

## **POLS681 – Teaching Political Science Spring 2007**

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Tues: 4-4:50  
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**Course Overview:** This course is designed to prompt graduate students to think about why and how to teach an undergraduate course, including designing a course and course assignments, and dealing with students inside and outside of the classroom. The purpose of this course is to prepare graduate students to teach as Graduate Assistant Lecturers at TAMU as well as to develop a course they will be prepared to teach as a newly minted assistant professor.

**Grading:** This course will be graded on a PASS/FAIL basis. Passing requires fulfilling all course assignments (in a professional manner and on time) as well as taking an active part in class discussions.

### **Assignments:**

- (1) To facilitate discussion, students are required to submit 2 talking points each week that includes assigned reading. Talking points are due by 9am on Tuesdays. Talking points that exceed 150 words (total), or that are late will not be accepted.
- (2) Teaching philosophy statement – 1-2 page statement that would be suitable for inclusion in your future job application packet. (double-spaced, 12-point, Times Roman font with 1-inch margins)
- (3) Shadow class analysis. You will pick 2 courses to shadow (list of courses is at the end of the syllabus) – one will be POLS206 or 207, and one 300 or 400-level course (or POLS209). No more than 2 students can shadow a particular course. You should attend each course twice and interview the professor for each course about their approach to teaching. You will then write a 1-2 page paper about each course, describing the professor's approach to teaching, what you observed, and assessing how teaching techniques differ across the two types of teaching. (again, paper should be double-spaced, 12-point, Times Roman font with 1-inch margins)
- (4) Syllabus for a class you hope to teach (draft and revised version). The syllabus will include a course overview description, list of assignments (including assignment descriptions) and their contributions to the course grade, required texts and other reading assignments, weekly course topics and readings, and any other pertinent information students will need for the course.
- (5) Draft of 2 kinds of sample assignments. The sample assignments should include one assignment that would be part of a test (e.g., 5 short answer test questions; 2 essay test questions) and one assignment that would be a take-home writing assignment (e.g., a research paper assignment description, book review, data analysis assignment).
- (6) Student practice class (including a 1-page overview of sample class, due several weeks before presentation are scheduled, again double-spaced, 12-point, Times Roman font with 1-inch margins). Each student will prepare a 50-minute class on a topic that would be given during the first 3 weeks of the course for which they designed a syllabus. The

student teaching the practice class is responsible for distributing appropriate readings to all others in the class at least a week before giving their practice class. Other class members are expected to read the assigned readings and be an appropriately active “class” for the practice instructor.

**Readings:** (required text)

- McKeachie, Wilbert J. and Mailla Svinicki. (eds.) 2006. *McKeachie’s Teaching Tips: Strategies, Research and Theory for College and University Teachers* (12<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston, MA: Houghton-Mifflin.
- Additional readings may be assigned as needed.

**Course Outline (topics, readings, assignments)**

Jan. 16 Introduction and overview

Jan. 23 Goals for a course – teaching objectives

- Chapters 1-3

Jan. 30 Teaching political science as science

- Chapters 4-6

Feb. 6 Planning a syllabus

- Chapters 16 & 17
- Assignment - Teaching philosophy statement due
- Assignment - Shadow class analysis due

Feb. 13 Writing a test

- Chapters 7-9
- Assignment –Draft of the syllabus for a class you hope to teach

Feb. 20 Designing a writing assignment

- Chapters 10-11 & 15 and see teaching writing and grading writing tips available on the webpage of the University Writing Center
- Assignment - Page overview of sample class due

Feb. 27 Dynamics in the classroom

- Chapters 12-14 & 25
- Assignment - Revised syllabus due

Mar. 6 Technology in the classroom

- Chapters 18-19
- Assignment - Draft of 2 kinds of sample assignments due (5 Short answer test questions; 2 Essay test questions; research paper assignment description, etc.)

Mar. 13 No Class - Spring Break  
Mar. 20 Student practice class (1)  
Mar.27 Student practice class (2)  
Apr. 3 Student practice class (3)  
Apr. 10 No Class – CEISAL conference  
Apr.17 Student practice class (4)  
Apr. 24 Student practice class (5)  
May 1 redefined as Friday classes day

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