

1. Teaching Philosophy Statement

I believe that...

Classroom management is important to establish early and to reinforce often. In political science courses, we often cover contentious topics. Therefore, I start each year with a classroom contract in order to establish a safe space for all of my students. **Effective classroom management** helps to pave the way for **open and respectful dialogue**.

A **strong classroom community** must be consistent throughout the school year. I work to strengthen our classroom community often by designing hands-on lesson plans that demand partner and groupwork.

Content should be presented to students in a way that is **engaging and relevant** to the course, to the discipline, and to current events. Students should be able to connect **complex theoretical concepts with practical applications** in order for them to see their learning as valuable.

High expectations should be held for all students.

It is my job as a teacher to share content in a way that engages a number of different **learning styles**. **Student choice and input** should be incorporated wherever possible.

Learning should be **hands-on** as well as **intellectual**, both active and cerebral.

Teaching should be **differentiated** to address all levels of learners—from the novice to the very advanced to maximize learning potential for students with different prior knowledge.

Teachers should express both **empathy** and **structure** in order for their students to succeed. Teachers should express a **passion** for the subject matter.

Diversity should be embraced and celebrated in the classroom. Diverse opinions on a variety of subjects should be welcomed and supported. The teacher should **properly halt intolerant behaviour** in a way that is stern but does not shame the student.

Teachers should plan lessons that integrate knowledge from other units and courses in order to encourage students to make **connections throughout the discipline**. Teachers should also be flexible in their lesson plans and always have back-up lessons that do not need electronic devices.

Teaching should be built on **trust** between the teacher and the students. The teacher must demonstrate a thorough understanding of the subject matter in order for the students to perceive the teacher and their classroom as legitimate. This will improve the classroom community.

In the classroom, **behavior expectations** should be clear and outlined in the first session. I always remind students that our classroom is a safe space where it is okay to be unrefined while grappling with new concepts.

Teachers should **demonstrate active listening** to show students that their ideas are heard and validated. Students should be **praised and encouraged** for high-quality efforts. This is particularly relevant in regard to written work. Instead of marking up a student's paper with everything that they did wrong, I prefer to suggest areas in which the student could improve. This semantic shift turns an accusation of fault into an opportunity for success.

Every lesson should **begin with an introduction** to connect new material to prior knowledge. The body of a lesson plan should **draw connections** between assigned readings, current events, and historical understanding. Lessons should **conclude with key takeaways** and applications.

The lines of **communication** should remain open between students and teachers. Teachers should be **accessible** to students by email and in office hours. Grades should be returned as **promptly** as possible.

A variety of assessments must be used in order to address different skill sets and to reinforce the information from different angles. This includes but is not limited to written essays, quizzes, formal exams, in-class presentations, short reading summaries, and group-work.

Every student is **unique**; it is the teacher's responsibility to tailor lessons and deliverables to be effective for a variety of students. Teachers should get to know their students well enough to **encourage** scholarly interests and skill development on an individual basis.

As teachers, we teach more than statistical methods or comparative politics. We help to guide students to developing the **critical thinking skills** necessary to become respectful and responsible leaders.

Teachers must work to **learn every day**. It is important that teachers update their skills and knowledge regularly throughout the year. At halfway junctures in the semester or school year, teachers ought to collect feedback so that they can tailor their approach if necessary. Teachers should **reflect** on their practice regularly in order to improve it as learning is a lifelong process.

Teachers must commit to guiding students to find and unleash the excellence within.