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## Teaching Portfolio

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# 1 Teaching Philosophy Statement

Early in my first semester teaching, I scheduled individual meetings with students to review drafts of their theory papers in *Theories of Social Justice*. Many of the students' theories contained summaries of class readings, but were missing both their own theoretical contribution and perspective. When asked about their writing process, several students commented that they chose to summarize because they did not see what they could contribute to existing work and they did not think that their interests and life experiences were relevant. This observation has led me to focus on cultivating student investment in the research process in all my classes and helping students understand the practical and policy implications of the research they interact with and conduct themselves.

I believe that students bring valuable perspectives and interests to political science that they can use to engage with research and to further develop skills broadly applicable to their lives. With confidence in the research process and motivation from peers and myself, a neuroscience major brought scientific perspectives to a theory of political misinformation, a finance major was excited to fit his research into existing knowledge about unionization data, and a football player observed parallels between team behavior and ethnic groups. These unique outlooks were deeply relevant to students in both introductory and advanced courses, providing them motivation to study political science topics in-depth. My chief goal in the classroom is to help students find how they can contribute to political science research relevant to real world problems and important to their own values and career goals.

The first step toward this goal is to foster a culture of deep inquiry and excitement in substantive political science topics. This means reading actual research articles from a diverse group of scholars so that students can see the range of research questions being asked, methodological approaches being employed, and diversity of scholars conducting research. To motivate students to connect with research, I devote time in each course to helping them develop strategies to read and analyze research articles. Students then engage with research before each class and reflect about substantive and research methods topics in a two-page reading journal. Reading journals often provide sparks of inspiration for students to relate personal experiences and perceptions of policy problems to the course. When reading a piece about gender and multi-ethnic violence for one upper-level writing intensive *Immigration, Identity, and the Internet* class, students argued whether ethnicity was always one's primary identity. One student's argument about her grandfather's identity prompted her to color her future assignments with this perspective and to interview him as part of her research article.

Engaging with research and making broad connections motivates students to want to start the research process themselves. Students have passions and curiosities about the political world that in-depth investigation can help them explore. Reading journals allow us to efficiently review foundational concepts and quickly move into activities designed to show students how individual pieces of research connect to broader topics and have real world consequences. Once one group of students learned how individual utility thresholds can lead to a collective action cascade in a mid-level *Political Protest and Violence* class, they were excited to propose solutions to tackle an ongoing dispute between environmental protesters and government leaders. I encourage this practical application of political science by devoting a substantial part of all my classes to research design workshops that culminate

in students producing original draft research articles and discussing their policy implications.

Students in all my classes tackle the challenge of reading and producing research together; semesters are structured to use substantive readings to slowly introduce research article writing for students in introductory courses and research methods for students in upper-level courses. During frequent in-class methods workshops, students work in teams offering suggestions to improve each others' work and making connections between the diverse set of research questions, theories, and research designs students are working on. This type of group work emphasizes substantive topics and shows how they can be applied in different contexts. Each team then promotes the work of its members by highlighting effective strategies different group members are employing, culminating in a gallery walk around the classroom where students learn what other groups have identified as best practices. This reflects my fundamental belief that everyone, regardless of course level or student major, has valuable contributions to make to others' work.

Finally, I work with students to understand the personal and political impact of political science research. A major part of class is devoted to making comparative research tangible for students. In my upper-level *Representation, Identity, and Dissent* course, students work through simple activities to illustrate the everyday applicability of comparative politics theories like profiling the diversity in their community, attending a community meeting, and simulating live-streaming a demonstration. Each of my courses also has a major simulation and community engagement activity meant to tie research into policy. The classroom turned into a negotiation when student representatives of European nations debated foreign relations with China while the class acted as reporters, writing up a newspaper article on the proceedings from different country perspectives. St. Louis City Aldermen convene to debate a bill on providing translation services to Bosnian immigrants using arguments from interviews with local Bosnian service agencies. Students distill their research articles into policy suggestions that they then investigate through interviews with community leaders and negotiate in a legislative session. These activities get students to understand the implications of research and how it can inform their engagement as citizens.

