



## Teaching Statement

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Education is a core pillar of academia; teachers who care often have outsized impacts on students as my former teachers have had on me, and my goal as a teacher is to continue that trend. My teaching and mentoring philosophy centers on structure as the ordering principle to content, but more importantly, practice. When the structure of any system is understood, students can use the system in ways that are most useful to them.

To teach students most effectively, my teaching focuses on the more abstract ideas hidden behind our pedagogical styles and assignments. For example, I focus on foundational skills such as critical reading and analyzing essay prompts in my entry-level courses. Many students struggle with these steps, particularly those new to higher education. Starting with a prompt, I teach them to break down complex questions, identify critical components, and organize their thoughts into coherent, full-length papers. This step-by-step approach helps demystify the writing process, making it more accessible and less intimidating.

A key element of my teaching philosophy is scaffolding techniques to support student learning. Students achieve their best when guided through a structured learning process that gradually builds their skills and confidence. I carefully design assignments and activities progressing from simpler to more complex tasks, allowing students to develop their abilities incrementally. As students advance to my upper-level courses, I shift to more sophisticated tasks, such as critically reading academic articles, assembling literature reviews, and designing rigorous research designs. Scaffolding is one of my most essential tools for understanding how information and research are built incrementally, reinforcing these skills through carefully structured assignments. I use this approach to deepen students' understanding of the subject matter and, more importantly, provide consistent feedback to be addressed in later assignments that reinforce their structural and substantive knowledge.

Drawing from my background as a queer, first-generation student, I focus on creating an inclusive classroom environment that actively empowers students from diverse backgrounds. My experiences navigating the challenges of higher education as someone with a learning disability have shaped my understanding of the barriers that many students face. I strive to ensure that each student feels valued and respected, regardless of their background, by acknowledging their life experiences and incorporating them into my teaching methods. This enriches the learning experience and helps students see the relevance of their experiences in academic discussions.

My practical experience as a teaching assistant for three graduate-level methodology courses has been instrumental in shaping my approach to teaching. At Purdue University, I had the unique opportunity to be actively involved in developing and delivering the graduate methods sequence. Over three consecutive semesters, I collaborated closely with faculty members to design and teach a series of practice labs as a part of the statistical courses that would provide students with hands-on experience in data analysis and methods. I designed most of these labs from scratch, ensuring they were both challenging, accessible, and useful

for the course assignments. In addition to designing labs, I co-created assignments and developed the midterm and final exams, giving me practical experience in course design for graduate students.

Innovation is critical to effective teaching, which is why I obtained a certificate in pedagogy through the Foundations of College Teaching course. I independently taught Purdue Political Science's most popular class during the Summer semesters of 2021-23. I use various tools and platforms to create an engaging and interactive learning environment, in-person or online. In virtual classes, I utilize multimedia resources, brief but informative online lecture videos, and analytic assignments designed to enhance critical thinking skills. I am committed to finding new and creative ways to engage my students and help them achieve their learning goals.

My teaching philosophy is grounded in the belief that every student has the potential to succeed when provided with the proper support and opportunities. By breaking down complex tasks and guiding students through each step, I aim to make learning more approachable and less daunting. My focus on inclusivity, shaped by my experiences, ensures that every student feels acknowledged and supported in the classroom. My hands-on experience as a teaching assistant and my pursuit of innovative teaching methods through professional development reflects my dedication to creating a dynamic and inclusive educational environment that encourages all students to thrive.

**Courses to Teach.** As a professor of political science, I intend to provide students with a high-quality and interesting experience. My training equips me to teach a wide variety of methodological and substantive courses. I can teach introduction and advanced methods/empirical and international relations courses at either undergraduate or graduate levels. This could include courses on nonstate actors, political violence, international organizations, social science statistics, causal inference, time-series and geospatial methods, and data science.

One graduate course I would like to teach, if there is a need, is "Everything is Data." In nearly all methods courses in political science, students are handed clean data that is ready for analysis. However, data is almost never "clean" and ready to use when it is initially collected and requires restructuring that has substantive effects and assumptions on research. This course would introduce students to the wide variety of data types that political scientists encounter in their research, including text, maps, images, and audio/video, among others. We would explore each data type's unique challenges and opportunities and learn how to clean and transform data using tools such as R and Python. By the end of the course, students would have a strong foundation in the fundamentals of data science, cleaning, and management and be able to apply these skills to their research.