

My teaching aims to accomplish four learning goals. First, we should be able to locate and critique systems of political power. Second, we should understand the real-world effects of knowledge production and political practice on the social world. Third, students should understand how political actors operate across varying institutional landscapes. Fourth, students will apply their critical thinking skills to the design and implementation of independent research. I base my lectures on examples from my field research in the Middle East. My teaching extends beyond the classroom to student service and research assistance.

First, I use a form of critical pedagogy that points out students' mundane interactions with systems of material power and ideational authority. When we learn about the state, for example, students tell me about the notorious potholes in their hometown. I relate that to state's authority to tax and provide public goods. We focus on forms of daily social authority by discussing how masculine social norms constrain women's choices and opportunities. When we discuss the state's police and security apparatus, I tell the story of how the Palestinian Authority police "arrested" me (brought-in for tea and questioning) several times for attempting to photograph each security division.

Second, the class confronts the ways in which knowledge production impacts the social world. We consider whether anarchy is a social norm that developed through the conduct of European diplomacy rather than a natural fact. From there, we argue about how statecraft influences and is influenced by the scientific production of knowledge on international affairs.

Third, we think comparatively and with methodological diversity about how political actors construct and realize their interests (e.g., violence, elections) across disparate institutional frameworks (e.g., majoritarian-proportional, authoritarian-democratic, informal-formal). For example, we consider ways to re-design Israel's PR system to prevent fringe parties from spoiling the peace process.

Finally, students sharpen these analytic and writing skills by designing and executing a rigorous research project on a topic of their choosing. While this is usually a paper, I encourage students to undertake creative projects, like documentaries, websites, or social entrepreneurship. On each proposal and draft, I provide extensive notes on the research question, collection and evaluation of evidence, interpretation of findings, and writing. I urge students to prepare their papers for publication or conference presentations.

My pedagogical style is oriented toward making students better independent thinkers and researchers. To facilitate ease of access to course material, I have automated my syllabi through Google Drive, with links to readings, weekly discussion/reading guides, and campus resources. Each topical section also includes a link to further reading material for student research. Course readings are linked to academic outlets so that students learn to navigate those journals. Students have access to the links through Google Drive beyond a single semester. My former students have continued researching and writing, and some have contributed to my colleague's and my blog on critical theory and the Middle East.

My teaching style increases student learning and stimulates interest in course subjects. When asked if the professor stimulates interest in the course topic, the mean response is 4.4 out of 5 (n=106). On whether or not students learn a lot in my courses, mean response is a 4.46/5 (n=267). When asked if course instruction is excellent, the mean response is 4.4/5 (n=164).

To summarize my teaching philosophy, I want my students to better understand and engage with the world rather than solely learn factual information about it. Students of political science should graduate with strong analytical skills, experience in civic engagement, and the ability to write persuasively. Finally, they should understand how their careers might impact the world.

Teaching Evaluations

Quantitative Response Summary

A quantitative assessment of my teaching evaluations reveals three points: First, when students are asked if *professor is excellent*, the mean response is a 4.44 out of 5 (n=164).

Second, *students learn a lot* in my courses. When students are asked if they learned a lot in my course, the mean response value is a 4.46 out of 5 (n=267).

Third, my courses make students more interested in political affairs. When asked if *professor stimulates interest* in the course subject, the mean response is a 4.4 out of 5 (n=106).¹

All of my course syllabi are available at drewhkinney.com/teaching for your reference. The following pages present selected course comments.

¹ The variation in sample size is due to my having taught at several different institutions which use disparate prompts.

Qualitative Responses²

Students appreciate my ability to clarify complicated concepts

“Explaining topics more in depth when students have trouble understanding” (Onondaga, 2013)

“Explaining concepts, creating good classroom discussion and using that discussion to teach the material effectively” (Onondaga, 2013)

“Funny, good at presenting and explaining the relevant subject matter” (Cornell, 2014)

“Drew has so much knowledge on the subject and is great at sharing it. He also gave extremely helpful feedback on our essay proposals. I learned so, so, so much from this class!” (CIEE, 2015)

“Drew is extremely knowledgeable and knows so much about the region. He is able to describe the events in a way that is easy for us to understand” (AMIDEAST, 2015)

Students enjoy my use of humor to engage with course material

“Funny, which helps engage the class,” “[M]akes class interesting” (Onondaga, 2013)

“He was entertaining,” “[V]ery funny and gives interesting lectures,” “Humor and relatability,” “Funny, clear, related to us,” “Funny,” “Funny,” “Humor” “Funny,” “Funny,” “Ability to present in a humorous way” (Cornell, 2014)

