

Nicholas J. Coburn-Palo

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Education

Brown University – Providence, RI

- Earned Ph. D. in Political Science (2014)
- Awarded Terrence Hopmann Teaching Prize (2011)
- Earned Masters degree in Political Science (2010)

Weber State University – Ogden, UT

- B.S. Major in Political Science with a Minor in History (1995)

Cornell University – Ithaca, NY

- Significant undergraduate coursework undertaken at the School of Industrial and Labor Relations and the College of Arts and Sciences (1986-1989)

Employment

University Faculty

Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, July 2022-Present; San Jose State University San Jose, CA, August 2020-May 2023; and the Graduate School of the Open University of Catalonia (UOC), Barcelona, December 2018-January 2021

I currently work on a full-time faculty appointment at Harvard University as a Preceptor of Public Speaking in the Harvard College Writing Program, as well as serving as an Instructor for the Harvard Extension School, teaching a Management course on Negotiations and Organizational Conflict Resolution, a joint undergraduate/graduate course on Writing in the Social Sciences, a graduate seminar on Comparative Democratic Transitions, and the year-long Capstone Seminar sequence in Policy Writing and Analysis in the Masters of Government program. I also have served as a consulting Dissertation Coach for Harvard Law School and supervise numerous M.A. thesis projects. I have previously served as a faculty member in the Department of Communication Studies at San Jose State University, where I have taught the following online courses: Mediation and Conflict, Persuasion and Practice, Communication and Global Organizations, Theories of Persuasion, Global Media and Resistance, and a graduate seminar on Argumentation and Debate. In addition, I have also worked with the Open University of Catalonia (UOC) in the creation and implementation of the inaugural United Nations affiliated Masters program in International Affairs and Diplomacy. In that capacity, I served as the Course Instructor for the graduate course, “Overcoming Negotiation Deadlocks,” which has involved instructional responsibility for over one hundred graduate students in an intensive, asynchronous, on-line course, for three years.

Negotiation and Diplomacy Trainer

United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), New York and Geneva; 2010-Present; European House – Ambrosetti, Milan, etc., 2015-Present, etc.

I maintained a relationship with UNITAR for over a decade, training diplomats from developing nations in numerous courses, including “Multilateral Negotiation Strategies” and “Public Speaking for Diplomats.” As a trainer for UNITAR, I have worked with representatives from dozens of nations, including Egypt, Nigeria, Venezuela, Malaysia, South Sudan, and Palestine. Areas of specialization have included bridging cultural difference in complex negotiations, delegation management, and advanced methods of preparation for multinational conferences. In 2011, I co-designed and taught the inaugural United Nations course for officials from Security Council nations in speech writing and presentation for the incoming Republic of South Africa delegation. In 2012, I presented at an ambassador level summit for the African Union in preparation for Rio+20 Summit on Sustainable Development. In 2020, I created and

taught a specialized course on negotiation strategies for the South Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the run-up to talks with Tokyo, Beijing, and Pyongyang.

As an offshoot of this work, I have undertaken consulting work with several other entities, including collaborations with the well-regarded Italian think tank, European House – Ambrosetti. My consulting work has also included lecturing on negotiation and diplomacy at universities on four continents, including National Taiwan University (NTU), Yale University (USA), The Warsaw School of Economics (Poland), and EAFIT University (Colombia). As another example of my work, I served from 2009-2011 as a consultant and advisor to the non-profit Rhode Island Urban Debate League (RIUDL), which included strategic planning, curriculum design, professional development programming, and the training of Providence public high school teachers and teaching assistants in public speaking and debate instruction designed to empower at-risk students.

