

TEACHING POLITICAL SCIENCE
POLITICAL SCIENCE 881

Fall 2008

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This class is designed to help graduate students in political science prepare to take on the responsibility of teaching their own courses. It is not intended to serve as a “how to”; that can come only from blending personal disposition with practical experience. Instead, the primary goal of the course will be to introduce some of the principal issues with which instructors routinely have to come to terms and to offer some guidance on how to address them. So, for example, while the class will not provide formal instruction in, say, how to lecture to a large group of students, it will identify the concerns that are common to such lectures and how those concerns might be addressed. Obviously, no class of this kind can provide you with all the answers regarding instructional strategies, but I do hope that, by the end of the semester, you will know what kinds of questions you must ask of yourself before you begin your professional teaching career.

That career will, in fact, begin quite soon. At this point, some students will come to this class confident that they already have a finely polished set of teaching skills in their toolkit, waiting only to be put to use. Others may be quite apprehensive, fearful that they may never do a serviceable job at instruction, no matter what degree of preparation. Most, however, simply have some general intuitions of what they would like to teach and how they might begin. My plan, therefore, is to channel these ambitions (and inhibitions) in ways that take account of your immediate needs by offering some practical assistance as you prepare to teach for the first time.

Requirements

(1) Attend class and participate in discussions. To that end, I will expect you to have done the modest amount of reading and have come prepared to discuss it. Most of what we will read and discuss will be general in nature, addressing topics that are endemic to any instructor. But, a good bit of what you read will be written by political scientists and, for that reason, often placed within the context of our own discipline. Your only required text is *The Joy of Teaching: A Practical Guide for New College Instructor*, by Peter Filene (2005, University of North Carolina Press). The remainder of your readings will be posted and available for download on Blackboard.

(2) In particular, I aim to ease your transition from graduate student to practicing political scientist. To that end, it will be your responsibility to assemble a set of teaching credentials that you may use when applying for your first job. So, I will ask you to develop the following:

- a teaching statement outlining your goals as an instructor and how you plan to meet them
- a sample syllabus
- a standard lecture
- an exercise designed to promote discussion
- an exercise in active learning
- examination items and a written assignment

OVERVIEW OF THE COURSE

Orienting Yourself to Teaching

1. How do students learn? (September 4)

Assignment: Visit this webpage and complete the 44 question survey. Read at least some of the explanatory material so that you can make sense of the results.

<http://www.engr.ncsu.edu/learningstyles/ilsweb.html>

Print the results and bring them along to class.

Reading

Diane F. Halpern and Milton D. Hakel. 2003. "Applying the Science of Learning to the University and Beyond," *Change* (July/August): 36-41.

2. Who are your students, what do they expect, and what can you expect of them? (September 11)

Reading

Peter Filene. 2005. *The Joy of Teaching*. Chapel Hill: UNC Press. Chapter 2.

Stephen Earl Bennett and Linda L.M. Bennett. 2001. "What Political Scientists Should Know about the Survey of First-Year Students in 2000." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 24:295-299.

3. What is your philosophy of teaching? (September 18)

Assignment: Write a Statement of Your Teaching Philosophy.

Reading

Peter Filene. 2005. *The Joy of Teaching*. Chapel Hill: UNC Press. Chapter 1.

Gabriela Montell. 2003. What's Your Philosophy on Teaching, and Does it Matter? *Chronicle of Higher Education* March 23.

Ohio State University, Faculty and TA Development, "Writing a Philosophy of Teaching Statement," <http://ftad.osu.edu/portfolio/philosophy/Philosophy.html>

Course Design

4. Setting Course Goals and Meeting Them (September 25)

Assignment: Select an undergraduate course that you would like to design. Consult the examples in Filene's chapter and write a similar outline. Specifically, write two paragraphs, one describing the course objectives and the other describing how you will meet those objectives.

Reading

Peter Filene. 2005. *The Joy of Teaching*. Chapel Hill: UNC Press. Chapter 3.