I actively evaluate and adapt my teaching practices with the goal of promoting student investment in political science research and its practical consequences in a way that resonates with students in courses at different levels. Student feedback and involvement in course decision-making promotes a supportive learning environment. In addition to inviting formal student evaluations and colleague observations, I solicit student feedback at least twice per week using informal "ticket out" index cards. After receiving feedback, I discuss relevant changes with students so that they are invested in the learning process. My teaching research is focused on evaluating two techniques to make the discipline relevant and exciting for students: research article writing and community engagement. In integrating research article writing into *Introduction to Comparative Politics*, I show that students with little background in political science can successfully conduct research. My most recent work adds small community engagement projects to *Representation, Identity, and Dissent*, expanding students' appreciation of diversity and illustrating the policy implications of their research articles. By using evidence-based practices to evaluate the effectiveness of my teaching philosophy, I hope to challenge students to find their own voice in the discipline and to learn how they can make connections from their work to local and global societal problems.

## 2 Diversity and Inclusion Statement

Representational inequality is pervasive, longstanding, and can only be successfully addressed in academia through a compassionate, holistic approach. I have been a volunteer educator and mentor for a wide range of youth and young adults as they work on community-based conservation projects. We often talk about aspirations, college, and careers. While serving in this capacity at the Missouri Botanical Garden, I met and worked with Chris, a hard-working and motivated young man who had aspirations of learning Spanish, a popular language in Jamaica, because he wanted to travel there. Chris' high school afforded him neither of those opportunities: no foreign languages were offered, meaning that Chris both could not follow his desire to travel nor could he attempt to enroll in most colleges, which require high school foreign language. Students who arrive at college having surmounted these challenges often find that their peers and instructors have had different experiences and that their perspectives seem not to fit within this system. My objective as a scholar and as a teacher is to establish an environment of mutual support by creating a collective political scientist identity, empowering students to relate political science to their own lives and to issues they care about, and setting up appropriate support structures for each student.

My research investigates how diversity — primarily ethnic diversity — impacts perceptions of, attitudes about, and collaboration with others. Using interviews, surveys, and experiments, I show that diversity has neither a pre-determined positive nor negative outcome. This is good news: it means that longstanding ethnic intolerance in certain societies can be successfully addressed through interventions like increasing ethnic group voice and political power and fostering an environment conducive to inter-ethnic friendship. At the same time, diversity can exacerbate disadvantage and discrimination. Active guidance and leadership are the keys to creating inter-ethnic cooperation in political institutions. Though classrooms are not filled with political elites, many lessons remain relevant. I have taken an active leadership role promoting diversity and inclusion in my classroom, and I am excited to expand my focus across courses to build an inter-departmental support system promoting and mentoring student work on diversity issues.

One of my goals is to encourage students to develop a collective identity, that of a political scientist, that empowers and enables students in their college careers far beyond my course. We know from research including my own that establishing a common ingroup identity among a diverse set of individuals promotes inter-group friendships, mutual understanding, and increased tolerance. How can I develop a common ingroup identity when my students come from a range of ages, majors, ethnicities, backgrounds, and levels of interest in political science? I present students with a challenge to, by the end of the semester, produce a research article akin to published work. By pursuing individual research, I encourage students to work on topics that they are deeply and personally invested in — these topics often revolve around life experiences including diversity and inclusion issues. Students develop their articles collaboratively in order to foster personal connections with others in the course, to identify and build off of each others' strengths, and to help students identify as researchers who bring a diverse set of identities to their work. Evidence for the success of this approach comes from pre- and post-test surveys implemented in my Introduction to Comparative Politics course where students increased their identification as social scientists. Students

noted how the research article and in-class activities surrounding it supported and motivated them to study issues they cared about using political science. I hope to track these students' progress after my course to measure how this initial emphasis on valuing diversity and building a collective identity translates into long-term feelings of acceptance and accessibility in the department and at college in general.

Local community engagement is a key way to make issues of diversity and inclusion part of the way students go about their lives and to support organizations doing community-based diversity work. My recent collaboration with the program Chris attended involved designing workshops to help youth increase their representational voices.

