

Political Science 495

Teaching Political Science

Wednesdays 12:00pm- 1:50 pm

Bunche A152

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Office Hours: Wed 10:00am- 11:00am & 2:00pm- 3:00pm

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Bunche 3165

COURSE DESCRIPTION

As graduate students one of our main jobs is to serve as teaching assistants in the department. For many of us, we go into the job with little training, and are unsure of how to effectively convey concepts to our students, and deal how to deal with the challenges that arise throughout the quarter. The objective of this class is to equip you with the practical and necessary tools to successfully foster student learning while also effectively managing all of the other tasks of a TA. In addition to learning the basics, we hope that you will also learn different pedagogical approaches that you may chose to implement in the future.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

This class is required for all first time TAs in the Political Science Department. It will be graded on a pass/ no pass basis. This class is not meant to be burdensome, and as long as you meet the following requirements passing the class should not be a problem.

- **Attendance**

Your presence every week is mandatory to pass this class. In the event that you should fall ill please be sure to communicate with me and make arrangements to turn in any outstanding assignments.

- **Assignments & Participation**

As with most classes, I expect that you complete the assigned reading prior to each week's class, and turn in your assignments on time. The readings are short and meant to provide you with practical advice to apply to your classroom. We will discuss the readings in class and you should feel comfortable engaging in discussions and activities related to the readings. All readings and handouts will be posted on the course web page.

- **Section Observations**

New TAs will be required to sit and observe two discussion sections. One by an experienced TA, and the other led by one of your fellow classmates. In addition, the TAC will observe and evaluate one section held by each new TA. Peer and TAC evaluations will be used to give each new TA constructive criticism and discuss opportunities to more effectively communicate curriculum to students.

- **Reflections**

TAs will be required to conduct teaching reflections every other week. These reflections are meant to help you self monitor and work on improving your teaching strategies. Reflections will be submitted to the TAC who will provide additional support as necessary.

READINGS

There is no required textbook for this course. Each week's readings can be found on the CCLE course web page filed under its assigned week.

TEACHING RESOURCES

The office of instructional development provides many resources for TAs. If you would like to rent instructional DVDs, electronic equipment, or reserve a classroom for a review session go to <https://oid.ucla.edu/programs-and-services>. Another great resource for TAs is the UCLA TA handbook. In it you can find information about your role as a TA, university policy, information about the composition fo the student body, and practical and helpful tips for getting ready to teach, approaches to instruction, and much more. When applicable, sections of the TA handbook will be listed as optional reading. You can find the TA handbook at <http://ww2.oid.ucla.edu/publications/tahandbook1>

An excellent resource to assist with writing assignments is the writing center. Students can make appointments at the writing center to have someone work with them one on one to develop a thesis, learn hot to organize ideas, or get assistance on effective proofreading strategies. I have found that they are especially helpful with students who are English language learners. I highly recommend adding the following url to your course website: <http://wp.ucla.edu/wc/about-uwc/services/>.

There are a number of other departments and offices on campus that may be useful for you to know about , including:

Counseling and Psychological Services: (310) 825-0768,
www.counseling.ucla.edu

The Office of the Ombudsman, Mediation and Dispute Resolution Resources:
(310) 825-7627, <http://www.ombuds.ucla.edu>

Title IX Office / Sexual Harassment Prevention (310) 206-3417,
<https://www.sexualharassment.ucla.edu>

College Academic Counseling: (310) 825-3382,
<http://www.ugeducation.ucla.edu/counseling/>

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1 October 2nd Getting Acclimated & Setting the Tone

- Assessing what strategies will be most useful on a class by class basis
- Building a section syllabus and other tasks to be ready on your first day
- Setting the tone in the classroom
- Your rights as a TA (visit by union rep.)

Reading

1. Webb, D. A. (2005). Twelve easy steps to becoming an effective teaching assistant. PS: Political Science & Politics, 38(4), 757-761.
2. Hoy, A. W., & Weinstein, C. S. (2006). Student and teacher perspectives on classroom management. Handbook of classroom management: Research, practice and contemporary issues, 181, 222.
3. How to improve lesson plans (and teaching): O'Leary, Rosemary. 2002. "Advice to New Teachers: Turn It Inside Out." PS: Political Science & Politics: 91-92
4. Tindell, D. R., & Bohlander, R. W. (2012). The use and abuse of cell phones and text messaging in the classroom: A survey of college students. College Teaching, 60(1), 1-9. (optional)
5. UCLA TA Handbook Beginning to Teach 33-42. (optional)

Assignment: If you have a draft of your section syllabus, bring it to class. Submit your section syllabus by Monday September 30th. Make sure you are registered as the TA on record for your sections. If you can't access to your course web pages, contact Diego Garcia or Kathy Escobedo.