5. Creating a Syllabus (October 2)

Assignment: Create a course schedule outline for the spring semester of 2009 semester. Assume that you will teach a MWF schedule, create the schedule template and then allocate class time to the substantive content.

(UNC Registrar's calendar is at http://regweb.oit.unc.edu/calendars/academic_cal07-09.php)

Reading

Peter Filene. 2005. *The Joy of Teaching*. Chapel Hill: UNC Press. Chapter 4.

Altman, Howard B., and William E. Cashin. 1992. "Writing a Syllabus." Idea Paper No.27, Center for Faculty Evaluation and Development Manhattan, KS: Kansas State University.

John T. Ishiyama and Stephen Hartlaub. 2002. "Does the Wording of Syllabi Affect Student Course Assessment in Introductory Political Science Classes?" *PS: Political Science & Politics* 35:567-570.

6. Evaluating Learning through Writing Assignments (October 9)

Assignment: Design a writing exercise that advances one of your course objectives. Explain how this exercise advances the objective and how you will grade it.

Reading

Pamela A. Zeiser. 1999. "Teaching Process and Product: Crafting and Responding to Student Writing Assignments." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 32:593-595.

Bob, Clifford. 2001. "A Question and an Argument: Enhancing Student Writing through Guided Research Assignments." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 34: 653-655.

7. Can Examinations Promote Learning? (October 23)

Assignment: Write one essay, two short-answer, and three multiple choice questions to evaluate student learning for your course. Explain how these questions relate to your course objectives and how you will grade them.

Reading

Peter Filene. 2005. *The Joy of Teaching*. Chapel Hill: UNC Press. Chapter 8.
John C. Ory and Katherine E. Ryan. 1993. *Tips for Improving Testing and Grading*. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications. Chapters 1 and 2.
Brian J. Glenn. 1998. "The Golden Rule of Grading: Being Fair." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 31:787-788.

Using Class Time Effectively

8. Lecturing (October 30)

Assignment: Prepare one lecture. It may be written out, word for word, or it may be structured as an outline.

Reading

Peter Filene. 2005. *The Joy of Teaching*. Chapel Hill: UNC Press. Chapter 5.
Lawrence Baum. 2002. "Enthusiasm in Teaching." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 35:87-90.
Wilbert J. McKeachie. *McKeachie's Teaching Tips*, Chapter 6.
Rosemary O'Leary. 2002. "Advice to New Teachers: Turn It Inside Out." *PS: Political Science & Politics* 35:91-92.

9. Promoting Discussion in the Classroom (November 6)

Assignment: Prepare one exercise designed to promote discussion. Explain what specific goal this exercise is designed to serve, relating it to one of your course objectives.

Reading

Peter Filene. 2005. *The Joy of Teaching*. Chapel Hill: UNC Press. Chapter 6.
Mel Cohen. 1991. "Making Class Participation a Reality." *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 24:699-703.
Andrew Green and Williams Rose. "The Professor's Dream: Getting Students to Talk and Read Intelligently." *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 29:687-690.

10. Active Learning (November 13)

Assignment: Develop an active learning exercise to be used in class. Explain what how it relates to one or more of your class goals

Reading:

Ricard J. Hardy, Chapman Rackaway, and Laurie E. Sonnier. 2005. "In the Supreme Court Justices' Shoes: Critical Thinking through the Use of Hypothetical Case Law Analyses and Interactive Simulations." *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 38:411-414.

Elizabeth T. Smith; Mark A. Boyer. 1996. "Designing In-Class Simulations." *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 29:690-694.

11. Norms and Normative Issues of Teaching (November 20)

Assignment: Prepare a list of substantive issues that, for personal reasons, you would find difficult to discuss in a class.

Reading:

American Association of University Professors. Statement of Professional Ethics.

Paul Gardner 1998. Teaching at Its Best: A Passionate Detachment in the Classroom *PS: Political Science and Politics*, 31 (Dec.): 802-804.

Ellis M. West. 1998. "Some Proposed Guidelines for Advocacy in the Classroom." *PS: Political Science and Politics* 31:805-807.