

Teaching Philosophy: I approach my teaching with two guiding questions: am I providing students with the practical skills to engage and evaluate the political world in which they live? And, am I enabling students to reach their own conclusions, to find their own intellectual voice in ways that matter beyond the confines of this course? This approach is grounded in my belief that the classroom space is most successful when it fosters a sense of enterprise—that is, a sense of mutual engagement in a project of understanding and intellectual growth.

To foster this environment, I employ two basic devices. First, I structure lectures and discussions around problems: what are the questions that the authors, or texts, are responding to (on their own terms)? Do these problems (in the same, or other terms) persist in our world today? By starting with questions instead of a single line of interpretation, students are drawn more deeply into the text. I have found this particularly useful in classes where students have diverse educational backgrounds. For instance, in a recent course taught with the Bard Prison Initiative (an upper division political theory offering taught at Eastern Correctional in New York) I assigned weekly “writing responses” where students had to formally articulate a question responding to the readings. This assignment took pressure off less confident students who were worried about not getting it ‘right,’ while encouraging students to find common ground through shared uncertainty. By starting from a mutual activity of questioning, students were asked to hone their scholarly instincts by constructing a common, critical framework in response. In large lecture courses, I frequently employ a similar exercise by having students break into groups to discuss a question raised by the text before returning to a discussion with the whole room. Approaching theory as a collaborative enterprise shows students that uncertainty sits at the heart of productive inquiry.

Second, and related, I emphasize that students should view their diverse perspectives and unique backgrounds as a *part* of their scholarship. Encouraging students to see connections between the course and their own experiences gives students a sense of authority over intimidating subjects, while keeping class discussions timely and vital. Instead of typical in-class presentations I often have students lead a portion of class discussion each week, either offering a textual interpretation for debate, designing a group activity, or posing a puzzle to be solved. Students were graded on the quality of their presentations, but, centrally, also on their *engagement* with the presentations of others. The purpose is to have students view themselves as scholars in their own right, while asking them to engage seriously with the ideas of their peers. In the past, three students memorably designed a quiz game (“Arendtopardy,” complete with *Jeopardy* soundtrack and buzzer) examining the core categories of Arendt’s *The Human Condition*. Two others organized a multi-round debate evaluating Michael Rogin’s political arguments in his interpretation of the film *Independence Day*. Another student argued for an adaptation of Nietzsche’s argument in the *Birth of Tragedy* using Beyonce’s *Lemonade*. This emphasis on mutual enterprise contributes to a classroom defined by active engagement, trust, and respect; my students often comment on this participatory, engaged classroom culture in my teaching evaluations.

Teaching Experience and Interests: I have taught large lectures as well as focused seminars, and have particular experience teaching students from diverse socio-economic and educational backgrounds. Classes I have taught include core survey courses covering ancient political thought, early modern and enlightenment political theory, as well as 19th and 20th C. continental thought. As I believe that research and teaching should complement each other, I also have several upper division course offerings on Greek tragedy, the politics of heroism, as well as courses analyzing the intersection of politics, film, and literature. I also have extensive experience teaching writing intensive courses: as a teaching fellow at UCLA I taught for several years with their year-long, “History of Modern Thought” Freshman Cluster; and this fall will be teaching a writing intensive course with the Bard Prison Initiative. At the advanced and graduate level, my teaching interests include the reception of Ancient political thought by contemporary democratic theory, as well as courses examining the role of popular genre specific discourses (such as melodrama) on film as sources of political imagination. As a TA I have also taught an introduction to US Politics course and would be happy to do so again. I routinely receive high evaluations from my students. These are available upon request.