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Teaching Portfolio

I am passionate about teaching American Politics and Political Methodology. I hold a deep enthusiasm for teaching. I believe that a teacher—who transmits knowledge, facilitates study, and dispels confusion—is an essential part of the academic community and the foundation for knowledge inquiry.

The University of Chicago is a great platform that has provided me with rich pedagogical experiences and prepared me to be a qualified and enthusiastic teacher. As a former graduate student in the Department of Political Science, I undertook the equivalent of ten teaching credits (including teaching assistantship, teaching internship, and individual teaching). To highlight my pedagogical training, I twice served as the head TA for William Howell's *The American Presidency*, where I not only led the weekly discussion session but also coordinated the mid-term and final exam question writing and grading. In 2018–2019 academic year, I co-taught the sequence of undergraduate core classes, *Social Sciences Inquiry* (SSI), as a teaching intern. In the 2020 winter quarter, then, I individually taught my own course, *Social Sciences Inquiry II: Quantitative Analysis and Vote Choice Theory*. The approach to teaching that I developed during my TA experiences has largely been enhanced in the past year as a postdoctoral Teaching Fellow. I individually taught the sequence of *Social Sciences Inquiry*, where I designed my own syllabus and used the American Voter literature and ANES data to guide students in using quantitative data to explore social scientific theories. And I received excellent evaluations from students—the average overall evaluation of all the classes that I individually taught is 4.71 of out 5.

In this teaching portfolio, I will state my teaching philosophy, and demonstrate evidence of my teaching excellence and student comments.

TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

During my teaching experiences, I have developed my own teaching philosophy that can be summarized by the three principles: (1) Student Centered Teaching, (2) Lifelong Ability, and (3) Inclusive Environment. I will now elaborate on each of these principles and demonstrate how I execute them in the undergraduate core sequence, *Social Science Inquiry*, which I individually taught at the University of Chicago in the past years.

Student Centered Teaching

In my ideal classroom, students are the center. My role is to assist students to explore new concepts and gain knowledge for themselves. Learning is not receiving a transmission, learning is constructing new knowledge. Of course, there is a time and place that I convey

knowledge to students via lectures and on the whiteboard. But I encourage opportunities for student-led learning—I hope my students will engage with me and with one another. I prioritize this philosophy, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is especially challenging to center the student when students are in disparate locations, often with the camera off. Thus, it has been even more important to ensure that students are engaged and feel themselves to be active participants in the class, rather than tuning out.

In this small seminar, *Social Science Inquiry*, I facilitate active learning for students in the classroom. I always divide the 18 students into groups of 4 or 5 students. Then, I demonstrate the main arguments or points by writing on the board and presenting a series of questions. I let the students talk with their group members for 10 to 15 minutes. After the group discussion that is based on the assigned readings, each group would choose a "spokesperson" who would share his/her group's thoughts with the whole class. And I also encourage them to rotate the "spokesperson" for different questions. Meanwhile, I keep track of commonalities and differences between the answers offered by the groups and write down important points on the board.

The philosophy of student centered teaching is particularly revealed in the way that I coped with the extra challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemics. In each Zoom session of my class, I first divide students into social breakout rooms of 4-5 students for 3 minutes to make students feel engaged; then, I directly break out discussions based on pre-recorded lectures or particular portions of readings with carefully assigned questions; meanwhile, I let each group summarize key points during the discussion in a shared Google Doc so I can keep track of students' thoughts; and finally, we come together for a full class discussion with my iPad as the whiteboard. Furthermore, during in-person class sessions, I always set up a Zoom camera with my iPad for students to participate in my class virtually if they could not make the class due to being tested positive or having close contact.

Student centered teaching extends outside of the class. Being a facilitator, I keep myself as approachable as possible. I reply to students' emails quickly (within the same calendar day). Particularly, I have a 15-minute rule. Since some contents I teach are methods and programming related, I encourage my students to figure out the problems by themselves first, but I also tell them "once you've spent 15 minutes attempting to troubleshoot a problem, you must ask for help." I usually assist them to figure out the problems with several emails back and forth (because most of the time I refuse to give a direct answer, instead I provide a hint).

Lifelong Ability

As the proverb goes, "give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." My teaching philosophy is to guide students, no matter their backgrounds and career goals, through the process of thinking analytically and scientifically so that they can utilize an analytical and scientific mind to solve current and future problems in

civic life. Most undergraduate students will not major in political science, but all will confront political information and opportunities to engage with social issues. Therefore, it is important for me as a teacher to design courses to help students inquire about social issues through a scientific lens and prepare them with some tools to see through the mist and catch the core of their social life challenges.

The SSI is a perfect sequence to prepare and train undergraduates with critical thinking and a scientific mind. For example, the autumn quarter in this sequence focuses on the basics of quantitative research design in the social sciences. In the first half of the quarter, I introduce my students to explore the randomness of the world and emphasize how to utilize the property of randomness to create credible causal inferences in experimental designs. In my classroom, I always challenge students to think about the counterfactual and push students to consider what would be a credible experimental design in a perfect scenario. Furthermore, I purposefully design the assignments to offer students an opportunity to choose a social phenomenon of their interest and use the analytical tools we learn to explain it.

