

# Teaching Statement and Portfolio

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## 1. Courses

My past teaching experience and my areas of specialization make me competent to teach the following courses and topics at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

- Canadian Politics / Quebec Politics
- Introduction to Empirical Political Science / Research Methods
- Quantitative Methods / Experimental Methods
- Political Psychology
- Public Opinion
- The Comparative Politics of Ethnic Diversity

## 2. Pedagogical objectives

→ @ first 2 sentence -  
use the word "I" and  
"my" six times - need to  
emphasize -

Throughout my doctoral studies I have demonstrated that I view teaching as an important <sup>student</sup> part of my professional development. The courses I have taught show my ability to direct <sup>centered</sup> students whose goal is to continue to the graduate level, as well as my desire to introduce <sup>learning</sup> new students to the field and share with them the breadth of political science. Most of my teaching experience deals in one way or another with the methodological foundations of our discipline. I believe that this strong emphasis on the basics of social science inquiry is essential in achieving the main goal I pursue in my teaching: helping students acquire the analytical skills that are necessary to critically deal with the information they receive in everyday life—in the form of causal claims, for instance—and to be able to understand and evaluate the works that they will encounter during their undergraduate or graduate studies.

As demonstrated by the excerpts from my teaching evaluations, students find my lectures and discussions to be challenging and highly motivating. This is especially important when teaching courses related to research methods, whether quantitative or qualitative, because it is often the only way to get students to engage with material that may at first seem remote from what sparked their interest in political science. This is achieved by encouraging students

Mike

Sharp  
2nd statement  
baseline

*focus on methodology  
instead of  
student centered.*

to move beyond the substantive matter at hand, so that they engage with the material at different levels of analysis and become aware of what is happening behind the scenes. I also strongly believe that a problem-oriented approach to teaching helps students engage with the material and increases learning retention.

*design* | Practically, I applied this teaching philosophy in the different courses I taught and designed. During the 2012-2013 academic year, I helped design, launch and teach a new, first-year introductory course on empirical political science. The goal of this new course is to introduce students to political science as a scientific enterprise with an emphasis on the logic of causal inference and the set of tools to assess causal relationships. It is first and foremost a hands-on, problem-oriented course, something I believe is essential when introducing students to complex concepts. This approach means asking students to do many short exercises applying the concepts at hand, whether it is to come up with their own causal mechanisms to explain a social phenomenon, or their own measures for a multidimensional concept such as democracy. It also means using real world examples to help students understand and connect with other important concepts. For example, we used the Arab Spring to clarify the differences between structural causes and triggers, and we explained and applied the idea of necessary and sufficient conditions by working through the 2012 U.S. Presidential election. These exercises really helped students grasp important but abstract concepts. Judging from their comments, many of them also felt it helped them engage with the material they encountered in other courses.

*what  
were  
the  
exercise!  
what  
was the  
teaching*

*very "I" centered*

Although this introductory course was specifically designed to deal with the underpinnings of empirical political science, I strongly believe that a course on a substantive topic should also aim to foster these analytical skills in students. An introductory class in Canadian Politics demands that an important amount of factual information be transmitted, but this can be achieved while also insisting on the different approaches to the study of politics. This is what I emphasize in the course "Introduction to Political Psychology" that I developed. The political psychology subfield exemplifies the methodological diversity of political science, and the readings are selected to reflect the breadth of the discipline. Throughout the class, I emphasize the need to pay attention to the strengths and weaknesses of different methods while reviewing the substantive findings in the literature. The syllabus for the undergraduate version of this course follows. In addition, I am currently designing a second course, "The Comparative Politics of Ethnic Diversity" which deals specifically with how individuals react to ethnic diversity, the ways in which countries manage this diversity, the consequences of these choices, and how individuals react to policies enacted by their government.

At the graduate level, the assumption is that most of these skills have already been developed. The goal then is to help students apply these skills, gain the methodological and substantive knowledge necessary to pursue academic research, and help them acquire the discipline and the work ethic essential for this type of work. I believe that my expertise on the behavioral and psychological consequences of immigration policies and the interdisciplinary nature of my own work—bridging the methods and knowledge from social psychology with the immigration policy literature— would contribute meaningfully to the *Immigration, Settlement and Diaspora Policies* field of your Policy Studies PhD program.

phrasing

Although I have yet to teach at the graduate level. I already have experience in directing students. During the 2013-2014, I taught the Honours thesis seminar in collaboration with Antje Ellermann. In addition to lectures on research design, quantitative methods and different statistical packages, I was also supervising nine students writing quantitative theses. These theses spanned different subfields of the discipline and I directed students working on polarization in the U.S. Congress, civil wars outcomes, democratization in Singapore, to name a few. I met with these students weekly and help them through the different stages of their project: from the literature review to data collection and from analysis to presentation. The objective was to offer guidance but also to encourage and foster the autonomy needed to move on to graduate studies. Student's evaluations as well as the theses they produced indicate that I attained this objective.

- identifies student / objectives.

5-10 pg.

### Comments for Charles

- too much "I" - not student centred approach
- not enough about Charles (what inspires / sparks them)
- presents past experience well but is it active or visioning enough -  
what would you like to do in the future - does he even like teaching?

- adjectives about himself -

- 1<sup>st</sup> paragraph, doesn't have enough evidence for  
assertions emphasis on teaching  
- content heavy w/out technique.

- Striking about how much of a blank slate Charles is.
- too short. / statement of teaching philosophy.

↳ structural, it does not conform to teaching practice.

- given - what is your signature practice - what are we getting? who are you as a teacher?  
what are your signature practices.

- i) clearly defined teaching philosophy
- ii) signature identity as a teacher?
- iii) evidence of teaching practice in term of techniques
- iv) what were the learning objectives of your course?

Liberal:

- examples
- how you are grounding in the discipline.