

## Statement of Teaching Philosophy

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I am an experienced, effective instructor who has taught in both traditional and online formats. I have been the instructor of record for nine undergraduate courses: Introduction to American Government, Introduction to Political Research, and a Senior Seminar course of my own design. I am prepared to teach additional courses on Latin American politics, electoral behavior, public opinion, populism, and the causes and effects of polarization. I have earned overwhelmingly positive student evaluations in the courses that I have taught with an average student evaluation above 4.5, out of 5, across all sections. As the teaching assistant for the graduate research methods sequence, I worked closely with the newly arrived graduate students to assist their understanding of the course materials and improve their abilities with statistical software such as R and STATA. I am trained in a range of methodological approaches within OLS and MLE, both frequentist and Bayesian implementations, and would welcome the opportunity to teach courses in these areas as well.

My extensive teaching experience has resulted in a comprehensive teaching philosophy that manifests in three primary goals: 1) providing an engaging and rewarding classroom experience, 2) achieving deep learning objectives such as critical thinking and writing, and 3) fostering a welcoming, inclusive, and productive classroom environment. These goals result in an active, engaging, and rewarding classroom experience for all students. I endeavor to provide each student with the tools to excel in their careers and the knowledge needed to be informed and engaged citizens. To achieve these goals, I have designed a variety of strategies and activities that emphasize inclusion and student engagement across curricula.

My first pedagogical principle respects the notions that not every approach may be appropriate in every setting and that effective strategies meaningfully engage students in a manner that maximizes attention and material retention. Teaching at one of the most diverse public universities in the nation has encouraged me to place significant emphasis on multimodal teaching strategies and adaptive techniques as they both engage and benefit each student's unique learning style. Towards this end, I include interactive Kahoot! quizzes during class, employing such tools especially when I feel the attention of the class is waning. I also include group activities, such as tasking groups of students to develop an effective campaign platform in my Introduction to American Government course. As a student in my American Government course stated, *"he did very well explaining topics and answering as many questions as he could. He engaged with the students and made class fun with Kahoot games. I actually learned things from what he taught and enjoyed the class."* I also assign digital textbooks where appropriate that utilize adaptive learning techniques, allowing students to synthesize material at their own pace. The shift from physical to digital textbooks is also influenced by the recognition that physical textbooks very often place an undue financial burden on students. Effectively engaging students with multimodal strategies to supplement the base class materials is one of the most recognizable comments I receive from students, even in large, online courses when one-on-one student interactions are more constrained: *"I would very much so recommend American Government online to any student who is determined to do an online course. Professor Luke is a very good instructor and although it is an online course, we have weekly lecture videos that he uploads to college. They are a completion grade but there are questions in them that test your knowledge and help you understand the content more."*

My second pedagogical principle concerns the necessity of instilling systemized thinking and writing as an applied skill. One approach I consistently use to achieve this goal is critical writing assignments. In my Introduction to Research Methods course, students incorporate class readings, their own research,

and personal experiences to draft a research design that they could conduct in their future endeavors. This assignment helps students synthesize the fundamental concepts of political science research by integrating what is learned with their own lived experiences. As one of my students reported, “*He actually graded our assignments to help us do better rather than to just pass or fail us.*” In upper division courses, my students are routinely challenged to engage in critical thinking through written and oral assignments. For example, in my Senior Seminar class, the students are required to read excerpts from seminal authors across a variety of topics, from Simone de Beauvoir to Thomas Hobbes to Saul Alinsky, and draft a 750-word essay responding to elements within that week’s excerpts. We then discuss these works and their respective arguments in the subsequent class, allowing students to practice making compelling arguments orally. These assignments not only expose students to a wide variety of viewpoints on a litany of topics, but also teach them how to synthesize multiple sources, compare the arguments made therein, and craft their own arguments. This mode of instruction towards critical thinking and writing is fundamental to my teaching philosophy that every student should leave my classes a better thinker and better writer, and provides upper-level students with skills that will prove useful throughout their careers.

The final pedagogical principle at the core of my teaching philosophy centers on fostering an inclusive, focused, and congenial classroom environment. As someone from a privileged background teaching at one of the most diverse public universities in the nation, I am acutely aware of the varied lived experience that each student brings to the classroom. This requires a thoughtful approach towards teaching about historical injustices and their contemporary legacy, and a forceful redress of popularly held misconceptions about history. However, this concern must be balanced with the requirement, especially in mandatory courses, that students of all political backgrounds feel welcome within the course, both in terms of attendance and a willingness to engage with class discussions. This results in a lively classroom environment that both engages and challenges students’ preexisting beliefs and opinions.

These principles guide both course construction and classroom conduct. Humor and relatability are powerful tools towards maintaining student attention but must be balanced with classroom discipline. As two of my students in the Fall 2022 American Government course stated, “*I appreciate that my instructor was able to make the class laugh and tie it back to US government and history...*” and “*my instructor was great at controlling the classroom. Even when there were interruptions when students were misbehaving, my instructor did an excellent job dealing with the situation.*” This balance between congeniality and structure creates an engaging and effective teaching environment and is a key goal for any class that I teach. My experience has prepared me to maintain classroom discipline while creating an engaging and rewarding course experience.

I believe my pedagogic and professional experiences will be an asset to your department. I look forward to a faculty position where I can continue to employ innovative pedagogical strategies, support student research, and contribute to the college community. I am most interested in teaching classes in research methodology, electoral behavior, populism and polarization, public opinion, and Latin American politics. I would also welcome the opportunity to teach graduate methodology courses and mentor aspiring scholars. I am eager to continue advancing my career as a professor who challenges students and creates rewarding opportunities for them.