

Teaching Statement

Students today live in a world of 24-hour news cycles and an over-abundance of information. Despite the wealth of information available, students lack a general understanding of international politics and a way of processing information to form a reasoned position on international issues. The objective of the classes I have taught so far is to introduce students to the academic study of international relations and to give them a framework of analytical and critical thinking skills so they can be knowledgeable members of society in an expanding world.

My first goal as a teacher is to provide students with a solid understanding of foundational concepts, using traditional and active teaching strategies that encompass a wide range of literature and research. To accomplish this, teachers must understand that students learn in different ways. In my classes, I use multiple techniques – lectures, discussions, multimedia, and simulations – to encourage learning for different types of students. I have found that incorporating a simulation into my Introduction to International Relations class to be particularly useful in understanding the core concepts of the class. Not only do these alternative teaching methods allow for a departure from the traditional lecture setup, they also encourage active student participation in discussions.

Students not only learn differently, but they also demonstrate their knowledge of the material differently. As such, I use multiple assessment techniques. Exams are a combination of both multiple choice questions and short response questions. In my Introduction to International Relations class, I also give weekly quizzes with true/false and fill-in-the-blank questions. Additionally, in my upper-level classes reading summaries are assigned to help students engage the concepts from the literature and lectures to deepen student knowledge. For those students struggling with these assignments, I often stay after class and hold extended office hours to offer additional help.

My second goal as a teacher is to promote critical thinking skills. One way this is accomplished is by applying real world topics to the concepts discussed in the lectures and assigned readings. For instance, in my International Conflict class, power transition theory is one of the most popular lectures among students. Following the lecture we take the lessons of power transition and apply them to the current rise of China vis-à-vis the United States. Students actively engage one another in whether the rise of China will, or will not, spark a future war with the US. In my Statecraft class, we discuss the moral justification for the uses of military force against non-state actors. We link this to the discussion of the current conflict in Gaza and attempt to understand the moral dilemmas facing a state attempting to engage in conflict with a non-state actor. Linking the key concepts and theories discussed in lectures to current events promotes critical-thinking skills and active student learning. These approaches have resulted in positive teaching evaluations where over 80% of students have rated my teaching at excellent or very good.

Lastly, I hope to help and encourage those students interested in learning more about the academic discipline of political science. For instance, Florida State's Department of Political Science offers a Research Intensive Bachelor's Certificate in Political Science. I have been involved this program by overseeing multiple RIBC interns who have actively assisted in my

ongoing research. My desire is to be an effective teacher that motivates students to learn, be successful, and be inspired to continuing learning about the world around them either on their own or through additional courses.

Presently, I have taught an Introduction to International Relations course, and Introduction to Comparative Politics course, an International Conflict course, and a Statecraft course. In addition, I will teach an Undergraduate Research Methods class in the Fall. In the future, I would like to teach an American Foreign Policy course.

While to date I have taught international relations classes, many of the core questions I discuss in my classes apply to all of the subfields of political science. For instance, a great deal of time is spent in my Introduction to International Relations class discussing the collective action problem and how this relates to the topics of international political economy and to transnational issues. Additionally, in my International Conflict class we discuss the collective action problem in regards to collective security and the problems of credible commitments as a cause of war. Both of these concepts are just as likely to be discussed in an American Politics or Comparative politics course. As such, students taking my classes leave with a well-rounded understanding of international relations and knowledge of key concepts that apply to the discipline of political science at large.