

Gov 3002: Teaching and Communicating Political Science

Department of Government, Harvard University

Fall 2019

Teaching staff:

Faculty advisor: Prof. Ryan Enos (renos@gov.harvard.edu)

Instructor: Sarah James (sarahjames@g.harvard.edu)

Office hours: Tuesdays 10:30am-noon in CGIS café or by appointment in CGIS K435

Class meetings:

All classes will be held on Tuesday afternoons from 3-5pm, with the exception of the two introductory sessions on 8/26 and 8/27 which will run 11am-4pm. All sessions will be held in K050.

Date	Type	Topic
8/26/19	<i>Required</i>	An introduction to teaching at Harvard
8/27/19	<i>Required</i>	The fundamentals of effective instruction
9/10/19	<i>Required</i>	Developing and grading assignments effectively
9/24/19	Option 1	Introduction to leading effective discussions
10/8/19	<i>Required</i>	Creating an inclusive classroom
10/22/19	Option 2	Creating effective practice opportunities in section
11/12/19	<i>Required</i>	Perspectives on teaching in the profession
11/19/19	Option 3	Developing your own course and syllabus

Note that on 9/17 there will be a discussion for **international students** to give them the opportunity to ask questions and seek advice from international TFs and faculty on best practices for teaching in an American classroom.

Goals:

The ultimate goal of this course is to help you to become an effective and efficient teacher. Developing the skills to clearly communicate information and your expectations to students not only enhances their ability to achieve but also makes balancing teaching and research more manageable. Furthermore, the foundation of our discipline, in some ways, is communicating what we know to others. Learning teaching best practices furthers your ability to do this successfully, regardless of your career goals. This is a required course (graded SAT/UNSAT) for Government Ph.D. students who are teaching in the department for the first time (typically G3s). Between meetings, you will have the chance to apply what you learn through peer observation, having your section videotaped, and watching your section with the Departmental Pedagogy Fellow.

Course expectations:

Students earning a SAT in Gov 3002 will meet the following expectations:

- Attend *all five required sessions* and *at least one optional* session. The optional three sessions are designed to be complementary, and we encourage Teaching Fellows to attend any and all of them if they would like to add additional skills to their teaching tool-kit.
- Observe and debrief one section with your assigned fellow graduate student by **November 1, 2019**.
- Sign up for a slot to complete a section video observation and debrief cycle with Sarah. The observation must be complete by the end of the semester.

Session overview

Monday, August 26, 11-4pm (Required)—An introduction to teaching at Harvard

In this session, we will explore:

- the basic logistics of running a section at Harvard, particularly in the government department
- best practices from experienced Teaching Fellows into section planning for the semester
- a pre-semester checklist to prepare for section

By the end of this session graduate students will enhance their:

- understanding of their Teaching Fellow Title IX responsibilities
- knowledge of the academic and mental health supports available to students
- sense of the departmental community that can support teaching challenges and celebrates teaching successes

Resources and readings

- [Bok Center for Teaching and Learning](#)
- Coleman, David. (2019). "[There's More to College Than Getting into College.](#)" *The Atlantic*.
- [The Crimson's freshmen profile](#)

Tuesday, August 27, 11-4pm (Required)—The fundamentals of good teaching

In this session, we will explore:

- the benefits of backwards planning section and the semester
- options for developing and communicating session objectives

By the end of this session graduate students will enhance their ability to:

- backwards plan both individual lessons and the semester as a whole
- design scaffolded course assignments

Resources and readings

- [ABL Connect](#): A Harvard-based repository of active-learning activities
- The Bok Center's [introduction to learner-centered design](#)
- Bransford, J. D., Brown, A. L., & Cocking, R. R. (2000). *How people learn* (Vol. 11). Washington, DC: National academy press.
- Brown, P. C., Roediger III, H. L., & McDaniel, M. A. (2014). *Make it stick*. Harvard University Press.
- Wiggins, G., Wiggins, G. P., & McTighe, J. (2005). *Understanding by design*. Ascd.

Tuesday, September 10 (Required)—Developing and grading assignments effectively

In this session, we will explore:

- the qualities of a fair and effective assessment (be it homework, quiz, test, essay, or final exam).
- the impact of using a rubrics and criteria for success to grade student writing

By the end of this session graduate students will enhance their ability to:

- incorporate effective assessment design and grading practices into their own section for the semester
- access the resources to support student writing available on GovWrites
- provide efficient and effective feedback on student work

Resources and readings

- Brookhart, Susan M., Thomas R. Guskey. (2019). "[Are Grades Reliable: Lessons from a Century of Research.](#)" *ASCD Education Update*. 61(5).
- Sackstein, Starr. (2019). "[PSA: When Giving Feedback, Don't Lead with 'I Love' or 'I Like'.](#)" *Education Week*.
- The Bok Center on [Grading and Designing Student Work](#)

- [HarvardWrites](#) and [GovWrites](#)—note this website is in the process of being updated, but there is useful content on here

Tuesday, September 24 (Optional)—Introduction to leading effective discussions

In this session, we will explore:

- the qualities of an effective classroom discussion based on course readings and concepts
- strategies for managing a scholarly discussion on a charged political topic

By the end of this session graduate students will enhance their ability to:

- implement best practices for increasing student participation in and understanding of a discussion's key takeaways
- assess student learning from a discussion-based section

Resources and readings

- Howard, Jay. "[How to Hold a Better Discussion: Advice Guide.](#)" *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.
- Reid, Rosie.(2019). "[A state Teacher of the Year shares her techniques for increasing the number of students who talk and share their ideas in class.](#)" *Edutopia*.
- Reznitskaya, Alina & A.G. Wilkinson. "[Teaching Students How to Think and Argue Together.](#)" *The Blog of Harvard Education Publishing*.
- Ross, Loretta. (2019). "[Speaking Up Without Tearing Down.](#)" *Teaching Tolerance*. Issue 61.
- Patel, Vimal. (2017). "[Teaching the Art of the Difficult Classroom Conversation.](#)" *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.

Tuesday, October 8 (Required)—Creating an inclusive classroom

In this session, we will explore:

- the role that extra-curricular experiences (in the broadest sense of the term) influence students' course experiences
- research-backed strategies for creating an equitable and inclusive classroom

By the end of this session graduate students will enhance their ability to:

- reflect on their own teaching practices, including our strengths and weaknesses regarding creating an inclusive climate
- frame contentious conversations to encourage genuine intellectual debate
- solicit and respond to feedback from students about section

Readings and Resources

- The Bok Center: [Inclusive Teaching](#)
- Brown, P. C., Roediger III, H. L., & McDaniel, M. A. (2014). *Make it stick*. Harvard University Press.
- Freeman, R. B., & Huang, W. (2014). "Strength in Diversity." *Nature*. 513.
- McMurtie, Beth. (2019) "[Knowing How to Study Can Mean the Difference Between Success and Failure for First-Generation Students. Here's How Instructors Can Help.](#)" *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.
- Ngounou, G.N. & Gutierrez, N.B. (2019). "The Value of Interracial facilitation of racial equity training." *Phi Delta Kappan*. 100(8) 55-61. (Note, while this is for facilitators of training sessions, many of the principals can apply to leading class discussions on challenging topics).
- Yee, A. (2016). The unwritten rules of engagement: Social class differences in undergraduates' academic strategies. *The Journal of Higher Education*, 87(6), 831-858.

Tuesday, October 22 (Optional)—Creating effective practice opportunities in section

In this session, we will explore:

- research on the role of practice in learning

- types of practice that can be effective for different types of content and courses

By the end of this session graduate students will enhance their ability to:

- develop effective practice opportunities related to course content and skills

Readings & Resources

- The Bok Center: [The Science of Learning](#)
- Brown, P. C., Roediger III, H. L., & McDaniel, M. A. (2014). *Make it stick*. Harvard University Press.
- Tanner, K. D. (2013). "Structure matters: twenty-one teaching strategies to promote student engagement and cultivate classroom equity." *CBE—Life Sciences Education*, 12(3), 322-331.

Tuesday, November 5 (Required)—Perspectives on teaching in the profession

In this session, we will explore:

- faculty perspectives on the current role of teaching in the profession
- graduate students' individual teaching personas and philosophies

By the end of this session graduate students will enhance their ability to:

- reflect on their effectiveness as a teacher
- develop action steps in response to strengths and areas for growth from this semester

Readings and Resources:

- [APSA's teaching website](#)
- Brookfield, Stephen. (2017). "The Four Lenses of Critical Reflection," in *Becoming a Critically Reflective Teacher*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2017), 61–77.
- Drezner, Daniel W. (2018). "[Teaching Political Science in the Age of Trump.](#)" *The Washington Post*. April 5, 2018.

Tuesday, November 19 (Optional)—Developing your own course and syllabus

In this session, we will explore:

- approaches for selecting course material and structuring course syllabi
- resources for building inclusive and clear syllabi

By the end of this session graduate students will enhance their ability to:

- design a learner-centered course

Readings & Resources

- [APSA Syllabi Project](#): A curated collection of syllabi by subfield.
- Deans, Tom. (2019). "[Yes, Your Syllabus Is Way Too Long.](#)" *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.
- Gannon, Kevin. "[How to Create a Syllabus: Advice Guide.](#)" *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.
- MacPhail, Theresa. (2019). "[Are You Assigning Too Much Reading? Or Just Too Much Boring Reading?](#)" *The Chronicle of Higher Education*.
- [Syllabus Explorer](#): A Harvard-based tool that collects syllabi from Canvas and allows users to search for keywords within the syllabi.

Note that Nara Dillon (the Director of Undergraduate Studies) and Ryan Enos (the Director of Graduate Studies) will be examining students' Q scores at the end of the semester and may reach out to learn from what went well in your classrooms or to offer support and resources where appropriate.

Comments and suggestions:

We always welcome your comments and suggestions. Please feel free to get in touch at any point with feedback. You can also drop an anonymous note in Sarah James's or Ryan Enos' mailbox at any point.