Teacher and Department Chair

The York School, Monterey, CA, August 2018-June 2022

I served as a Teacher and the Humanities and History Department Chair at the York School, a well-regarded independent upper school located on the central California coast. Teaching responsibilities have included courses in World History, Asian History, Philosophy, American Government, and Modern Asian Politics. I have also served as an Advisor for the school's Model United Nations program and the Philosophy club, in addition to serving on the school's Curriculum Committee. Our campus embraced deeply integrating technology into our curriculum well before the COVID-19 outbreak, with an emphasis on Google-based platforms. All faculty members have been trained on the "One Schoolhouse" on-line platform, as well as performing considerable work on OLC/Blackboard, Blackbaud, and Canvas.

Teacher and Debate Coach

Taipei American School – Departments of History and Political Science, Taipei, Taiwan; August 2013-July 2018

I served for five years as an upper schoolteacher (grades 9-12) and Coach of the Debate Team at the Taipei American School (TAS), an international independent school. Teaching responsibilities have included Public Speaking and Rhetoric, IB Philosophy, IB Theory of Knowledge, AP American Government, AP Comparative Government, U.S. History, History of Asia, and Honors Seminars on both Crisis and Leadership Skills, as well as Constitutional Law. Teaching responsibilities have required working in numerous on-line educational platforms, including Canvas, Power Teacher and OLC/Blackboard. In 2014, students I coached at TAS won the Southeast Asian Independent Schools (IASAS) Parliamentary Debate Championships. Our squad also won the International Division in Public Forum Debate at the U.S. National Tournament of Champions (TOC) in 2017. Students I coached twice finished in Fifth Place or better at the International Public Policy Forum World Championships in Group Writing and Debate.

Program Dean and Lead Instructor

Yale University – Ivy Scholars Program – International Security Studies and the Office of International Affairs, New Haven, CT; February 2001-August 2012

For over a decade I served in a variety of instructional and leadership roles for Yale University's Ivy Scholars Program, a successful summer debate institute which evolved into a university administered leadership initiative targeted at talented and gifted high school students, providing integrated instruction in political thought, international relations, group writing, and presentation skills. Positions held with the organization initially included Lead Instructor, Dean of Faculty, Dean of Students, and, ultimately, Program Dean. During my tenure, the Ivy Scholars Program experienced tremendous growth, growing to almost three hundred students from nearly thirty nations. Responsibilities included curriculum and simulation design, significant lecturing and seminar instruction across a broad range of topics, cultivation of potential donors, responsibility for a six-figure financial aid program, as well as the training and supervision of a large teaching staff.

Teacher and Debate Coach

The College Preparatory School, Oakland, CA; September 2000 – May 2008

This position, at a highly regarded independent upper school, involved curriculum design, classroom teaching, competition coaching, student supervision, and program administration. Courses taught included Introduction to Philosophy, Introduction to Speech and Debate, Intermediate Debate, and Advanced Debate. Students I coached in Policy and LD Debate won or advanced to the final round of virtually every major national competition, including Harvard, UC-Berkeley, Stanford, the NFL/NSDA National Championships, and the National Tournament of Champions (TOC). Significant service work included a term as the Chairperson of National Forensic League (NFL/NSDA) Rules and Review Committee for Policy Debate in 2006, as well as serving on the National Tournament of Champions (TOC) Advisory Committee for Policy Debate for almost a decade.

Assistant Dean and Debate Coach

Hopkins High School, Minnetonka, MN; February 1999 – June 2000

This public high school administrative position involved working with students and staff on conflict resolution and mediation, as well as investigating violations of institutional rules. In addition, responsibilities included identifying and implementing consequences in accordance with school district policy, supervising a security staff of over a dozen people, and working with counselors, diversity coordinators, and special education instructors to facilitate a constructive learning environment and maintain compliance with institutional standards, including IEPs. Debaters I coached while at Hopkins won the Minnesota State Championships and the National Tournament of Champions (TOC) in Lincoln-Douglas style debate.

Foreign Manager and Teacher

Sung-Il Foreign Language Institute, Suwon, South Korea; November 1996 – June 1998

This teaching and management position involved instructing students and mentoring teachers in English across a wide variety of contexts, experience, and age. In addition, I designed and taught English language courses for multiple off-site programs for universities and government institutions. This included numerous multi-month immersive training programs for the South Korean Ministry of Home Affairs, where diplomats were being prepared to conduct trade negotiations in the U.S. and the United Kingdom.

