Megan Gregory". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Dr. Megan Gregory  
Assistant Director, Educational Development  
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## 6 Faculty Teaching Evaluations



**Guillermo Rosas**  
*Associate Professor of Political Science*

August 5, 2019

William O'Brochta  
Department of Political Science  
Washington University in St. Louis

RE: Teaching Evaluation for Introduction to Comparative Politics on July 10, 2019

Dear William,

I observed about two-thirds of your Introduction to Comparative Politics class on July 10, 2019. The class was devoted to Globalization, Immigration, and Technology. I walked away with an extremely favorable view of your teaching ability. In short, you are extremely well organized, have an excellent rapport with students, and are creative in his use of dynamics that help students remain engaged in the discussion. I was impressed by your ability to speak to a mixed audience of undergraduate and high school students, and walked out with several ideas I will try in my own teaching.

You are extremely well organized. At the beginning of the class you laid out a map of the questions you wanted the class to focus on. You announced how you would divide up class time and made sure to budget enough time for class discussion, reading checks, and class dynamics. One class exercise involved the use of online data repositories, and in order to both provide a sense of tempo and to keep an eye on time, you projected on the smartboard a timer that indicated how long the activity would take. Throughout the class, I got the sense that every topic was covered as long as necessary and not a moment more.

You have an excellent rapport with students. This was obvious even as students arrived in the classroom. You knew every student by name and were comfortable moving around the classroom and trying to incorporate all students into class discussion. As a tracer of your ability to create a comfortable class environment, all students were willing to participate when prompted to do so. I was particularly impressed by the laudatory comments you had for the full class regarding previous written work they had turned in. You communicated to students that their effort was valuable and that they were on the right track to complete a research design exercise due at the end of the semester. I would have liked to see your written comments on such exercises, as I'm interested in seeing how you convey constructive criticism on an individual basis.

You displayed a lot of creativity in coming up with dynamics to help students work through concepts and ideas. In this particular class, you had prepared an exercise in which students interacted with data on remittances from migrant communities. Students worked in small groups by plotting data available at [www.migrationpolicy.org](http://www.migrationpolicy.org). Having students work together guarantees that their attention will not wander far from the task at hand, an outcome that would certainly obtain were they working individually. The group effort also allows far more input into deciding which countries to analyze. Following this class exercise, you directed a discussion concerning how technology affects migration and remittances flows across borders, which of course is linked to the concept of globalization. I would like to note here as well your decision not to display powerpoint slides. It was refreshing to see you using the board to keep track of your ideas, and it was even better to realize that students were not nervously trying to jot down the arbitrary content of some slide as if they were memorializing some immortal truth!

There certainly are a few areas in which further improvement is possible. Regarding classroom management, for example, I noticed that you had to start the class a bit late because three students had not yet arrived (eventually, two would show up after a few minutes). Managing expectations regarding the beginning of the class is extremely important, as students will tend to trickle in a little bit later every day if they realize there is no penalty for doing so. An occasional early pop quiz may help in this regard. On a different topic, I am not particularly enamored of brainstorming exercises. Though these in principle provide every student with a chance to participate in a discussion, student interventions tend to be anecdotal, and seldom build toward generalization or more abstract ideas. In addition, talkative students tend to monopolize the conversation, and this also lets some students off the hook.

I appreciate the opportunity to sit in in your classroom, and commend you for the professionalism and devotion to students with which you prepared your class.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Guillermo Rosas', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Guillermo Rosas  
314-935-7456  
[grosas@wustl.edu](mailto:grosas@wustl.edu)



# Washington University in St. Louis

## ARTS & SCIENCES

### Department of Political Science

To: William O'Brochta  
From: Sunita Parikh  
Re: Teaching Evaluation for Political Protest  
Date: 15 July 2018

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I very much enjoyed teaching Topics in Politics: Understanding Political Protest and Violence with you in Spring 2018. You were a great asset to the class and I know the students appreciated your contributions. What follows is an information evaluation of what I consider to be your strengths as well as areas in which you have room to improve.

*Overall*, your approach to the course was terrific. You were extremely well prepared, dedicated to your work, and alert to how your contributions were being received. You began on a high note by pushing me (gently!) to give you the syllabus far enough in advance that you could get a sense of the class before we met the students. When I expressed interest in your reactions to the syllabus and suggestions for improvement, you offered thoughtful suggestions. You also set up and managed Blackboard and kept me apprised when there were gaps in the material (which was my responsibility) which you needed me to address. In terms of the administration of the class, you did an excellent job.

*Teaching*: You chose three class days with topics of interest to you (I think there were three in total?). For two you introduced an article you had selected, while for the other you worked with the materials that had already been assigned. In both cases you did a very thorough job in presenting the material and building in space for Q&A. I would not have thought to select the article you did, but it complemented the existing readings well, and I will use it or something like it next time I teach the class. I also thought that the in-class exercises you had the students do for each class were very well conceived and provided a welcome break from lectures. They enjoyed doing them and the results were good; they clearly learned from them and it gave them a different perspective.

You shouldered the lion's share of the work in grading (you did all of it), meeting with the students about their assignments and group projects, and advising them on the projects. You managed the one group that had trouble successfully. I have no doubt you could have run them on your own, as you will do when you teach your own classes.

