Description of my Pols. 401 this semester (Fall 2017)

As I conduct it, the purpose of having a "Teaching Political Science" teaching internship is to give students an opportunity to look at the course they took from me from the teaching side of things, to give you an opportunity to begin to develop your own teaching style by interacting with students in small group discussions, preparing one or more short lectures on various topics covered in the course syllabus (see below for courses being offered this semester by me), help prepare and/or grade quizzes on course content, and write a paper in which you envision how you would organize a course in this area or improve on the one you assist with.

For this Fall I am teaching Pols. 315(1) International Relations MWF 10:30-11:20, and Pols. 382 Political Leadership 11:30-12:20, both in Saunders 637. You may pick one or the other to work with me (of course you cannot be enrolled in the same class you are assisting in).

By the way, you might be curious about what other students have thought about this course and what students have thought about the role played by teaching assistants in the courses I teach. My course evaluations are published at https://www.hawaii.edu/ecafe/published-results.html?id=1890#298103. They are a lot more systematic than what you can find on the web at such sites as http://www.ratemyprofessors.com/. FYI however, the value of such ratings is a subject of some controversy; for instance a former dean of one of the universities where I did research for several years once said of their course evaluations "[The scores] are totally worthless." Food for thought.

Assignments

Working with students:

Most important, I will expect regular attendance in the 315 or 382 class (whichever one we have agreed on) you are assisting with since familiarity with the lecture material and scheduled activities are essential to being able to help students to learn. Attendance will be a major part of your grade.

Here are the activities in which you will be expected to participate.

1. Facilitate group discussions in class when we have them, and circulate a small sheet of paper to students and have them write a question they would like me to address, after I give a brief lecture. I'll also give them a point on the quiz for a question they ask on the back of Friday quizzes. You may circulate from group to group as you feel appropriate. Short discussion sessions will be about once a week, perhaps more at the beginning of

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1 Other faculty take different approaches to this course; so you may want to talk with our Department Chair, Prof. Noelandi Goodyear-Kaʻōpua, Prof. Kathy Ferguson who is offering section 1 of Pols. 401, or our Undergraduate Chair Prof. Ehito Kimura, to inquire about what similar opportunities there are with other faculty; or just try talking with a faculty member about the opportunity to work with them (all regular faculty members may offer this opportunity even though the official class offerings do not indicate this; and if you find that they are unaware of this just have them contact Prof. Ferguson for details).
the semester. As the semester goes on, the discussions will be replaced with simulation exercises.

2. Recommend questions to put on quizzes, based mostly on lecture content but if you still have the textbooks you could use material from them as well. Questions should be about points you think are most worthwhile to remember; use your judgment. You will be grading the quizzes and exams as students finish in class. I usually give them ample time to finish; most finish early. And I’ll supply you with the answers. Since the questions are usually true/false, multiple choice, or matching, they take little time to grade.

3. Help students with their simulation assignment in 315, or decision making exercises in 382. There is a short essay written by Prof. Ferguson that provides useful guidance in how to compose such assignments. After reading them over yourself you might want to make a presentation in class on it. If so, I’d include material from your presentation in the following quiz.

4. In Pols. 315, monitor simulation activities to facilitate participation. Some students have more difficulty than others in participating. Also assure that the "rules of the game" are followed. More on that later.

5. We will occasionally get together outside of class at a time mutually convenient to discuss progress in the course and possibly make adjustments to the syllabus looking forward, with the goal of optimizing student learning. The day and time are flexible, but usually Friday after 12:30 seems to work best. We’ll decide sometime before classes start when first to meet. Duration would be an hour or less.

6. Occasionally I’ll assign some readings on my teaching philosophy, on "critical thinking" and other pedagogical matters.

7. About twice during the semester—perhaps more if you wish—you will be making a class presentation on some subject being covered in class. This could be about the reading material (including lectures) or some of the video presentations. Most students in the past have opted to do a short lecture on one or more of the readings, but this can be negotiated. Remember, for a quiz related to your presentation, write out about three to five questions you would want the students to answer.

The above tasks 1-7 constitute 80% of your grade, 40% or half of which is attendance at the lectures.

8. A final paper will be required, about 20% of your grade, in which you think about designing your own course or redesigning this one or similar subject matter such as American foreign policy. What would be its aims? What literature and experience would you draw on? What classroom and extra-curricular activities would you include in the course to encourage student engagement and learning? How would you organize the course? This is due before the end of exam week.

Readings (will be on Laulima). We will discuss them during some of our meetings together.

Chadwick, Richard (2005) “Active Learning and Simulation”
Ferguson, Kathy (2014) “How to Read a Political Text”
Ferguson, Kathy (2014) “How to Write a Political Text”

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2 There are about 44 class sessions (this varies from semester to semester) so 1/44th of the grade is lost per unattended session. Thus 1-n/44 would be your score for this 40% of your grade, where n is the number of sessions missed. For example if you miss 5 classes sessions, 1-5/44=.886, so 89% would be your grade for this portion of the course.
Additional readings may be recommended. For instance, if you are planning in the future sometime to teach international relations, sites like http://fod.msu.edu/oir/resources-teaching-international-relations-james-madison-college are helpful (useful material is at the bottom of the webpage). You can find resources on political leadership teaching easily by googling “how to teach political leadership in universities” for instance, although I must say there is little systematic in the offerings which seem to be very topically oriented. Here’s one that intrigued me: https://pursuit.unimelb.edu.au/articles/what-street-gangs-can-teach-us-about-political-leadership. As to my approaches to these two courses, see my syllabi online at http://www.socialsciences.hawaii.edu/profile/index.cfm?email=chadwick@hawaii.edu. This site needs updating for current syllabi. I’ll be sending those to you when they are done and you are registered for 401(2); and you’ll have access via Laulima to them as well as other materials related to the course with which you are assisting.