

**Political Science 6201**  
**Teaching Political Science I**

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Hours: 1:00-2:30 pm Tuesday & Thursday and by appointment  
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Fall Semester 2006  
Friday 11:50-12:40  
OSH 229

This course is the first part of the department's sequence on teaching political science. In this class, we examine a number of topics related to teaching such as presenting lectures, conducting discussions, and grading exams. The goal of this course is to provide you with additional information on matters of teaching and learning to supplement your teaching experiences. This course should also be an opportunity for all of us to learn more about teaching and our discipline. Please come to class ready to discuss the material, ask questions, and share your views and experiences.

Course Requirements

Grades for this course will be based upon fulfilling the following:

- (1) attendance and active participation (25%);
- (2) four written assignments:
  - a. paper on text evaluation (15%);
  - b. paper on classroom observations (25%)
  - c. lesson preparation (20%)
  - d. class exam or writing assignment (15%).

**COURSE OUTLINE**

Week 1, August 25, Introduction

Week 2, September 1, Teaching Critical Thinking in Political Science

**Read:** Barry Beyer. 1979. "Learning, Knowing, and Teaching." In Teaching Thinking in Social Studies. Columbus: Charles Merrill. Pp. 68-83.

Thomas Atwater. 1991. "Critical Thinking in Basic U.S. Government Classes." PS: Political Science and Politics 24 (2): 209-211.

Mel Cohen. 1993. "Making Critical Thinking a Classroom Reality." PS: Political Science and Politics 26 (2): 241-244.

Week 3, September 8, Encouraging Students to Read Well

**Read:** Anthony Daley. 1995. "On Reading: Strategies for Students." PS: Political Science and Politics 28 (1): 89-100.

Andrew Green and William Rose. 1996. "The Professor's Dream: Getting Students to Talk and Read Intelligently," PS: Political Science and Politics 29 (4): 687-690.

Week 4, September 15, Presenting Information through Lecture

**Read:** Kenneth Eble. 1988. "The Lecture as Discourse." In The Craft of Teaching, 2nd ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Pp. 68-81.

Barbara Gross Davis. 1993. "Delivering a Lecture." In Tools for Teaching. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Pp. 111-119.

Barbara Gross Davis. 1993. "Explaining Clearly." In Tools for Teaching. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Pp. 120-124.

Week 5, September 22, Micro-teaching Exercise

Week 6, September 29, Fostering Class Discussion

**Read:** Kenneth Eble. 1988. "Discussion." In The Craft of Teaching, 2nd ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Pp. 83-97.

Mel Cohen. 1991. "Making Class Participation a Reality." PS: Political Science and Politics 24 (4): 699-703.

**\*\* Text evaluation paper due \*\***

Week 7, October 6, Fall Break: No Class

Week 8, October 13, Using Simulations and Technology

**Read:** Elizabeth Smith and Mark Boyer. 1996. "Designing In-Class Simulations." PS: Political Science and Politics 29 (4): 690-694.

Stephen M. Shellman. 2001. "Active Learning in Comparative Politics: A Mock German Election and Coalition-Formation Simulation." PS: Political Science and Politics 34 (4): 827-834.

Week 9, October 20, Discussion on Classroom Observations

**\*\* Paper on classroom observations due \*\***

Week 10, October 27, Using Writing as a Teaching Tool

**Read:** Barbara Gross Davis. 1993. "Designing Effective Writing Assignments." In Tools for Teaching. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Pp. 213-221.

Charles King. 1998. "Battling the Six Evil Geniuses of Essay Writing." PS: Political Science and Politics 31 (1): 59-63.

Week 11, November 3, Preparing Exams

**Read:** Barbara Gross Davis. 1993. "Quizzes, Tests, and Exams." In Tools for Teaching. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Pp. 239-251.

Donald Chisolm. 1990. "Between Leibniz and Voltaire: Exams and Grading in a Less Than Perfect World." PS: Political Science and Politics 23 (4): 600-604.

**\*\* Lesson preparation assignment due \*\***

Week 12, November 10, Grading

**Read:** Barbara Gross Davis. 1993. "Grading Practices." In Tools for Teaching. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Pp. 282-287.

Brian Glenn. 1998. "The Golden Rule of Grading: Being Fair." PS: Political Science and Politics 23 (4): 787-788.

Week 13, November 17, Academic Honesty and Other Matters

**Read:** Kenneth Eble. 1988. "Cheating, Confrontations, and Other Situations." In The Craft of Teaching, 2nd ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Pp. 164-180.

Week 14, November 24, Thanksgiving Break: No Class

Week 15, December 1, Last Class

**\*\* Exam or writing assignment due \*\***

Week 16, December 8, Reading Day: No Class

### **Assignment Information**

Micro-teaching Exercise in class on September 22.