*Areas for improvement*: You really did a wonderful job in the course, but we can all improve. After 25 years of teaching I still have areas I work on. Here are two for you to think about: (1) Encouraging class participation through questions when the format is essentially a lecture is difficult. You tended to ask them questions based on the reading, which they should have done. But sometimes even when a student has done the reading,

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they are hesitant to step forward, especially if there seems to be a right or wrong answer. One way I have dealt with this is to ask questions about their experiences in a particular setting and then lead that conversation back to the pedagogical point. It allows them to talk about the topic from a position of authority. Think about how you might facilitate that for different topics (some won't allow it, but many will). If you can find ways to have them contribute from a position of confidence, you can draw out a wider range of students.

(2) You are an engaged, interested teacher. Your door is open to students. That is a very good thing. But especially when you are a junior teacher, whether a grad student or new faculty, students are more likely to eat up your time. Not all faculty are as open and welcoming as you are, and students will gravitate to you because they feel comfortable. It becomes important to set boundaries, because their needs will expand almost infinitely. You should set boundaries that you are comfortable with, but be mindful that for them, the best boundary is no boundary.

I hope this feedback is useful to you. I'd be happy to talk more about any of these points.



# Washington University in St. Louis

## ARTS & SCIENCES

### Department of Political Science

To: William O'Brochta

From: Sunita Parikh

Re: Teaching Evaluation for Immigration, Identity, and the Internet

Date: 22 May 2018

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I very much enjoyed teaching Immigration, Identity, and the Internet with you in Fall 2018. You were essentially my co-teacher in the course more than an assistant, and the course was measurably better because of your contributions. What follows is my evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses I perceived. The strengths far outweigh the weaknesses.

*Overall*, the course was stronger for the innovations you introduced. First, you managed the transition from Blackboard to Canvas, doing all the work and figuring out how to make Canvas work for the class. Second, your revisions to the course syllabus helped to keep it topical (a goal I have every time I teach this course) and to introduce topics I hadn't previously included. Third, you set up requirements for the course which were tailored to conform to its writing-intensive classification, but you also introduced peer review and group projects, which I had not utilized before.

*Teaching*: We split the class sessions more or less 50-50, and you were particularly good, as you were in our previous class, at developing in-class exercises that complemented the reading and had the students working together in groups. This was helpful because as a seminar, the dynamic among the students is particularly important. We had students at opposite ends of policy and ideological spectrums, and having at least some of them work together and interact regularly aided the quality of the discussion overall.

We shared the tutorials and feedback grading, as is appropriate in this kind of course, and your feedback to the students was helpful and of high quality. You graded the response papers which they were required to write for each session, which was a major task. The response papers meant that the students were more prepared throughout the semester than they have been in the past. I will definitely incorporate this aspect into my future teaching of the course, not least because it reinforces the writing element.

*Areas for improvement*: You really did a wonderful job in the course, but we can all improve. After 25 years of teaching I still have areas I work on. This is particularly challenging course because it is an interdisciplinary seminar with a range of writing requirements. Students read across multiple disciplines and they write papers ranging from quick responses to the reading to literature reviews in the style of our discipline to more creative final projects.

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My biggest takeaway from the way we taught the course this time is that having the response papers due every session is probably too great a burden on them. I'm not sure that they actually read closely in order to write the papers, and I think I'd rather have them read 80% and do most of that carefully than 100% in which less of it is careful. I'm not entirely sure how to address this, but it's something I plan to think about in more detail.

A second reaction I have to the way the class developed was that we increased the workload but I am not sure we focused enough on aspects that would help them write in the major to the same extent. I am of two minds on whether a group project is the best way to develop their writing skills in the way a writing in the major course is designed to do, at least the way I think about it. I think that having them work together and then write their own individual papers (which they also did) is the way to go.

As you can see, these are issues which have to do with the way we jointly taught the class, rather than your contributions per se. You did a fantastic job of shouldering a major responsibility in teaching with me.

I hope this feedback is useful to you. I'd be happy to talk more about any of these points.

## 7 Professional Development in Teaching

### Professional Development

- **University Teaching Citation, 2019:** I am the only political science graduate student in several years to complete the university sponsored teaching citation program. This is the highest, university-wide teaching training program. Completing the teaching citation requires at least three semesters of significant teaching experience coupled with a reflection and an assessment of these experiences. The goal is to approach teaching with a critical and analytic eye that then helps build your teaching philosophy. Each teaching experience must be evaluated, and I worked closely with professionals in the university teaching center throughout this process.
- **Graduate, Course Design Institute, 2018:** I enrolled in the university's first course design institute. During this month-long program, I learned the principles of best-practice course design, and I worked to create my own course following these principles. I also provided advice and support to others participating in the program from a wide variety of disciplines and levels of teaching experience.
- **Student, Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Course, 2019:** I was the first non-STEM student to participate in the university's semester-long Scholarship of Teaching and Learning course. This course was designed to provide a basic overview of SoTL as a discipline and to walk students through designing their first SoTL project in a collaborative environment.
- **SoTL Scholar Certification, 2020:** The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Scholar certification is the highest university-wide certification in the SoTL field. I successfully implemented a SoTL project, documented and reflected on the experience, and presented the work at the American Political Science Association Teaching and Learning conference.
- **Member, Graduate Teaching and Learning Community, 2016-present:** The graduate teaching and learning community is an informal group that meets monthly to listen to presentations about teaching-related topics. Topics range from interdisciplinary teaching to community engagement to student motivation.
- **Student, Introduction to Online Teaching Course, 2020:** I attended a three week course on online pedagogy that focused on designing both synchronous and asynchronous course content for the online environment.
- **Attendee, American Political Science Association Teaching and Learning Conference, 2018, 2019, 2020:** I attended the 2018, 2019, and 2020 TLC at APSA conferences and the 2020 standalone Teaching and Learning conference as part of the Research, Writing, and Information Literacy track.