Week 2 October 9th Teaching Styles and Lesson Planning

- Planning for your teaching style
- Strategies for student participation
- In class activities for the college level
- Visit from supervising professor

Reading

1. Brame, C. J. (2013). Flipping the classroom (can also be found on course web page). <https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/flipping-the-classroom/>
2. Barkley, E. F., Cross, K. P., & Major, C. H. (2014). Collaborative learning techniques: A handbook for college faculty. John Wiley & Sons. (part 3 chapter 7)
3. The downsides of PowerPoint: Wolff, Jonathan. "PowerPoint failure" <http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2007/mar/06/highereducation.news> (optional)
4. Bos, Angela, and Monica Schneider. 2009. "Stepping Around the Brick Wall: Overcoming Student Obstacles in Method courses." PS: Political Science & Politics: 375-383 (optional)
5. Pedrosa, D., Cravino, J., Morgado, L., Barreira, C., Nunes, R. R., Martins, P., & Paredes, H. (2016). Simprogramming: The development of an integrated teaching approach for computer programming in higher education. (optional)
6. UCLA TA Handbook Approches to Instruction 44-49. (optional)

Assignment: Turn in a copy of your lesson plan for this week's section.

Week 3 October 16th Classroom Management & Interacting with Professors and Students

- Professor interactions and expectations
- How to deal with overly talkative, and very quiet students
- Challenges with students and "what ifs"

Reading

1. Brooks, David (2011) "Getting Students to talk", Chronicle of Higher Education, March 21.
2. Young Jr, A. A., Furhman, M., & Chesler, M. A. (2015). How Race and Gender Shape Perceived Challenges to Classroom Authority and Expertise. In Faculty Identities and the Challenge of Diversity (pp. 57-76). Routledge.

3. Buchler, Justin. 2009. "Teaching Quantitative Methodology to the Math Averse." PS: Political Science & Politics: 527-530
4. UCLA TA Handbook The TA and University Policy 24-29

Assignment: Observe an experienced TA by the end of week 3.

Week 4 23rd Midterm Review, Grading & Disputes, & Dealing with Difficult Situations

- Midterm review (group work, and games)
- Grading efficiently
- Giving useful student feedback
- Dealing with plagiarism and grading disputes
- Student mental health (Health and Psychological Services rep.)

Reading

1. UCLA TA Handbook Grading and University Policy (37-40) & Cheating and Plagiarism (60-62)
2. 10 Tips for grading essays quickly and efficiently <http://www.unwrittenhistories.com/10-tips-for-grading-essays-quickly-and-efficiently/>
3. Donaldson James, Susan 2017. Mental health problems rising among college students. NBC News.
4. Simon, Caroline. 2017. More and more students need mental health services. But colleges struggle to keep up. USA Today College.
5. Warner, John. 2015. Why grading student writing takes so much time (for me anyway). Inside Higher Ed.

Assignment: Observe a classmate by the end of week 4. Think of questions for the TA panel.

Week 5 October 30th Experienced Student Panel & Observation Discussion

- Experienced TA panel Q & A
- Discuss TA Sections, what you liked, what would be done differently

Assignment: Come prepared with questions for our TA panel. Have comments ready to discuss about the sections you observed, and turn in observation forms.

Week 6 November 6th Writing Skills & Course Evaluations

- Active learning for essay writing
- Using peers as writing monitors
- How to increase evaluation participation
- Strategies to reduce bias in evaluations

Reading

1. Baglione, Lisa. 2008. "Doing good and doing well: Teaching Research Paper Writing by Unpacking the Paper." PS Political Science & Politics: 595-602
2. Barkley, E. F., Cross, K. P., & Major, C. H. (2014). Collaborative learning techniques: A handbook for college faculty. John Wiley & Sons. (part 3 chapter 11)
3. Barberio, Richard. 2005. "The One-Armed Bandit Syndrome: Overuse of the Internet in Student Research Projects." PS Political Science & Politics: 307-311
4. Kelsky, Kareb. 2018. The semester's ending. Time to worry about our flawed course evaluations. The Chronicle of Higher Education.

Assignment: Write down some activities that you think might help build writing skills. We will discuss strategies in class. Email me the day time and location of each of your sections, and schedule a followup meeting.

Weeks 7-9 NO CLASS MEETINGS

TAC Observations will be conducted during weeks 7 and 9. I will contact each of you to set up a time to visit your section, and conduct a one on one follow up meeting. There will be no meeting or observations week 9 due to the Thanksgiving holiday. One on one meetings may be scheduled Monday or Tuesday of week 8 for those who were observed during week 7.

Week 10 December 4th Final meeting- Wrapping up the quarter

- Turning in final grades
- Letters of recommendation
- Interactions outside of the classroom

Reading

1. Roever, Sally, and Paul Manna. 2005. "Could You Explain My Grade?: The Pedagogical and Administrative Virtues of Grading Sheets." *PS: Political Science & Politics*: 317-320
2. Safier, Rebecca. 2017. Four Amazing Recommendation Letter Samples for Students <https://blog.prepscholar.com/4-amazing-recommendation-letter-samples>