

EVIDENCE OF TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS

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While at Syracuse University, I served as the primary course instructor for an upper-division undergraduate course on International Security. I also served as a teaching assistant for three courses, including: From Republic to Superpower – America in the World; International Actors and Issues; and Introduction to International Relations.

These courses provided valuable teaching experience along three dimensions. First, for each of these classes, I obtained experience with independent instruction. As a teaching assistant, I was responsible for developing lesson plans and independently managing discussion sections on a weekly basis. As an instructor, I was further responsible for designing the course content and assignments. Second, I directed a wide range of classroom types, including lower-level undergraduate, upper-level undergraduate, and master's-level graduate students. The classroom size for these courses ranged from fifteen to sixty students per semester. Third, in addition to delivering lectures and managing discussion, I have experience advising student research projects. As a teaching assistant for From Republic to Superpower, I oversaw the development of approximately twenty senior theses. I served in a similar role as a graduate assistant for a senior capstone course, where I advised students on the structure, methods, and content of their final projects.

My most recent experience as the instructor of International Security suggests that my experiences have translated into more effective classroom performance. In this class, for example, my evaluations surpassed the departmental averages along all measurable dimensions. Open-ended responses further support this claim and demonstrate that students in my course improved their ability to conceptualize debates, use empirical evidence to evaluate competing arguments, and apply theoretical frameworks to understand contemporary problems in international affairs. My effectiveness as an instructor is further illustrated by my receipt of the Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award from Syracuse University in 2014.

This document presents quantitative and qualitative assessments of my effectiveness as an instructor. I present these course evaluations in reverse chronological order, beginning with my most recent teaching experience. Evaluations from courses that I have taught multiple times are grouped into single reports. Whenever possible, I compare my performance to the departmental average and to my own evaluations over time. For each course, I include a sample of qualitative, open-ended responses.

Course: PSC 322: International Security
Term(s): Summer 2017
Role: Instructor
Enrollment: Undergraduate; 14 students

	<i>My Avg.</i>	<i>Dept. Avg.</i>
1. This course helped me to describe U.S. political institutions and explain how they operate	4.77	4.42
2. This course helped me to describe the structure and politics of the international system or countries outside the United States	4.93	4.45
3. This course helped me to apply political science concepts, theories, and/or philosophies to explain current political issues and policy debates	5.00	4.39
4. This course helped me to communicate in written and oral form about politics, and helped me to organize ideas, create and defend an argument, and use and cite sources properly	4.86	4.33
5. This course helped me to conduct or evaluate political research (quantitative or qualitative in nature), and evaluate the extent to which arguments are well reasoned and/or empirically supported	4.93	4.22
6. The objectives of the course were clear	4.79	4.59
7. The instructor was enthusiastic in presenting course content	5.00	4.59
8. When appropriate, the instructor presented divergent viewpoints	4.93	4.41
9. The instructor treated students with respect	4.93	4.63
10. Class discussions contributed to my understanding of the subject	5.00	4.47
11. I was comfortable asking questions in this class	4.86	4.22
12. The instructor was available for help outside of class	4.71	4.42

Note: This table compares my average to the departmental average on a 1-5 scale, defined as: (1) Strongly disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Neither agree nor disagree; (4) Agree; (5) Strongly agree. Values where my average is above the departmental average are presented in bold font.

Which aspects of this course were most valuable to your overall learning experience?

- The learning experience was heightened by [the instructor's] objectivity, he was always unbiased and respectful to all viewpoints
- There was a sense of community that began to crop up which helped contribute favorably to the discussion and made four-hour classes much more pleasant
- Very personable teacher who cares about his students and their success
- One of the most effective educators I have ever had the pleasure of knowing
- The course was very rigorous and required you to not only learn key concepts, yet also understand divergent models and alternative ways of thinking

Which aspects of this course would you suggest changing?

- The reading was a lot of pages but very doable when taking a regular length course
- The course is very intensive and requires a lot of time to truly understand key concepts
- Adding more time to do the assignments and more use of visuals

Course: IRP 400/PSC 600: From Republic to Superpower – America in the World
Term(s): Spring 2016; Spring 2017
Role: Teaching Assistant (Professor: James B. Steinberg)
Enrollment: Graduate/undergraduate; 21 students (average; 15 undergraduate/6 graduate)

	<i>Spring 2016</i>	<i>Spring 2017</i>
1. TA was usually prepared for section	4.00	4.00
2. TA was on time to class	4.00	4.00
3. TA seemed well organized	4.00	4.00
4. Grading was generally fair	4.00	3.92
5. Assignments were returned on time	4.00	4.00
6. Comments on assignments were useful	4.00	3.92
7. TA seemed to enjoy teaching section	4.00	4.00
8. TA helped to clarify the reading	4.00	4.00
9. TA helped prepare me for exams	4.00	3.90
10. TA encouraged student participation	3.67	4.00
11. TA showed respect for students' ideas	3.89	4.00
12. TA was available to help students	4.00	4.00
13. I felt comfortable approaching the TA with my concerns	3.89	3.92
14. I learned a lot in this section	3.89	4.00

Note: This table summarizes my quantitative evaluations on a 1-4 scale. The scale is defined as follows: (1) Strongly disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Agree; (4) Strongly agree. The highest scores for each question are presented in bold, comparing across semesters.