**Publication:** "Track Summary: Teaching Research, Writing, and Information Literacy" (with Julia Marin Hellwege), 2020. *PS: Political Science & Politics* 53(3): 588–590.

- **Attendee, Assessment Institute, 2020:** I attended Assessment Institute at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI).
- **Attendee, Professional and Organizational Development (POD) Conference, 2020:** I attended the POD Network conference.
- **Student, Instructional Design Foundations and Applications, 2021:** I completed a course on instructional design theory offered by the University of Illinois.
- **Student, Learning Technologies Foundations and Applications, 2021:** I completed a course on designing learning technologies offered by the University of Illinois.
- **Student, Assessment for Learning, 2021:** I completed a course on assessment, educational data management, and evaluation offered by the University of Illinois.
- **Student, Leading for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Higher Education, 2021:** I completed a course on leadership toward issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion offered by the University of Michigan.

## Pedagogy Workshops

I have attended a number of advanced-level university teaching center hosted pedagogy workshops:

- **Developing Critical Reading Skills:** I emphasize learning disciplinary reading skills at the beginning of all of my courses in order to prepare students. This workshop provided me with some strategies to increase student motivation when reading and to mix-up the ways that I assess reading comprehension and understanding.
- **Facilitating Engaging Discussions:** Most of my courses are centered around productive discussions. I learned some of the theory behind discussions as a pedagogy and a number of new ways to have discussions that keep the classroom mood fresh and exciting.
- **Motivating Student Learners:** I aim to challenge my students, so motivation is important. This workshop discussed both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and suggested a number of theories that explain student motivation and how to increase it.
- **Collaborative Learning in Groups:** This workshop was about ways to introduce small and medium sized group activities into the classroom, and it was especially focused on larger classes. I used a number of these techniques in the Political Protest and Violence course.
- **Increasing Media Literacy:** Students increasingly need to know how to evaluate news sources for bias. This workshop helped me think of activities to incorporate into class related to course concepts, but that also taught media literacy skills. I have developed a newspaper article bias assignment that I used in the Political Protest and Violence course very successfully; I plan to continue including this subject in all of my courses.



- **Facilitating Challenging Conversations:** This workshop discussed how to handle “hot moments” during class sessions. We discussed techniques for avoiding such situations by encouraging a respectful classroom environment and strategies for debriefing and calming tensions during difficult classroom topics. These techniques were useful in the Immigration, Identity, and the Internet course, as many students were heavily invested in deeply personal topics.
- **Active Learning in Lectures:** Active learning is particularly hard to foster in large classroom settings. This workshop provided suggestions for how to create active moments to break-up lecture material.
- **Developing Effective Summative Assessments:** Summative assessments are a critical component of backwards course design. This workshop discussed effective summative assessment design strategies.
- **Inclusive Undergraduate Research Mentorship:** Research mentorship is a critical skill both in a science lab and when collaborating with students on political science research projects. This workshop discussed key principles for co-creating mentoring opportunities to maximize student benefit.
- **Small Teaching Book Group:** Participated in the first teaching center book group which discussed James Lang’s *Small Teaching* over the course of a semester.
- **Intentional Tech Book Group:** Participated in a teaching center book group discussing Derek Bruff’s *Intentional Tech* over the course of a semester.
- **Distracted Book Group:** Participated in a teaching center book group discussing James Lang’s *Distracted* over the course of a semester.

## 8 Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

My SoTL research focuses on making political science applicable and relevant to a broad and diverse group of students. This focus relates to my overall goal of training “applied political scientists.” I achieve this goal by guiding students through the research article writing process and involving them in community engaged activities.

Students often finish political science courses without feeling like they are a political scientist. They may be introduced to various topics in the discipline, but students are often just observers to the work that political scientists do. I argue that students of any grade level, major, or experience can benefit from becoming what I call applied political scientists: individuals who know disciplinary skills, collaborate with one another, and apply their skills to relevant public policy problems. Becoming an applied political scientist teaches students how to use skills from the discipline to address everyday problems and questions. In other words, the discipline of political science is a way for students to learn important writing, critical thinking, collaboration, and career-related skills.

### Working Through the Political Science Research Process

Guiding students through the political science research process is one of my signature pedagogies. The research process involves exposure to all of the key aspects of political science: from developing research questions, to evaluating research design options, to presenting and providing feedback on work. The exact ways in which students engage with the research process vary depending on the type of course I am teaching. In upper-level seminar courses, I ask students to complete a full research article. This is more difficult in some larger introductory courses, so I emphasize exposing students to each part of the process. Students can work in small groups or through in-class activities to be conversant in each component of research without having to write a full research article on their own. The broad exposure to each facet of political science and the collaboration and connection to public policy that this exposure brings is my main goal.

To evaluate the effectiveness of this approach, I conducted research in my Introduction to Comparative Politics course where students had almost no prior exposure to the research article process. My motivation for choosing this course was two-fold: first, if the process is an empowering force, then the best place to start is in introductory courses in order to get students excited about and invested in political science. Second, by teaching these concepts to mostly inexperienced non-majors and assessing their ability to perform article writing related tasks, I can set-up a pipeline where article writing is taught across different courses and expectations build on each other.