Lecturer and Assistant Director of Forensics

Weber State University, Ogden, UT; August 1995 – May 1996

Upon completion of my undergraduate degree, my alma mater offered me a one-year full-time faculty appointment as a Lecturer and Assistant Director of Forensics in the Department of Communication. Responsibilities included developing and teaching multiple sections of both Introduction to Public Speaking and Intercollegiate Forensics, as well as coaching a nationally competitive Policy and Parliamentary debate program.

Teacher and Debate Coach

The Pinewood School, Los Altos Hills, CA; August 1991 – June 1993.

This middle and upper school teaching position at a well-regarded independent school involved developing and teaching multiple sections of Introduction to Communication Theory, Intermediate Public Speaking and Advanced Public Speaking. In addition, I coached competitors in debate and individual events at local, regional, and national competitions, with students winning significant awards at major national-circuit competitions including Stanford, UC-Berkeley, Loyola-Marymount, the California State Championships, and NFL/NSDA National Championship.

Selected Presentations, Conferences, and Workshops (2010-present)

- ***Featured Speaker – Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) – October 2025***
Delivered a lecture to senior level officials on “Leading with Impact” at the General Secretariat of the Gulf Cooperation Council in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.
- ***Featured Speaker – TECH Tokyo (Japan) – June 2025***
Spoke on the topic of “Negotiating with Americans” at the grand opening event for the entrepreneurship hub, an event attended by numerous CEO’s, university officials, and governmental officials up to the cabinet level.
- ***Featured Faculty Speaker – Harvard Business School – April 2025***
Spoke on the topic of “Embracing the Power of Strategic Listening” as part of the “Lectures that Last” series, where one faculty member from each of Harvard’s graduate schools is selected to give a lecture at Harvard Business School, as part of a program run by the Harvard Graduate Council.
- ***Featured Faculty Speaker – Convocation – Harvard Extension School – March 2024***
Spoke as the representative of the faculty at the Convocation event before a large crowd at Memorial Church, as well as online internationally.
- ***Workshop Leader – The European House-Ambrosetti (Italy) – March 2024***
Taught two “C-Suite” level workshops for business leaders and government officials, one in Trieste on “Overcoming Conflicts and Turning Them into Opportunities: Secrets of International Mediators” and another in Turin entitled “Talk and Convince: The Techniques of Great Speaker to Be Clearer and More Incisive Communicators.”
- ***Keynote Speaker – Harvard Leadership Institute for the First-Year Experience (LIFE) – July 2023***
Delivered a Keynote Lecture on Storytelling and Leadership to a select group of incoming freshman students at Harvard, as well as engaging in an extended Question-and-Answer session about my career experiences and offering advice for success as an emerging leader.
- ***Keynote Speaker and Workshop Leader – European House-Ambrosetti (Italy) – June 2022***
Taught a workshop in Rome to business and government leaders on “The Art of Negotiation: An Irreplaceable Skill Even in the Virtual World” and was the Dinner Keynote Speaker at a meeting of leaders from AC Forum and the LCE (an informal alliance of ten of Europe’s top conference venues) in Milan.
- ***Workshop Leader – European House-Ambrosetti (Italy) – June 2021***
Led a workshop in Bologna for corporate and government officials on advanced negotiation practices. This involved introducing two in-depth case studies, on Japanese-South Korean trade relations and on best practices for negotiating with Ransomware hackers.
- ***Instructor – United Nations (UNITAR)/Republic of Korea – August-October 2020***
Developed and taught a bespoke on-line course for the United Nations on advanced negotiations strategies, working with almost fifty diplomats from the South Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the run-up to talks between the South Korean government officials and their counterparts in the governments of the China, Japan, and the DPRK.
- ***Workshop Leader – European House-Ambrosetti (Italy) – June 2019***
Designed and taught a series of CEO-level workshops on advanced negotiation practices for one of the top private think tanks in Italy. Topics covered during the meetings in Milan and Udine included overcoming cultural differences during negotiations, successfully manipulating BATNA, building coalitions during multilateral negotiations, and overcoming adversarial negotiating tactics, with the emphasis of the workshop focused on assisting many participants with ongoing negotiations with China over expansion of the Belt and Road Initiative into Italy.