I strive to not only impart inferential logic to my students but to also enable them to hone quantitative tools necessary for answering social puzzles. To achieve that, in the winter quarter of the SSI sequence, I design the class under an overarching inquiry—what factors determine individual vote choice in American presidential elections, and I teach students the quantitative tools necessary for answering this overarching question (e.g., from conceptualization to sampling, from correlation to regression). The scientific mind and analytical skills are not built in one day, so I organize the class on a weekly basis. Each week, class sessions include a balance of lecture (that introduces the key concepts about that week's topic), full class discussion (where I lead students to discuss the topics according to the readings), and lab (where I guide the students by using R to perform a task related to that weeks' topic). More importantly, to consolidate knowledge, the weekly assignments are particularly designed to provide students with suitable hands-on exercises that will coherently snowball the toolkits for a whole empirical analysis. By the end of the term, students are well prepared and able to individually conduct empirical analyses in the final paper. With this approach, these analytical skills can be widely applicable to non-majors and myriad career paths.

Inclusive Environment

I welcome different perspectives and diverse cultures to my classroom and offer an inclusive environment to my students. Students enter my classroom with a wide range of backgrounds and experiences. My goal as a teacher is to make sure students from different backgrounds, especially underserved populations, pass the initial few hurdles. I do this by assigning pre-course surveys and then meeting with students individually during office hours at the beginning of each quarter. From these meetings, I learn a bit about each student's strengths and I set a tone that encourages students to build and maintain connections with me. For example, in one of the SSI sections I taught in Autumn 2021, I noticed a Latina female student always sitting in the far

corner. She was very quiet in the first several weeks. Then I had a long chat with her during my office hours (and I extended my office hours as it was almost over when she came). I asked where she grew up and then did a brainstorm on potential social phenomena that caught her interest and could be related to her background. Then, I also encouraged her to share her views in the classroom. I still remember that after her speaking up for the first time in class, everyone kindly gave her a round of applause. From then on, she started to participate more actively in class and wrote a very nice research design that attempts to use ANES data coupled with geographic data to explain why the Latino population in Florida is more likely to vote for Trump compared to other Hispanics.

When individual students are equitably supported, the classroom is more conducive to learning. Adding in inclusive teaching strategies and representing diverse scholarly voices also helps. In my classroom, I normally have lots of international students and I always create opportunities for them to share knowledge of their home countries that is related to our discussion. So, the class environment is vivid and everyone benefits from the discussion on the same topic from diverse views.

EVIDENCE OF TEACHING EFFECTIVENESS

In what follows, I provide a sample of quantitative and qualitative feedback I have received. Quantitative measures come from university-administered end-of-quarter evaluations, and those presented here are from all five classes in Social Science Inquiry sequence where I individually taught as a Teaching Fellow (2021–2022) and a Grad Student Instructor (Winter 2020).

Evaluations as Instructor of SSI

Evaluative Dimension	Mean	Median
Organization	4.77	5
Lectures	4.74	5
Discussions	4.52	5
Stimulation of interest	4.70	5
Challenge to learn	4.74	5
Availability Outside the class	4.79	5
Independent thinking	4.77	5
Inclusive environment	4.82	5
Overall, great instructor	4.76	5
Overall, excellent course	4.71	5
Number of Responses	52	

Notes:
Cell entries indicate students' levels of agreement on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).
Cell entries are the average of all five SSI classes I individually taught.

STUDENT COMMENTS

Instructor for Social Science Inquiry II, Winter 2022

As a Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow, I individually taught two sections of SSI II in Winter 2022. Here, I highlight all the comments that include my name from the course evaluation.

- The professor, Shu, is such an experienced and energetic instructor that he explains everything nicely and you will never need to worry about zooming out during his classes. Plus, he is such a nice person that whenever you have a question and reach out to him, he will never hesitate to get out his way to help you: for example, if you email him a question during the weekend, it's highly likely that you will receive his detailed reply within an hour. Trust me, go do yourself a favor and take his class:)

- Shu is an amazing and enthusiastic professor, totally recommend. Moderate learning curve if haven't done R coding before. Recommend OH for help.

- We met at the scheduled class time and Fu just gave lectures on the new stats thing we were learning that day. We had a homework assignment due on Mondays and he also had OH on Mondays which was convenient. We had a final research paper using all the stats stuff at the end.

- I learned so much about experimental analysis. Professor Fu steered this course towards learning about American Politics and the 2020 election, and I learned so much both from the data itself and from Professor Fu's analysis.

- Shu is amazing, take this class and the first quarter of SSI with him.

- Shu's lectures and our in–class discussions were incredibly useful in helping me to understand the content of the class.

- Shu Fu presented informative lectures, and made sure that all materials presented were on Canvas, as well as additional R materials.

- Shu is a really really awesome guy; available for office hours, a great teacher during lecture and has a great sense of humour.

- Professor Shu prepared and explained the material well in–class and motivated many inspiring class discussions.

- The prof was very accessible outside of class which helped tremendously, and he also genuinely wanted us to learn and wanted to teach us so he was open to questions or just general confusions.