Using a pre- and post-test design coupled with a quantitative evaluation of student writing performance, I found that students in an introductory course can successfully navigate the research article writing process and do so quite proficiently. Further, student interest in political science, identification as a social scientist, and willingness to work hard to understand political science concepts significantly increased. My goal moving forward is to establish a series of courses where the research article writing process is taught in order to better prepare students for senior capstone experiences, to improve the quality of student writing, and to provide continuity between courses that encourages and supports students

to become political science majors.

### **Small-Scale Community Engagement**

One of the most important parts of teaching students to be applied political scientists is emphasizing the relevance of doing political science research to public policy problems. Along with working through the research article writing process, my students develop policy briefing papers about their research findings and engage in legislative policy simulations that reveal how research can be applied to make improvements to policy. Since I teach comparative politics, many of the relevant, public policy connections we make seem to apply only to countries about which students may be interested, but where they have little personal investment.

To address this issue, I conceptualize and assess how community engagement can be employed in comparative politics courses. Community engagement is critically important for teaching students about diversity and inclusion, for establishing meaningful relationships with public policy practitioners, and for applying student research to generate meaningful community service. In contrast to the limited existing work on comparative community engagement that emphasizes study abroad trips and extended volunteer placements, I investigate the effectiveness of small community engagement projects at increasing the public policy relevance of comparative politics theories. Small scale community engagement projects are much easier to integrate into existing courses and allow me to design courses that include both research article writing and meaningful community experiences.

I designed three types of small scale community engagement experiences ordered in terms of student investment and implementation complexity that I implemented in my Representation, Identity, and Dissent course. For each type, I used pre- and post-test surveys and reflections to assess both students' improved ability to relate comparative politics theories the course and to public policy topics and their understanding of people with different backgrounds and experiences. First, students worked alone on three small assignments where they learned about their community. These assignments included developing a community identity profile describing different identity-based groups in their area, attending a community meeting, and identifying public policy problems in the community and organizations working to address these problems. Next, students formed groups and went into the community and conducted qualitative interviews and compiled data on a public policy problem related to the research articles they were writing. Students relied on these data as evidence during an in-class legislative policy-making simulation. Finally, students participated in a whole class project to develop a training designed to help local youth working for a community partner identify issues of identity-based discrimination that they were experiencing and develop strategies for making their voice heard.

I found that each of these types of community engaged projects had major benefits for students' ability to relate course content to their lives, to understand how political science relates to public policy, and to better understand people from diverse backgrounds. In the future, I would like to expand this intervention to assess other potential outcomes that small-scale community engagement projects impact.

## Research Output

- “Writing a Research Article in an Introductory Course” (R&R).
- “Research Articles, Not Research Papers: Empowering Students Through Research Writing,” forthcoming in *Handbook of Political Research Pedagogy* published by Palgrave Macmillan (Dan Mallison, Julia Marin Hellwege, and Eric Loepp, eds.).
- “Writing a Research Article in an Introductory Course,” APSA Teaching and Learning Conference, 2020.
- “Small Scale Community Engagement in Comparative Perspective,” APSA, 2020.

## 9 Service, Curriculum, and Program Development

- **Teaching Political Science Workshop Series (founder), 2019-present:** I founded and lead a monthly workshop on teaching pedagogy open to all graduate teachers in the political science department. The goal of these workshops is to provide peer mentoring to new teachers, to provide instruction on basic pedagogy, and to develop interest in teaching among graduate students in the department.

**Publication:** “Graduate Student Peer Teaching Mentoring” (with Bryant Moy), forthcoming at *The Political Science Educator*.

- **Department of Political Science Pedagogy Specialist, 2020:** I was asked by the Department of Political Science to develop best-practice pedagogy for faculty transitioning to teaching online. Started by identifying faculty needs and compiling applicable resources. Developed and presented a guide to teaching best practices including syllabus language, strategies for adapting in-person teaching methods to an online format, and an extensive advice section. Consulted with individual faculty members on pedagogical issues.
- **Teaching Center Graduate Student Advisory Council, 2017-2020:** I served as the Chair of this group from 2018 to 2019. The group advises the university teaching center on programming, new initiatives, and reports graduate student teaching concerns. Members of the group plan once monthly teaching and learning community events focusing on a variety of pedagogy topics that are open to all graduate students and postdocs.
- **Teaching Center Orientation Mentor, 2018-present:** I have been asked to lead the political science teaching orientation workshop for new Assistants in Instruction for the last several years. During this session, I review expectations for graduate teachers in the department and introduce some basic pedagogy tools that will help graduate students get started teaching. I also provide my perspective about teaching political science.
- **University Graduate Advisory Council, 2018-2019:** This committee consists of department Directors of Graduate Studies and a graduate student from each department in the graduate school. We work on various cross-department graduate student issues including teaching.
- **University Teaching and Professional Development Committee, 2018-2019:** This committee consists of a small group of Directors of Graduate Studies and graduate students tasked with assessing graduate teaching throughout the graduate school. During my time on this committee, we initiated a review of department teaching mentoring programs to help encourage departments to take a more active role in teacher training.