“Interesting, funny, and motivates us to learn more about the material” (Cornell, 2014)

“Funny, passionate,” “Really knowledgeable and engaging” (Cornell, 2014)

“Funny, interesting lecturer. Bring Drew Kinney back...for new course” (Cornell, 2014)

“The professor was humorous, engaging, and showed expertise. He was confident in what he knew, and down to earth” (Cornell, 2014)

“He discusses things with the class while lecturing, and makes jokes” (Cornell, 2014)

“I like that he was very animated” (Cornell, 2014)

Students enjoy lively debate and discussion during my lectures

“[G]ood at making the class question theories” (Onondaga, 2013)

“Allows students to form their own ideas and work in a good supportive environment” (Onondaga, 2013)

“I could tell he cared a lot about the material, but was also very informed and encouraged us to form our own opinions” (Cornell, 2014)

“Asked provocative questions in class and encouraged discussion” (Cornell, 2014)

“He was engaging and taught all sides of debate” (Cornell, 2014)

“The course overall was wonderful, and I appreciated the ample opportunity for discussion” (CIEE, 2015)

² St. John Fisher College (Fall 2017) did not generate qualitative responses.

Qualitative Responses

Students enjoy my lectures

“Very refreshingly informative, current, and grounded in current events. Professor was lecturing about human nature and society, not just History of the Middle East. Wonderful class and professor, 10/10” (Cornell, 2014)

“He was an entertaining lecturer” (Cornell, 2014)

“When the class didn't read as much he had less to work with, but is a good lecturer and I actually enjoyed the classes more when they weren't as discussion-heavy” (CIEE, 2015)

“This is crucial: Drew Kinney is by far the best Area Studies professor I've had at AMIDEAST. The assignments are relevant, tests are reasonably difficult, lecture is clear, the material is made incredibly relevant, etc. If there are any chances to bring him back, I would do so” (AMIDEAST, 2015)

“The material was great and Prof. Kinney presented in such an engaging fashion” (AMIDEAST, 2015)

“Drew talks candidly about the situation and presents the material in an awesome manner” (CIEE, 2016)

“This is one of my favorite classes of all time” (CIEE, 2016)

Students learn a lot in my courses

“I learned so much about the Middle East through this class. I really can't say enough about how much I enjoyed this course and Drew as a teacher” (AMIDEAST, 2015)

“I learned a ton from Drew, and not just about history. We would talk about current events and any questions we had, and he opened my eyes to a lot of things that I didn't know about previously. I also learned a lot about identity and how that can shape actions and decisions by people and other units” (AMIDEAST, 2015)

“I learned a lot about middle east history and it was a good overview for someone who's never studied the history of the region before. I also liked that questions were encouraged” (AMIDEAST, 2015)

“Drew is great--very knowledgeable about the subject matter and also very nice to be around. I learned a lot in his class and will really miss spending class time with him” (CIEE, 2016)

Students find me helpful and approachable

“Approachable, friendly, knowledgeable, very responsive on emails” (Cornell, 2014)

“He was very understanding and willing to help” (Cornell, 2014)

“He is willing to take questions + attempts to engage audience” (Cornell, 2014)

“Willingness to answer questions” (Cornell, 2014)

“Drew is great--very knowledgeable about the subject matter and also very nice to be around. I learned a lot in his class and will really miss spending class time with him” (CIEE, 2016)

Qualitative Responses

Areas of growth: organization and lecture guides³

“Pre-made notes would be helpful,” “Give notes,” “Notes would be helpful,” “Personally I learn a lot better with notes” (Onondaga, 2013)

“I like that there is freedom for open discussion on various topics, but feel that lectures could use more structure and organization” (Onondaga, 2013)

“Could give more notes, either during class or e-mailed after class, in order for us to be sure what is most important out of each class's discussion” (Onondaga, 2013)

“Make it more clear what we're supposed to have learned at the end of each class (the outlines you've started to give on Angel after classes will help a lot” (Onondaga, 2013)

“I really enjoyed listening to Drew's lectures but they often felt unplanned” (CIEE, 2015)

“I liked Drew a lot. In the future, I would appreciate focus questions for the readings” (CIEE, 2016)

³ Comments about and requests for better organization have decreased substantially since 2013. Reasons for this decline include: (1) posting my lecture notes online after class; (2) including weekly reading guides to follow along with readings; and (3) automating my course syllabi to facilitate ease of access to readings, guides, and further research materials.