

# PS 495B - TEACHING POLITICAL SCIENCE II

Fall, 2021

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Office Hours: TBA

## Course Description<sup>1</sup>

This course is the second half of a two-quarter sequence designed as an introduction to teaching for graduate teaching assistants. The broad aim is to prepare graduate students to be effective teachers, and each week it addresses the practical situations and challenges TAs face in this position, such as how to manage classroom dynamics or how to grade student assignments fairly. This is a hands-on course, and includes a mix of weekly seminar discussions with classroom observations and feedback.

## Assignments

- **TAC Observation & Recording:** There will be no regular class meetings during weeks 6 & 7. TAs will arrange with the TAC to be observed and recorded during one of their discussion sections during this period. TAs will choose a two-minute video clip from the recording for the Week 9 teaching workshop.
- **Peer Observations:** During this same period (weeks 6-7), TAs will arrange to observe at least one discussion section led by an experienced peer (3rd year or above). TAs will write a reflection with emphasis on the teaching techniques and classroom activities they observed. Excerpts of these reflections may be shared with the class.
- **Readings:** There is no required textbook for this class. In select weeks, TAs may be asked to review short articles or videos on aspects of pedagogy. These readings will be posted on the course site and should be read *before* the class for which they are assigned.

## Policies & Expectations

This course is graded on a pass/no-pass basis. I expect students to come to each session, and be prepared to participate in the activities and discussions.

## Teaching Resources

- UCLA's **Center for the Advancement of Teaching** (CAT), provides multiple services, resources, and programs to enhance and support teaching excellence, innovation, and inclusivity. Please take the time to familiarize yourself with their website: <https://teaching.ucla.edu/> Should UCLA return to remote teaching, the CAT's Guide to Remote Teaching <https://teaching.ucla.edu/gradstudent-programs/a-tas-guide-to-remote-teaching/> will be an essential resource.

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<sup>1</sup>Teaching is a collaborative process, and this syllabus builds on work by previous Political Science TACs Bronwyn Lewis Friscia, Mack Eason, Angie Gutierrez, and Roey Reichart, as well as the team from the UCLA Center for the Advancement of Teaching.

- The **writing center** is an excellent resource to assist with writing assignments. Students can make appointments at the writing center to have someone work with them one on one to develop a thesis, learn how to organize ideas, or get assistance on effective proof-reading strategies. I highly recommend adding the following URL to your course website: <https://wp.ucla.edu/>
- The **UCLA Library teaching toolkit** (<https://www.library.ucla.edu/support/support-instructors/library-teaching-toolkit>) provides a variety of handouts, interactive online modules, and other activities that you can include in your course to help your students with the research process. The Library's research guides <https://guides.library.ucla.edu> are another great resource for student research.
- Some **other key departments and offices** on campus:
  - Counseling and Psychological Services: (310) 825-0768, [www.counseling.ucla.edu](http://www.counseling.ucla.edu)
  - The Office of the Ombudsman, Mediation and Dispute Resolution Resources: (310) 825-7627, <http://www.ombuds.ucla.edu>
  - Title IX Office / Sexual Harassment Prevention (310) 206-3417, <https://www.sexualharassment.ucla.edu>
  - College Academic Counseling: (310) 825-3382, <http://www.ugeducation.ucla.edu/counseling/>

## Schedule of Sessions

### Week 1 - Introductions & Planning

#### Agenda

- Setting policies and writing a TA syllabus
- Preparing for the first section
- Planning for the quarter

### Week 2 - Classroom Dynamics

#### Agenda

- Establishing classroom norms
- Understanding UCLA students
- Resources and support for students in crisis

### Week 3 - Teaching Strategies and Student Learning

#### Agenda

- Understanding how students learn
- Active learning strategies and techniques
- Brainstorming classroom activities

## **Week 4 - Inclusive Classrooms**

### **Agenda**

- Guest presentation on diversity, equity, and inclusion from CAT staff

## **Week 5 - Grading and Feedback**

### **Agenda**

- Aligning learning objectives and evaluation methods
- Providing helpful feedback
- Rubrics and strategies for impartial grading

## **Week 6 - Observations I**

### **Agenda**

- TAC observes TAs in section
- TAs observe experienced peers in section

## **Week 7 - Observations II**

### **Agenda**

- TAC observes TAs in section
- TAs observe experienced peers in section

## **Week 8 - *No Class; Thanksgiving***

## **Week 9 - Observations Workshop**

### **Agenda**

- TAs choose 2 minute clips from their sections
- Class provides feedback

## **Week 10 - Wrapping Up**

### **Agenda**

- Dealing with student evaluations
- Reflecting on the quarter and debriefing