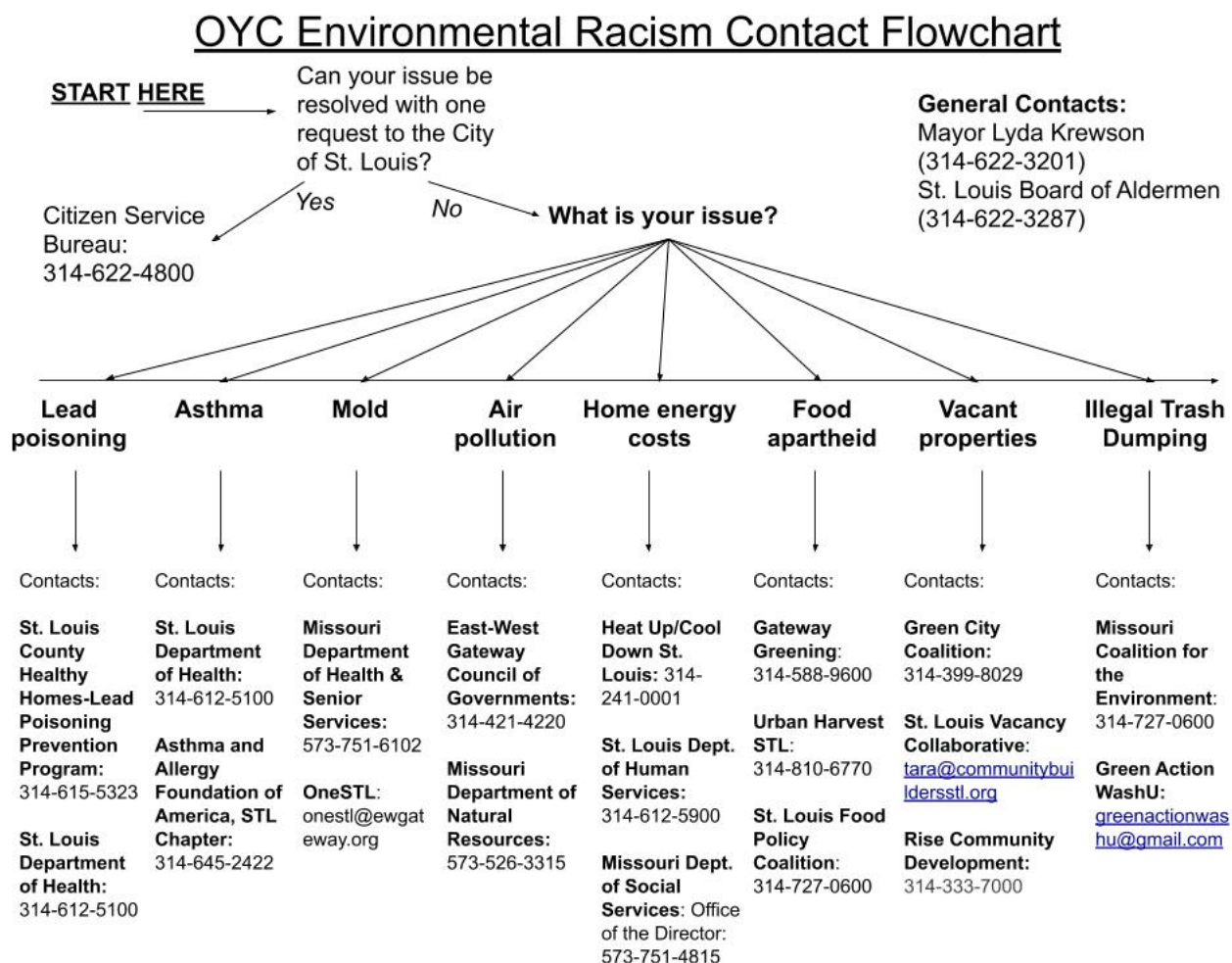
## 10 Artifacts

### Published Reflections and Interviews on Teaching:

- Invited contribution discussing my SoTL research ([click here](#))
- Interview with the Center for Teaching and Learning ([click here](#))

### 10.1 Engaged Learning: Community Engaged Project Flowchart

This flowchart is part of the training materials that students developed in my Representation, Identity, and Dissent course during our community engaged project. The project worked with a local community partner to help youth identify issues of environmental racism and to make their voices heard about these issues to local representatives. Students developed a four part training program that involved teaching youth about environmental racism issues in St. Louis, helping them identify an issue relevant to them, using this flowchart to determine who to contact to address the issue, and coaching them through actually making contact with local government or a non-profit organization in order to successfully discuss their issue with a community leader.



## 10.2 Activity Example: Policy Day Simulation

Each of my courses includes a simulation activity designed to help students understand the policy making process. Before engaging in the simulation, students complete individual and group assignments to ensure that the simulation is grounded in political science research.

The exact simulation design varies depending on the course: in Political Protest and Violence, students re-created the government response to an actual protest event; in Immigration, Identity, and the Internet, students debated a policy as members of the St. Louis Board of Alderman; and in Introduction to Comparative Politics and Representation, Identity, and Dissent, students employed different versions of a legislative bargaining process.

The simulation format for my Representation, Identity, and Dissent course is shown here. Prior to the simulation, students prepared an individual briefing paper that spoke to the policy implications of the research article they were writing and worked in a group to conduct interviews and find quantitative data to support their policy proposal.

Policy Day Schedule/Format  
Representation, Identity, and Dissent  
William O'Brochta  
Summer 2020

Country Selection (11:00-11:05):

- William announces the country.

Group Country Research (11:05-11:15):

- Groups have 10 minutes to research the selected country and to collectively decide on a policy proposal based on the group's policy briefing papers and data report.

Group Policy Presentation Preparation (11:15-11:20):

- Each group will prepare a slide presentation describing their policy proposal.

Policy Presentations (11:20-11:35):

- Each group will have three minutes to present their policy proposal to the other groups using the visual aid created earlier.
- Groups not presenting should take notes to see what common themes might exist between policy proposals.

