Teaching Philosophy Statement
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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.