- Prof. Fu was very helpful and accessible in his office hours, often staying hours late to make sure that everyone understood the assignment.

Instructor for Social Science Inquiry I, Autumn 2022

As a Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow, I individually taught two sections of SSI I. Here, I highlight all the comments that include my name from the course evaluation.

- Shu's lectures were always very engaging, and so was class discussion. He really knows what he's talking about.

- The reading was very dense but it was informative, as was Prof. Fu's lectures/discussions.

- Both Shu's discussions and his lectures were helpful in contributing to my learning. His office hours were also very helpful and conversational, and I both learned a lot about the world and my own work.

- Prof. Fu found some really interesting papers for us to discuss as a class. I learned a lot about methodology and experiment design from reading them. Prof. Fu was also very energetic and positive, which helped a lot.

- His positive energy was engaging and he clearly enjoys the material being covered. He had a good balance of lectures and discussions. Highly recommend his office hours because he is a great person to work through ideas with

- Professor Fu is a wonderful teacher: super super nice, energetic, and always happy to engage people in class. He gives great advice on how to write a social science paper. He is also very welcoming during office hours and people normally stay there for quite a while to chat!

- OH were helpful and it helped to get a lot more personalized feedback. There was also no pressure to speak in class so i felt relaxed, and he (Shu) had a lot of positive energy, a little too much energy at 9am in my opinion but go him. We sometimes had small group discussions which would have been more helpful/productive if we all were comfortable with each other

- Prof. Fu was very friendly and overall, his readings and discussions were informative.

- He is good at moderating discussions. Brings a lot of energy to the classroom.

- Discussions were great, Shu was the most wonderful professor.

- Prof. Fu is very interactive, and has great energy.

- Shu was really helpful during office hours and would give really good feedback on your essays as well.

- Shu is a very passionate teacher who loves what he does. He was always very positive and welcoming. The environment he created made you feel really comfortable in the class. He also cares a lot about his students and wants us to enjoy the class.

Instructor for Social Science Inquiry II, Autumn 2020

As a graduate student, I once individually taught one section of SSI II in Autumn 2020. This is also my first time being an instructor. Here, I highlight all the comments that include my name from the course evaluation.

- Fantastic course, even better instructor. Would highly recommend Shu if you manage to get him.

- Shu is very kind and approachable.

- Office hours with Shu were very helpful – he is very accessible outside of class.

- I appreciate his dedication to help each individual student if they were stuck or looked lost

- Shu was extremely motivated and enthusiastic about the material. He also knew the material extremely well given that he is a graduate student actively doing research in computational political science.

- He was always willing to help and made time for students whenever we needed. He also gave good feedback on assignments.

- Shu was very prepared, knowledgeable, energetic, and passionate about what he was teaching us. He has a very lovable personality and really fueled my interest in the course.

- Shu is great, very committed to helping students understand and highly available outside of class to answer any questions.

- He was really helpful towards students, really wanted us to understand the material well.

Calvin Walters, one of the students in my class, gave me a shoutout in his Senior Spotlight on the UChicago Athletics website. In answering the question, "Which UChicago faculty or staff member made the greatest impact on you and why?" he said:

- Shu Fu in the Political Science department also made a great impact on me, as he introduced me to the great wonders and enjoyment of coding in SOSC 132. His genuine passion and excitement for teaching and engaging with his students is by far the best classroom experience I have had at UChicago, and inspired me to follow my current degree track.

Head Teaching Assistant for *American Presidency*, Winter 2019 & 2017

As a graduate student, I twice served as the head TA for William Howell's *The American Presidency*, where I not only led the weekly small group TA session but also coordinated the mid-term and final exam question writing and grading.

- The head TA was awesome. Genuine and passionate - just like Howell.

- Shu Fu was wonderful tho hire him forever thank you.

- Shu was great. Made the course 1000% more interesting and accessible through the discussion sections.

- Shu is great–clearly interested in the course material, and very thorough in covering the material in discussion.

- Shu was very helpful and energetic, good at facilitating discussion.

- Shu was great! Super nice and summarized material well.

- Shu is a very helpful TA. He asks good questions in discussion sections, and is always available outside of class hours for students. He prepares us well for exams and helps us use the class materials productively.

- Shu was very helpful and enthusiastic during discussion section.

- Shu was great, delivered good feedback and his enthusiasm for the topic was inspiring.

Teaching Assistant for *American Presidency*, Autumn 2016

Back in the 2016 Autumn Quarter, I served as TA for Mark Hansen's *Electoral Politics in America*. This was my first time as TA and I led the weekly small group TA session.

- Shu Fu was a great TA. He was really helpful outside of class. He obviously really loves being a TA and that definitely was evident in the way he led discussion and interacted with the class.

- Shu was awesome! He was always available outside of class and very willing to help.

- Shu was great, kept discussion interesting while also keeping us on track. Very helpful outside of discussion when I was writing my paper.

- Shu is an awesome TA. He was engaging and committed. No weakness.

- Shu was very nice and approachable, and helpful when discussing papers in his office hours. However, he does not give very comprehensive written feedback on drafts or final assignments, so you have to speak to him in person if you want this.