Group Strategy Meeting (11:35-11:45):

- Each group will have ten minutes to incorporate ideas from other groups into a revised policy proposal.
- All group members should write down the revised policy proposals and be prepared to share.

Negotiation (11:45-12:00):

- One member from each group will pair up with one member from each of the other two groups. This group of three will review their revised policy proposals and try to settle on a final compromise that satisfies the policy goals of all three groups. Each of these new groups will write-up their revised policy proposal on a slide (10 minutes).
- Each group will present their revised proposal to the class (5 minutes).

Vote (12:00-12:05):

- The class will vote on whether to adopt each of the three policy proposals. To pass, a proposal must receive at least a majority votes.

Implementation (12:05-12:15):

- Everyone will pick a group of three people you have not worked with in this simulation.
- Within these three groups, one group will be assigned to develop a timeline for implementation, one group will be assigned to develop a (guesstimated) budget listing costs to implementing the policy, and the third group will develop a plan to measure whether the policy was successful.

Conclusion (12:15-12:25):

- Each group briefly presents their part of implementation.

Recap (12:25-12:35)



## 10.3 Pedagogy Resource: Online Teaching Resources Guide

As the Department of Political Science Pedagogy Specialist, I created a 50+ page resource for instructors teaching online for the first time. This resource includes sections on designing syllabi and teaching best practices. I have included the table of contents and first few pages here, [click here for the full version](#).

### Online Teaching Resources

Department of Political Science  
Washington University in St. Louis  
Written By: William O'Brochta  
Updated: August 13, 2020

This resource was created to aggregate content that may be helpful when thinking about teaching during the fall 2020 semester. There are five sections:

1. Syllabus Language: Describes potential policies to include in syllabi for fully online courses.
2. Teaching Best Practices: Describes best practices for fully online courses.
3. Courses with an In-Person Component: Details syllabus language and best practices specifically for courses that will meet in-person or have an in-person meeting option.
4. Graduate Student AIs: Discusses working with graduate student AIs in your course.
5. Contact List: Provides a list of offices to contact for help with various teaching related tasks.

Instructors are encouraged to contribute to this document in two ways:

1. Add resources to the Box folder titled Teaching Resources. This folder is organized by topic. Please add PDFs so that everyone can view the resources.
  - Add example syllabi or example course policies to the "02 Examples" folder contained in "01 Syllabus Language."
  - Add PDF copies of teaching best practice articles or resources to the appropriate folder in "02 Teaching Best Practices," "03 Courses with In-Person Component," or "04 Graduate Student AIs" as applicable.
2. Submit questions or tips using the Qualtrics link ([click here](#)).
  - Questions or tips submitted using the Qualtrics link will be incorporated into updated versions of this document.

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## Syllabus Language

Audience: This section is meant to provide a list of topics to consider adding to your syllabus. Each topic is followed by a discussion of why the topic is useful and use cases for seminar and lecture courses.

### Participation

- Why to Include: Many courses incorporate participation as part of the course grade.

### Considerations

- Asynchronous:
  - Course login: Instructors can check whether students have logged into Canvas to view asynchronous material. Instructors interested in doing this should assess Canvas' participation tracking features before the semester starts or design easy ways for students to confirm they have participated.
    - Example: At some point in a recorded lecture, direct students to complete a one question survey, the link to which you provide.
  - Discussion boards: Instructors can evaluate both the number and quality of discussion board posts. These expectations should be clearly detailed in the discussion board prompt and in the syllabus.
  - Group work: Small group assignments with tangible outcomes --- peer review for example --- can be assigned outside of synchronous class time. Students working in groups can come up with their own synchronous or asynchronous way to complete the assignment.
  - Content dropbox: To foster connections between course content and news and/or popular culture, instructors can create a way for students to submit links to relevant articles and videos.
  - Quizzes/small assignments: Short assessments during or following asynchronous course components can be used to assess participation. These assessments can take different forms: reading check quizzes, reading journals or blogs, quizzes about video content, et. cetera. Instructors can choose whether these assessments are part of a participation grade or are evaluated as a separate course component.
- Synchronous:
  - Attendance: See section on Attendance below.
  - Camera and microphone use: Not all students have access to a camera and microphone that they can use during synchronous classes, and some students with these technologies may feel uncomfortable using them for whatever reason. Consider surveying students to ask about their technology capabilities before the semester starts. Early in the semester, consider asking students to meet with you individually or in small groups. Students are more likely to turn on their camera and microphone in this environment. You can also encourage students to participate with their camera and microphone on, though requiring use of these technologies is not recommended.