- ***Featured Lecturer – EAFIT University (Colombia) – May 2019***
Was a featured lecturer and at a large entrepreneurship conference being hosted by the business school at a major university in Medellin, Colombia. The lecture, entitled “Five Reasons Why Negotiations Fail,” covered topics including leadership and team management during negotiations and converting cultural differences into strategic gain.
- ***Workshop Leader – Taipei American Chamber of Commerce – March 2018***
Presented an advanced workshop on “The Subtle Arts of Persuasion and Negotiation” to local business leaders in Taipei at the Taipei American Chamber of Commerce. Instruction was offered in multilateral negotiation strategies, crisis communication, and applying lessons from the world of diplomacy to the world of business.
- ***Lecturer and Juror – Warsaw School of Economics (Poland) – April 2016***
Served on the competition jury and lectured on “When to Walk Away from Negotiations” at the Warsaw Negotiation Round, a World Mediation Organization affiliated global negotiation competition in Warsaw, Poland, featuring some of the world’s leading law and business schools.
- ***Instructor – United Nations (UNITAR) – May/June 2015***
Served as a Course Instructor for the United Nations on-line course for diplomats entitled, “Overcoming Negotiation Deadlocks.” Responsibilities included developing and administering a multi-weeklong negotiation simulation exercise and presenting interactive lessons via video conferencing.
- ***Presenter – TEDx Taipei – December 2014***
Developed and presented a well-received TEDx talk on “Why Negotiations Fail: Lessons Learned from Training Diplomats at the United Nations” at Taipei American School in Taiwan. The talk can be located easily on YouTube.
- ***Instructor – United Nations (UNITAR)/Olaf Palme Fund – March 2013***
Developed and presented curriculum at a workshop for U.N. diplomats from developing nations entitled “Effective Negotiations in Multilateral Conferences” at the Malaysian Mission to the United Nations in New York.
- ***Instructor – African Union/United Nations (UNITAR) – March 2012***
Developed and presented curriculum at an ambassador level training workshop entitled “Consultations & Capacity Building Training for the African Union Negotiators to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20)” at the African Union Mission to the United Nations in New York.
- ***Facilitator – Yale University/Brady-Johnson Center for Grand Strategy – December 2011***
Assisted in the design and facilitation of a political crisis management simulation in New Haven, Connecticut for Yale’s elite “Studies in Grand Strategy” program. Collaborated with fellow facilitators including for U.N. Ambassador and Director of the NIA John Negroponte, Prof. John Lewis Gaddis, Prof. Paul Kennedy, and former Treasury Secretary Nicholas Brady.
- ***Instructor – United Nations (UNITAR) – November 2011***
Developed and presented curriculum at a workshop for U.N. diplomats from developing nations entitled “Effective Public Speaking and Presentation Skills” at the Egyptian Mission to the United Nations in New York.
- ***Instructor – Republic of South Africa/United Nations (UNITAR) – January 2011***
Developed and presented curriculum for the inaugural United Nations course on speech and statement writing for incoming Security Council delegations, entitled “Introduction to Statement Writing for the United Nations Security Council,” for the South African delegation at their Mission in New York.
- ***Presenting Researcher – Yale University/ International Security Studies – December 2010***
Featured presenter at the International Security Studies Colloquium hosted by Yale University in New Haven, Connecticut on “The Past, Present, and Future of America’s Relationship with the Koreans.”