

## Teaching philosophy statement

I thrive in the classroom setting: it provides me with a unique chance to both share my knowledge and to learn new things from the dynamic exchange with students. No class is ever the same. Indeed, I am driven to continuously learn and develop my technique to become a better teacher. I constantly seek to give my students not only direct classroom knowledge but also a wider perspective of the discipline and its applications to real world problems. To do so, I especially encourage and support students who want to learn beyond the minimal requirements by providing them with additional tools and sources, along with my continuous support and feedback. As a recent student myself, I know that even one class can change someone's life. Hence, I am extremely careful and attentive in the way I tailor courses. In what follows, I first elaborate on the core principles of my teaching: respect, challenge, and support. Then, I will expand upon the type of courses I have taught and desire to teach in future. Finally, I will describe what methods I use to improve on my teaching approach.

My first teaching principle is "respect". I respect my students as individuals, and I set clear ground rules for class interaction given all individual perspectives. As clearly as possible, I provide them with all the necessary information they require to be successful in the course. Gently, but consistently, I make sure the students are not only personally flourishing in the classroom, but that they contribute to the success of their peers as well. My experience shows that it is not difficult to create an environment that facilitates a friendly connection between the students. Furthermore, in regards to setting boundaries in such an open setting, I am very transparent regarding my attitude towards cheating: I make sure that it is impossible to do and that the students perceive it as going against our mutual agreement of respect and honesty.

The second principle is "challenge". Whatever constitutes the students' prior knowledge, I encourage them to stay open to other perspectives throughout the course, gain new skills or attain a broader understanding of what they want to do further in life. My ultimate aim is to show my students that they can always do better and strive for greater heights. I want to inspire them and assist them as much as I can. Last, but not least, my third teaching approach principle is "support." While I make clear to the student that sometimes struggling with new material is part of the learning process, constantly challenge my students, I make sure they know they can come to me for help and support.

During "Introduction to Statistics", the first course I taught completely on my own, I introduced and followed these principles. The students came from diverse backgrounds, which included highschoolers, undergrads, postgrads, domestic and international students, and those who were fluent in English and others for whom understanding simple tasks was a challenge. I aimed to make sure that nobody felt left out by providing constant personal feedback. One of the students, who struggled tremendously over the course, wrote the following email to me at the end of the semester:

*It was a tough and stressful course, but I know that the things I learned will be applied in my career in the future. You have been very attentive and accessible, and it shows that you care about your students doing well.*

Meanwhile, another student, an international highschooler who was extremely strong in math before this course and who eventually received one of the best grades, wrote the following to me:

*I appreciate your teaching so much; it let me be very interested in statistics.  
I am planning to study statistics in college.*

Furthermore, in two other evaluations, students wrote the following impressions about me: “She is nice and friendly and responsible” and “You are great! Thanks a lot!”. It was wonderful to get feedback that I was on the right track with my teaching approach and that students were learning from and enjoying my class.

In regards to my teaching interests, I am able to instruct courses in International Relations, methods/data science, and formal theory. My broad IR areas of interest are online social networks, terrorism, and Eastern European politics, with a concentration on authoritarian regimes. My life experience growing up in Moscow, together with my constant monitoring of politics in the region, allows me to provide a comprehensive view of the many aspects of past and recent events that go beyond the conventional textbook content.

In terms of methods/data science, I can teach a range of courses course, from experimental design and causal inference to MLE and Bayesian statistics. I can also teach courses in object-oriented programming, relational databases, and machine learning. In short, I enjoy explaining seemingly complicated things in a way that every student can understand them. I am truly passionate about math and computer science, and I always try to inspire my students to become as excited as I am about these subjects.

Currently, I have a lot of ideas for courses I would love to teach. One course in particular that I’d like to offer to political science majors is an applied course in data science. I think such a course could be very empowering for undergraduates.

In order to improve my teaching and keep growing as an educator, I had enrolled in The Preparation-in-Pedagogy program at the Teaching Center at the Washington University in Saint Louis. This program provided me with additional opportunities to gain professional feedback and reflect on ways to improve on my performance. As part of the curriculum, I participated in multiple workshops on active and collaborative learning, and diversity and inclusion in the classroom. In addition, I continue to carefully analyze the feedback I obtain from students and make sure I learn from and never repeat the same mistakes. One such improvement was to be become more aware of the pacing my explanations. Furthermore, I continuously reflect on my teaching in order to develop a style of teaching that is most beneficial to my values and talents. For example, I have already discovered that I prefer to combine lecturing with interactive and participatory components of learning in the same class.

To conclude, sharing knowledge is a crucial part of academic life which I thoroughly enjoy and from which I greatly benefit. I am always open to learning, growing and improving in hopes to become a more effective educator and to be able to inspire students. I am truly excited to be on this teaching journey of discovery and sharing and am looking forward to what the years will bring!