- Discussions: Instructors who are interested in grading discussions based on the quality of student contributions may want to announce this ahead of a given discussion so that students can adequately prepare. Students without the ability to participate verbally can use the chat function. These discussions are often more equitable if everyone is encouraged to speak a certain number of times during the discussion.
  - Example: We are now going to conduct what I call a three-penny discussion. During the next 15 minutes, everyone (including myself) has three opportunities to contribute to the discussion and everyone should do their best to participate at least twice. You can also type your contribution into the chat if you would like. I will give everyone two minutes to brainstorm this discussion question before we start.
- Breakout rooms: When using breakout rooms, instructors can set an explicit expectation for what work is due at the end of students' time in the breakout room. It is often best if student output is in writing. Students who complete the assigned work would receive credit for participating.
  - Example: You will have 8 minutes to discuss this topic in breakout rooms. During this time, answer these three questions in writing as a group and be prepared to share when our breakout room time is over.
- Tickets out/quizzes/poll questions: Instead of requiring vocal participation during synchronous classes, instructors can ask students to complete short quizzes, discussion prompts, or poll questions at various points in the class and collect and evaluate these short assignments.
- Mid-semester evaluations: Because it is more difficult for students to assess their participation in an online course, instructors may wish to provide a short, written evaluation of student participation halfway through the semester. This evaluation can state in general terms how well the student can expect to do if he/she continues their current level of participation throughout the semester. It can also signal to students whose participation needs to improve.
  - Example: You are on track to do well in class engagement. You have contributed during synchronous class and consistently make good quality comments on blogs. I always appreciate your willingness to jump in during group discussions. Keep up the good work, keep participating, and you will do well in this component of the course.
- Personalized student participation policies: Students taking online courses are likely doing so in different environments, some of which are more conducive to participation than others. One way to address this potential inequity is to develop a participation policy and to offer an option for students to propose a personalized participation policy that is substantively similar to the policy you developed, but that works better for a particular student. Once you approve a student's policy, you can ask them to evaluate their own adherence to their policy throughout the semester.

### Examples

- I hope that class time will be a productive space to discuss readings, work in groups to complete activities, teach your peers, and relate the course to your life experiences. Class engagement goes beyond simply showing up for synchronous class; while I will take

## 10.4 Sample Syllabus: Representation, Identity, and Dissent

This is a highly abbreviated sample syllabus. Full syllabi for a variety of courses are available on my website ([click here](#)).

### Representation, Identity, and Dissent

Note: This is a course in Comparative politics and International Relations with an American public policy emphasis. The course has no pre-requisites and is ideal for juniors and seniors across a variety of majors. This course was taught online with synchronous and asynchronous components, but can also be taught in person.

**Course Description:** How do people express their political opinions? Political opinions form along many identity-based lines: ethnicity, religion, language, region, or gender. We explore and synthesize research on different forms of identity to find what makes some identities politically relevant and what it takes for identity groups to gain political representation. For unrepresented groups, we investigate how individuals express their identities outside of government and how a lack of representation fosters dissent. Our ultimate goal is to develop theories connecting identity and action in order to predict future cases of representation and dissent. Our focus will encapsulate theories and results from both American and Comparative politics, and we will work to emphasize the public policy relevance of our work.

**Course Objectives:** At the completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Describe and make connections between different forms of identity and action.
2. Think critically to identify characteristics of identities that cause them to become politically relevant.
3. Connect forms of action by arranging them on a continuum. Use this model to explain how actors select a type of action.
4. Given situational factors, use theory to predict individual and collective responses to identity threat.
5. Summarize differences in conceptions of identity and action to better understand and appreciate diverse perspectives.
6. Apply your knowledge to personal and community engaged situations.
7. Develop your knowledge about the research article writing process and demonstrate your capacity to write your own article and to help others revise their work.

### Grading and Policies:

I work to establish a collaborative classroom where students can learn together and co-create impactful work. My grading policies rely on three features: clear rubrics, feedback, and scaffolding. I give students all rubrics on the first day of the semester. Students receive feedback from me during in-class activities and draft submissions before submitting to me for a grade. Students also peer review their own work and work of their classmates. I offer opportunities to re-write work in order for students to incorporate feedback. This is part of my scaffolding process, where major assignments are spread out during the semester and

feedback from one assignment is incorporated into each subsequent assignment. I ask a lot of my students, and their hard work translates into high grades. My course policies also follow this student as colleague and partner approach.

## Assignments:

Below are a list of the major assignments throughout the semester. The assignment list usually contains full descriptions and rubrics for each assignment.

- Blog (12%): We will create online blogs updated before each class. Each blog should include a very short summary, a reaction to the reading question of the day in light of what you learned in the reading, and a reflection relating the reading to life experiences or current events.
- Class Engagement (10%): I invite you to help me cultivate an inclusive classroom climate that provides everyone with many ways to engage with the course. Class engagement involves both participating and supporting other students in their learning. Beyond attending class and participating, I will ask you to serve as a notetaker several times throughout the semester. Notetaking is an excellent skill that helps you retain information from class and helps to support students who may have been absent or who are interested in learning different perspectives about a day's class. During our asynchronous classes, we will continue our conversation online by commenting on other students' blogs at least twice.
- Policy Day (15%): Applied political scientists think carefully about how their work applies to public policy problems. Our policy day is designed to share what you believe are the most important insights from your research with the class and to act as an expert trying to convince the class of your findings. There are two written components to policy day: a group data report and an individual briefing paper. The briefing paper helps you learn professional memo writing and gives you practice articulating your point clearly and convincingly. The data report asks you to work in a group to gauge the feasibility of your policy proposal by interviewing community members and collecting quantitative data. On Policy Day itself, we will engage in a legislative simulation where everyone works in teams to propose and negotiate legislation based on your policy briefing paper and data report.
- Community Experiences (5%): The course includes several short assignments and surveys that help you synthesize course content through the lens of community involvement. These assignments include learning more about the demographic make-up of your community, investigating local community organizations, attending community events, and engaging with our community engaged project. The project works with a local community partner to apply our knowledge from the course to benefit public policy and to address local problems. Our community engaged project will also provide opportunities for us to learn from our community partner.
- Research Article: We are working as applied political scientists in this course. Many of the skills taught in this course may be new to you, and you may find them difficult. Rest assured that tenured academics who have been writing research articles for years

still struggle throughout the research process. We will approach the research process in manageable steps and work together to maximize everyone's success. Our goal is to not only learn more about what career political scientists do, but also to think carefully about how the skills you are learning transfer to different careers.