Please list the aspects of this section and of the TA you particularly liked:

- The TA made us feel comfortable to participate in class while challenging us at the same time
- He pushed us to think more in depth and critically
- TA is passionate about the subject, incredibly knowledgeable, and highly engaging
- David prioritized the concerns and success of his students and would make a strong effort to help in any way he could
- The sections were clearly organized and elaborated/reinforced lecture points
- David has a wide range of knowledge on subjects related to international relations and is talented in presenting what he knows
- David was definitely the best TA I've had at Syracuse
- David was always available, and gave helpful feedback on all writing assignments

Please list the aspects of this section and of the TA you disliked most:

- Discussions revolved around a few people
- Sometimes I felt he was intimidating, but as the semester goes on, the feeling went away
- Many classmates were not encouraged to participate

Please list suggestions for how the TA could improve his/her sections and teaching:

- The TA should encourage students who do not participate well

Course: PAI 710: International Actors and Issues
Term(s): Fall 2016
Role: Teaching Assistant (Professor: James B. Steinberg)
Enrollment: Graduate; 29 students

	<i>Fall 2016</i>
1. TA was usually prepared for section	4.00
2. TA was on time to class	4.00
3. TA seemed well organized	4.00
4. Grading was generally fair	3.58
5. Assignments were returned on time	3.70
6. Comments on assignments were useful	3.74
7. TA seemed to enjoy teaching section	4.00
8. TA helped to clarify the reading	3.96
9. TA helped prepare me for exams	3.92
10. TA encouraged student participation	3.93
11. TA showed respect for students' ideas	3.89
12. TA was available to help students	3.96
13. I felt comfortable approaching the TA with my concerns	3.93
14. I learned a lot in this section	3.70

Note: This table summarizes my quantitative evaluations on a 1-4 scale. The scale is defined as follows: (1) Strongly disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Agree; (4) Strongly agree.

Please list the aspects of this section and of the TA you particularly liked:

- His teaching style is engaging, and you can tell he wants his students to succeed
- Open atmosphere, ideas and discussion were encouraged
- Was always available for students and provided helpful additional insight during office hours
- The constructive criticism was very helpful, he never let a badly-constructed argument pass
- I learned more with David than I learned from any other professor this year
- David has an obvious level of mastery with the material
- Able to demonstrate the applicability of the readings to today's foreign affairs

Please list the aspects of this section and of the TA you disliked most:

- Maybe start at the very basic foundation for some concepts and don't assume everyone is at the same level
- A more focused reading list would make discussion better and it would encourage more people to read
- Biggest complaint is that assignments weren't turned back in a timely fashion

Please list suggestions for how the TA could improve his/her sections and teaching:

- Relate the readings/lectures more to the papers
- Clearer guidelines on the papers; seemed to be large disconnect with [the professor]
- Engaging the 2-3 "silent" members of the section would improve perspectives and discussion

Course: PSC 124: Introduction to International Relations
Term(s): Fall 2013; Spring 2014; Fall 2015
Role: Teaching Assistant (Professor: Terrell Northrup)
Enrollment: Undergraduate; 48 students (average)

	<i>Fall 2013</i>	<i>Spring 2014</i>	<i>Fall 2015</i>
1. TA was usually prepared for section	3.97	4.00	4.00
2. TA was on time to class	3.97	4.00	4.00
3. TA seemed well organized	3.94	3.98	4.00
4. Grading was generally fair	3.94	3.84	4.00
5. Assignments were returned on time	3.88	3.91	3.84
6. Comments on assignments were useful	3.88	3.90	3.89
7. TA seemed to enjoy teaching section	4.00	4.00	4.00
8. TA helped to clarify the reading	4.00	4.00	3.95
9. TA helped prepare me for exams	4.00	4.00	4.00
10. TA encouraged student participation	3.94	3.95	3.89
11. TA showed respect for students' ideas	4.00	3.91	4.00
12. TA was available to help students	4.00	4.00	4.00
13. I felt comfortable approaching the TA with my concerns	3.94	3.91	3.92
14. I learned a lot in this section	3.94	3.98	3.95

Note: This table summarizes my quantitative evaluations on a 1-4 scale. The scale is defined as follows: (1) Strongly disagree; (2) Disagree; (3) Agree; (4) Strongly agree. The highest scores for each question are presented in bold, comparing across semesters.

Please list the aspects of this section and of the TA you particularly liked:

- Urged us to think critically about every concept
- He didn't make you uncomfortable if you didn't know the material
- He genuinely cared about his students succeeding
- Very interactive which made learning more interesting
- David is always super prepared for class and is a great facilitator of discussion
- David wanted to make sure we truly understood everything, and didn't just try to memorize it
- He was extremely organized, encouraging, and coherent

Please list the aspects of this section and of the TA you disliked most:

- Lack of time for some discussion due to projects
- Not always getting a review before the quizzes
- Harsh questions about the group project

Please list suggestions for how the TA could improve his/her sections and teaching:

- Sometimes he got very involved in one topic that we didn't particularly need to know about
- A lot of people don't like to talk, but it'd be cool if he got more people to actively participate
- Get more students involved in discussion by reaching out to the back row more often