Many students from diverse backgrounds need support structures that can help address inequalities and integrate them into college life. These structures should be collaborative and personal. When I mentor individuals, my aim is for us to work together to develop a plan that we can implement in stages, over time. 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. Likewise, I have advised young adults on conservation projects for the last ten years. Here economic inequality is the biggest barrier, as most individuals I work with live in rural areas. This means that I need to work to fully understand the situation, what resources are available, and work with the individual to help make their project stand out despite these barriers. Successful faculty mentoring for students with similar experiences requires a willingness to invest in understanding their story and to develop an individualized plan to help them succeed.

I plan to continue demonstrating my commitment to diversity and inclusion in several ways. First, my research lends itself to student involvement with complex issues of identity-based inequality and lack of representation. As I often work collecting new data on political representation, there are many opportunities for students to become a part of my research team and to deepen their understanding of and contribute to solutions addressing identity issues. Beyond my own research, I want to continue and strengthen several collaborations that I have already started in the courses I have taught. I intend to create a research mentoring group focused on representation and identity-based inequality where students who start their own research in my Introduction to Comparative Politics course can continue their work. This group will be a space where we will highlight new and innovative work on identity and diversity, create cross-disciplinary collaborations to attract students typically under-represented in political science, and develop a supportive environment for students interested in studying identity-based issues. I also want to expand the accessibility of the political science major to students of all types of backgrounds by enhancing the community-based partnerships with underserved youth-based organizations that I have created for my Representation, Identity, and Dissent course. Finally, I want to contribute to improve my classroom and department climate. I will do this by offering a broad variety of courses about diversity and inclusion of many identity-based groups that use inclusive pedagogy, work on measuring the impact of community climate contracts that I ask students to develop in all of my courses, and prioritize cross-disciplinary collaborations to attract a more diverse set of students and instructors into the political science discipline.

### 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.

Course	Semester	Role	Description	Highlight
Representation, Identity, and Dissent	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	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.
Immigration, Identity, and the Internet	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.

Course	Semester	Role	Description	Highlight
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 in 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 (Syllabus complete): 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.
- 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.

- The Politics of Developing Nations: Synthesizes a wide literature on developing nations with a focus on both institutions and behavior. Course will challenge students to apply this literature to American public policy problems.
- 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. 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 undergraduate courses where I had a significant instructional role. In all quantitative evaluation measures, I received among the highest scores.

### 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)**

- “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 spot on 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 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 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 APSA 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.
- **Attendee, APSA Teaching and Learning Conference, 2018, 2019, 2020:** I attended the 2018 and 2019 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.

### 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.
- **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.

## 6 Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

My SoTL research focuses on making political science applicable and relevant to a broad and diverse group of students. I am currently focusing on two strategies — research article writing and community engagement — to achieve these goals.

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 without actually conducting political science research, students are just observers to the work that political scientists do. I argue that teaching students of any grade level, major, or experience to write a research article is an empowering experience that cultivates student interest in the discipline, creates a shared political scientist identity, and teaches important writing and critical thinking skills.

### Writing a Research Article

Writing a research article is one of my signature pedagogies. Importantly, I teach and mentor students through the article writing process that we use as political scientists, and the expectation is that students produce a full draft research article suitable for submission to an undergraduate political science journal by the end of the semester.

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 research article writing. My motivation for choosing this course was two-fold: first, if writing a research article 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 write a research article 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 research article writing 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 the research article writing process is emphasizing the relevance of doing political science research to public policy problems. Along with writing the research article, 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 am working on a project to 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 work alone on three small assignments where they learn about their community. These assignments include 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 *Pedagogy Through the Research Process* published by Palgrave Macmillan.
- "Writing a Research Article in an Introductory Course," APSA Teaching and Learning Conference, 2020.
- "Small Scale Community Engagement in Comparative Perspective," APSA, 2020.



## 7 Service, Curriculum, and Program Development

- **Department of Political Science Pedagogy Consultant, 2020-present:** I was asked by the Department of Political Science to develop best-practice pedagogy for teaching online. Developed a guide to online teaching strategies that included syllabus template language, strategies for adapting in-person teaching methods to an online format, and an extensive best-practices section.
- **Teaching Political Science Workshop Series (founder), 2019-present:** I founded and lead an informal 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*.

- **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 session 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.

## 8 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,



Guillermo Rosas  
314-935-7456  
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# 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.