- Research Question (6%): Your research article will address a research question: a problem that you feel needs to be addressed or a puzzle you have discovered. You will use this research question to write all the other components of your research article, though it is perfectly okay if your question shifts slightly as the course progresses. You must choose a research question closely related to tying together the concepts of identity and action. For this assignment, write a *one sentence* research question followed by a one paragraph description of your question.
- Annotated Bibliography and Literature Review (12%): A literature review serves an important purpose in a research article, but that purpose is distinct from summarizing all relevant literature about your topic. Literature reviews focus the reader's attention on research that directly attempts to address your research question; literature reviews engage the research and do not summarize it. The annotated bibliography is the place to summarize work that you think is relevant for your literature review, theory, and background information for your research article. Your annotated bibliography should contain at least eight scholarly sources cited in APSA format with a several sentence explanation of how each cited paper addresses your research question. Your literature review should be three to five pages, not including the annotated bibliography or references section.
- Theory (15%): The theory section of your article should rely on previous literature to build an argument resulting in your hypothesis. Your theory must be related to a major theory of identity or action either that we read in class or that you found on your own. You should use this existing theoretical argument as a starting point for your theory and provide an innovation on this theoretical argument. The theory section itself should be three to five pages not including references, but you should also include a revised literature review before your theory section. You need not include your annotated bibliography.
- Research Design (15%): The research design section describes how you plan to test your hypothesis. Political scientists use many different research designs, and we will discuss a multitude of methodological approaches in this class. For your research design part of your research article, you should propose a primary and an alternative research design. The primary design should be the absolute best and most appropriate research design regardless of time or money. You should supplement this discussion by specifying a plausible research design that you could conceivably carry out using existing empirical data. Your research design should be at least three to five pages not including references, and should first include your literature review and a revised theory.
- Research Article (10%): Your research article should combine revised versions of your literature review, theory, and research design sections along with an abstract, introduction, and conclusion. You can choose to insert a "results" section

describing what you expect to find if you had completed the analysis. Your research article should be at least twelve pages, not including references, and read like a cohesive manuscript. You should edit and revise all parts of your article as best as possible (I know you are under a time constraint!).

## Topics and Readings:

Below is an abbreviated schedule for the semester. This schedule usually contains goals and questions to consider for each class, reading and assignments due on the date of a given class, and assignments assigned. I have made a conscious effort to represent gender and ethnic/regional diversity of scholarship in these readings.

### Unit 1: Foundations of Identity

- Goals and Questions: What is identity? How is political science research relevant? Workshop on research questions, finding sources, and writing literature reviews.
- Assignments: Beginning of course survey. Community identity profile. Research question.
- Selected Readings: Hoover Green, Amelia. 2013. "How to Read Political Science: A Guide in Four Steps."  
Htun, Mala. 2004. "Is Gender like Ethnicity? The Political Representation of Identity Groups." *Perspectives on Politics* 2(3): 439-458.

### Unit 2: Identity as Politically Relevant

- Goals and Questions: What is political relevance? How and when do people strategically deploy identities?
- Assignments: Research question peer review. Field observation.
- Selected Readings: Cederman, Lars-Erik, Andreas Wimmer, and Brian Min. 2010. "Why do Ethnic Groups Rebel? New Data and Analysis." *World Politics* 62(1): 87-119.  
Claassen, Christopher. 2016. "Group Entitlement, Anger, and Participation in Inter-group Violence." *British Journal of Political Science* 46(1): 127-148.

### Unit 3: Connecting Forms of Action

- Goals and Questions: Why do people resort to violence to uphold an identity? Why is representation important? Workshop on theoretical arguments.
- Assignments: Midterm synthesis. Literature review and peer review. Policy day briefing paper and group data report. Policy day simulation.
- Selected Readings: Asamoah-Gyadu, J. Kwabena. 2007. "'Get on the Internet!' Says the LORD': Religion, Cyberspace, and Christianity in Contemporary Africa." *Studies in World Christianity* 13(3): 225-242.



Meier, Kenneth J., and Jill Nicholson-Crotty. 2006. "Gender, Representative Bureaucracy, and Law Enforcement: The Case of Sexual Assault." *Public Administration Review* 66(6): 850-860.

#### Unit 4: Predicting Action

- Goals and Questions: How can we create a unified model to encompass all types of action? Applying course content to local public policy problem. Workshop on research designs.
- Assignments: Theory section and peer review. Form task groups and work on community engaged project.
- Selected Readings: Module on community engaged project.

Herrera, Yoshiko. 2005. *Imagined Economies: The Sources of Russian Regionalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

#### Unit 5: Public Policy Solutions

- Goals and Questions: What happens after identity groups gain representation? What is the role of allied groups in supporting diversity? Workshop on abstracts, introductions, and conclusions.
- Assignments: Research design and peer review. Finalize community engaged project. Research article roundtable presentations. End of course survey.
- Selected Readings: O'Brien, Diana Z., Matthew Mendez, Jordan Carr Peterson, and Jihyun Shin. 2015. "Letting Down the Ladder or Shutting the Door: Female Prime Ministers, Party Leaders, and Cabinet Ministers." *Politics and Gender* 11(4): 689-717.  
Klandermans, Bert, Jacquelin van Stekelenburg, Marie-Louise Damen, Dunya van Troost, and Anouk van Leeuwen. 2014. "Mobilization Without Organization: The Case of Unaffiliated Demonstrators." *European Sociological Review* 30(6): 702-716.