

### Teaching Statement

I see my role in the classroom as that of a facilitator; not simply of knowledge, but of empowerment, choice and self-reflection. As a female international student working in political science, a discipline with the analysis of power at its core, I root my pedagogical commitment in facilitating my students' ethical engagement with the uneven empirical world around them, instead of simply serving as a conduit for a stream of information.

Beyond the classic repertoire of teaching students to read, analyse and communicate complex arguments and texts, I focus on empowering my students to become active participants in their communities. I have found that students tend to be more engaged when they have a stake in creating the community they participate in. I therefore practice principles of direct democracy and create egalitarian classroom communities from the onset where all participants, instructor included, contribute to the learning objectives and content. We collaboratively determine the rules of classroom conduct, our conflict resolution processes, and the nature of their contributions to the academic community we form. This allows students to express their opinions and arguments, trusting their colleagues to hold them and each other accountable and ensure the classroom remains a productive learning environment.

To better harness the collaborative communities that emerge, I actively work on utilizing the diversity of knowledge, ideology, experience, and voices in a classroom, so that students can learn from one another as much as they learn from the instructor. As such, I eschew the purely lecture format, in favour of utilizing active learning techniques like the collaborative mapping of arguments from primary theoretical texts, student-generated communal study guides, peer feedback on written drafts, and revolving group discussions. By periodically and intentionally changing up group compositions for all these activities, they are presented with the diversity of opinions within the classroom itself and learn from each other's interpretations, and experiences in this manner. I attempt to ensure ideological, gender, racial, and experiential diversity across groups to the extent possible to maximise exposure to new opinions.

I try to incorporate additional and alternate viewpoints not represented in the classroom, by bringing in guest speakers and practitioners whose work and experience provides students with a relatable authenticity. One such speaker was a Turkish professor who was a victim of the anti-intellectual purge of 2016 in Turkey, and was better able to communicate governmental repression and mobilization under democratic and autocratic regimes. I additionally utilise a variety of multimedia resources (media resources, documentaries, ethnographies, Skype conversations) and interdisciplinary texts to compensate for the diversity of voices that won't make it into the classroom otherwise. I am invested in incorporating the benefits of technology into classrooms as a mean by which we can generate increased participation and involvement by students, generate new voices and content, and relate the study of politics more directly with the forms of politics students interact with outside the classroom.

By actively drawing in the empirical world into the classroom, I hope to communicate to students that politics surrounds us in all aspects of our lives and we make political decisions constantly. For instance, I integrate the study of campus social movements into my course *The Politics of Protest*, where students are able to study and discuss campus sexual assault and student athlete mobilization through the lens of social movement theory. This allows me to direct students' attention from more 'theoretical' texts toward those texts' real-world implications, especially in their lives. I use a combination of pop culture and current events to reinforce the

immediacy of politics in our lives. In recent years, I have used movie trailers, such as the trailer for *Me Before You*, to illustrate how (disability) activists mobilized and brought marginal voices to the fore, by piggybacking off a Hollywood production. I have also designed a syllabus unit that measured comparative calculations of Ecological Footprints, allowing students to grapple with global disparities in resource consumption, and come to terms with their own complicity in global patterns and trends of climate change and conflict.

I find that the classroom can be an excellent place to deconstruct the power dynamics that shape our lives and thereby empower young adults to be political creatures who are active participants in political and social processes. While many students have intuitive positions on political issues, I encourage students to make the “hard choices”, often by playing devil’s advocate but also through the use of political simulations. We recreate impromptu political situations encountered in our texts and students are assigned the roles of leaders, activists, advisors, military generals amongst others. Simulations allow for real time decision making as well as generating empathy for the perceived mistakes and successes of political actions, such as starting a war or turning back refugees. The replication of the empirical world in our classroom settings, helps empower students to make political choices, while being cognizant of the weight and importance of these decisions.

Finally, I hope to provide a space for students to reflect on their role in the world and their complicity, active or passive, in the politics around us. I do so by being critical of my own arguments and reflecting on my own intellectual journey, while extending an invitation to students to be self-reflective as well. While ensuring the safety (mental and physical) of my students is paramount, I also am cognizant of the value of intellectual discomfort in the classroom. I find discomfort to be a side effect of exposure to new ideas and new voices as we update and amend our belief systems in the face of new information. I encourage this intellectual discomfort to the extent possible, in efforts to convey to students the value of being open to new ideas. Inculcating the practices of introspection and reflexivity therefore, allows us to keep learning beyond the immediate experience, thus extending the learning community created within the classroom to the world and life beyond the college classroom.