For this exercise, you will prepare a short lesson (10 minute) and teach it to our class. After your presentation, the class will have a chance to ask questions and you will get feedback on your presentation. The purpose of this exercise is to learn to evaluate your own teaching by: (1) planning a lesson; (2) presenting the lesson; (3) responding to questions; and, most importantly, (3) assessing your own presentation as well as learning from others' responses to it. For this exercise, you should select a substantive topic to teach as you might present it in an introductory political science course. Be sure to chose a topic that can be presented orally in no more than 10 minutes. You may use the board, a handout, or an overhead if necessary but no other presentation aids should be used (e.g., no video or PowerPoint).

Assignment 1, Length: Approximately 3-5 pages double spaced; Due: September 29.

Text Evaluation: Your task in this short paper is to evaluate a typical reading assignment that an undergraduate student would encounter. To begin, first select one chapter in a current textbook used in an introductory political science class. Read the chapter for content, noting how long it took you and what you learned. Next, look at the chapter again, this time focusing on the pedagogical features of the chapter. For example, how is the chapter organized? what are the

learning objectives of the chapter? are these objectives clearly stated, implied, or not entirely evident? how have the authors attempted to meet the learning objectives? are there specific features in the chapter to help students understand the material or meet the objectives? how well did they work? Finally, offer your summary evaluation of the chapter you read. Consider, for example, whether the chapter conveys the content clearly, whether a student reading the chapter would learn the most important information about the topic, or whether a student would need particular background knowledge to learn from the chapter. And, if you were teaching a class using this text, what might you do to help students learn the material covered in this chapter? Your paper should not consist of a series of short answers to these questions, but should be presented as a cohesive evaluation of the chapter.

Assignment 2, Length: Approximately 3-5 pages double spaced; Due: October 20.

Paper on class observations: The purpose of this assignment is to learn about classroom teaching not through participation (as we usually do) but by careful observation. This assignment has two parts. The first part is to conduct detailed observations of two class sessions in an introductory political science class. Before conducting any observation, be sure that you have the permission of the instructor(s). As you conduct your observation, consider the following questions: (1) how would you describe the physical setting of the classroom; does it appear to facilitate learning, why or why not? (2) what was the instructor's approach to teaching in this class -- was it a lecture, a discussion, a group activity, or some combination of these? (3) what techniques, if any, did the instructor use to enhance learning (e.g., writing main points on the board, effective use of questions, using overheads or other visuals, using a video or some other technology)? (4) what was the content of the class session and how well did it seem to be conveyed? and, (5) how did students respond in the class, e.g., were they engaged or distracted, did they ask questions, how many students seemed to be actively involved in the class? Once you have completed your observations, write a short paper describing what you learned. Use the notes from your observations as the basis for your paper and include your notes with your paper. Be sure that your paper focuses on what you learned from your observations and is not merely a summary of your observations.

Assignment 3, Length: 3-4 pages, double spaced; Due: November 3.

Lesson preparation: Choose a topic that would be appropriate for an introductory political science course and write a lesson for presenting it. First, write a set of notes for presenting your topic as a lecture. Start by identifying the class and roughly where the material fits into the class (e.g., Introduction to Comparative Politics course: this lecture introduces students to the basics of parliamentary democracy after they have discussed US politics and as an introduction to British politics), and then present the content of your lecture in note form. Once you have completed the lesson as a lecture, consider two additional questions: (1) could you, and if so how would you, present this same content as a class discussion? and (2) how might you integrate video, the internet, or some other technology into the presentation of this content?

Assignment 4, Length: 2-3 pages; Due: December 1.

Examination or writing assignment: This assignment is to prepare an examination or a writing assignment for an introductory class in political science. For the exam, first explain what content your test covers as well as what format you are using (e.g., short answer, essay, multiple choice) and why. Then, present the exam as you would give it to students in the class (i.e., complete with course number, instructions, etc.). For the writing assignment, first explain the purpose of the assignment within the context of the course and the learning objectives you have. Then, present the instructions for the writing assignment as you would give them to students.

**Statement on Academic Honesty:** All students in this course are expected to meet the standards of academic honesty. This statement means, among other things, that the written work you submit in this course must be your own. Any work you submit must be the product of your individual effort and not the work of others. Work submitted for this course must not have been submitted in a previous course nor may it be submitted in any course being taken concurrently without the knowledge and approval of all instructors concerned. An act of academic misconduct is a violation of the university's regulations regarding student conduct. As such, an act of academic misconduct may result in a failing grade for an assignment or a failing grade for a course. An act of academic misconduct may result in a recommendation to university officials for additional disciplinary action. The following definition is from the university's Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities (Policy 8-10, Rev 6, February 2006): "Academic misconduct' includes, but is not limited to, cheating, misrepresenting one's work, inappropriately collaborating, plagiarism, and fabrication or falsification of information. . . . It also includes facilitating academic misconduct by intentionally helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic misconduct." Definitions of these terms as well as information regarding your rights and responsibilities as a student are available in the university's policy manual <<http://www.admin.utah.edu/ppmanual/8/8-10.html>>.

**Equal Access:** The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All written information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.

**Schedule Changes:** The schedule of assignments or due dates may need to be changed based upon events during the semester. If changes need to be made, advance notification will be made in class.