

# Teaching as Learning for My Students and Myself

I have been privileged to teach a wide variety of students, ranging from young undecided American undergraduates, to advanced majors with an interest in Asia, to professional, mid-career students, from countries as diverse as the United States, Vietnam, Burma, Kenya, Indonesia, and Singapore. I hope to have contributed to my students' overall intellectual and personal development. I know I have learned from all my students—about teaching, about politics, and about life.



One part of “teaching as learning” is my contribution to my students’ intellectual development. I look at the time students are with me as a precious resource to be used to develop students’ knowledge of the fields of Comparative Politics, International Relations, Political Theory, and Public Administration and to generate their enthusiasm for the study of, and for participation in, politics. This is only a starting point, though. I also hope to reach further and impact the students’ overall development by encouraging students to evaluate arguments critically, to tolerate and even see the benefit of differing opinions, and to improve their confidence in public speaking and their skills as writers. My courses are designed to put a premium on student involvement (through discussion or other active learning tools such as cases and simulation exercises). I believe that with encouragement and a smile I can demand more and get more from students and thus make a more meaningful impact on their personal growth.

Teaching is also learning for me. I believe I should approach teaching with the same rigor I apply to my research. Therefore, it is imperative to keep up with trends in effective teaching methods and to continually assess and strive to improve my teaching. In addition to these considerations of pedagogy, though, teaching is learning in that it is an opportunity to interact with bright young (or not so young) people of diverse experiences. Students’ views have excited me about new areas of research. Also, the way in which material must be considered for teaching causes me to refine my own thinking about politics and to cut through unstated assumptions.

In all of my courses, I always hope to convey that I thoroughly enjoy teaching. I have found genuine enthusiasm to be infectious.

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