

# TEACHING PORTFOLIO

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## TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

My teaching experiences have ranged from formal course instruction at Nipissing University, a liberal arts college in Ontario, to academic skill development programming at McGill University's Teaching and Learning Services. Through these experiences, I have taught a broad range of students: 'traditional' undergraduates, graduate students, mature students, first generation students, and members of Indigenous communities. I recognise that students approach the university experience with diverse academic skills, learning needs, backgrounds and interests. My approach to teaching therefore seeks to provide opportunities for skill development and active learning, while emphasizing the principles of universal design for learning and the creation of respectful and open learning environments.

Firstly, I believe that students must be provided with level-appropriate **skill development** opportunities for their success in the course and beyond the university environment. My experience has been that students come to university with varying levels of academic skills. For example, first-year students may have never encountered a scholarly journal article before coming to university. To help students learn to critically read these academic texts, I set aside time during one of the first classes to read through an article with students, treating the process as a 'mission' to uncover key pieces of information (research questions, methodology, thesis statement, evidence, and relationship to the course) in the text. For upper-year students, I focus on adding new skills to this toolkit, including learning how to evaluate methodology and suggest areas for future research. I include skill development seminars on these topics, and others such as academic integrity and the research process frequently in class as part of the course syllabus. For the past four years I have shared my interest in student skill development at McGill University through my work at Teaching and Learning Services, where I have managed a variety of workshops, panels and conferences, sharing best practices and advancements in higher education pedagogy with graduate student instructors and teaching assistants.

My teaching also employs **active learning** methods. I use a variety of types of activities in the classroom to reinforce course content and promote critical thinking. For example, while teaching about electoral systems, I created sample ballots for a variety of electoral systems, including first-past-the-post, proportional representation, mixed member system, and alternative vote (rank-order) using real political candidates. We conducted elections in class using each of these voting systems. Students were encouraged to consider how the electoral system influenced their decision-making process. They then counted the ballots under each system, and based on the results, we discussed the benefits and drawbacks of each electoral system. This activity made a sometimes dry or confusing subject like electoral systems engaging and relevant. I value 'learning by doing' to improve student engagement and performance.

I also prioritize **universal design for learning**, a principle that focuses on creating flexible learning environments for diverse student needs. After attending an eye-opening workshop on 'Disability, Universal Design and Access,' I reevaluated how my course format and materials could prioritize accessibility. One of the simple changes I made was to switch to an online course management system that would provide all materials in an electronic format, in order to be compatible with a variety of software programs that students may use to enhance accessibility. I also designed all assignments to build on each other, beginning with an annotated bibliography and ending with a final term paper. While this was designed to enhance accessibility for students with learning needs, ultimately all students have found this evaluation structure to be helpful as it allowed for frequent feedback and opportunities for improvement. I plan to continue participating in professional development opportunities that will improve my ability to create accessible learning environments.

Finally, I am aware that students' approaches to learning are informed by their background and previous experiences. In the field of political science, this is a great opportunity for student engagement if harnessed appropriately. In my lectures, I always include contemporary examples and discussions to relate course material to student experiences. In doing so, I strive to create **respectful and open learning environments**, where students will gain the confidence to ask challenging questions and an appreciation of diverse responses. I have honed this skill by facilitating faith-sharing groups for students of diverse backgrounds, including international undergraduate and graduate students, at the Newman Centre of McGill University and engaging in inter-faith and ecumenical initiatives in the Montreal community. These experiences have enhanced my ability to engage in and moderate respectful and constructive dialogue on particularly passion-provoking topics, while also expanding own my perspectives. I hope for the diversity of my students' experiences with politics to inform my research agenda. By also including my own research in the classroom, I will likewise challenge my students to consider new approaches to political questions in their academic and non-academic life.

In sum, I seek to create opportunities for skill development, active learning, universal access and engagement in respectful dialogue in my teaching. This approach recognises the diversity of student backgrounds and fosters student success at university and beyond. My teaching philosophy has been informed by my participation in a variety of pedagogical and student development workshops and conferences, and refined through my experiences as a course instructor, teaching assistant, workshop facilitator, and mentor. I plan to continue seeking opportunities for my own development as a teacher in the future.

## TEACHING EXPERIENCES

### COURSES TAUGHT

#### **Democracy and Development (POLI 2207) (2014)**

Nipissing University, Department of Politics, Philosophy and Economics (North Bay, Canada)

- Designed and delivered a second-year 3-credit course on the comparative politics of democracy, and economic and human development

#### **Canadian Politics (POLI 2706) (2012)**

Nipissing University, Department of Politics, Philosophy and Economics (North Bay, Canada)

- Designed and delivered a second-year 3-credit survey course on Canadian politics, including institutions, political parties, elections and public administration

### TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIP

#### **Introduction to Political Science (POLS 110) (2010-2011)**

Queen's University, Department of Political Studies (Kingston, Canada)

- Conducted bi-weekly tutorials for two sections of the POLS 110 course (47 students), a first year 6-credit introductory course
- Evaluated students from my section on participation, exams, and papers

### COURSE DEVELOPMENT

#### **Electoral Integrity and Malpractice (2015)**

Scuola Superiore Sant'Anna, [Masters in Electoral Policy and Administration](#) (Pisa, Italy)

- Developed an e-learning module for a new international Masters programme in Electoral Policy and Administration, in coordination with the [International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance](#)

### OTHER EXPERIENCES

#### **Graduate Education Assistant, McGill University Teaching and Learning Services (2011-2016)**

- Developed and facilitated skill-development activities for graduate students, including grant-writing, academic integrity, knowledge mobilization and teaching skills
- Pedagogical Workshops developed and facilitated:
  - Active Learning and Classroom Management
  - [Designing and Delivering Effective Lectures](#)
  - Developing your Teaching Portfolio
  - [Engaging Students Using Active Learning Strategies](#)
  - Grading in the Social Sciences and Humanities
  - Interacting with Students and Course Supervisors
  - Talking It Up Without Dumbing it Down

#### **Academic Success Workshop Coordinator, Nipissing University Learning Network (2009-2010)**

- Oversaw the development of a suite of academic success workshops through [Nipissing University's Learning Network](#), including the selection and training of workshop developers and facilitators

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **McGill University Social Equity and Diversity Education, Safer Spaces Certificate (2016)**

A suite of workshops on topics related to equity, diversity, and inclusion, including:

- Understanding Discrimination
- Disability, Access, and Universal Design
- Indigenous Perspectives
- Race and Cultural Identity
- Sexual Assault: How to Respond to and Support Disclosures
- Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

### **Workshops and Conferences**

- Strategies to Support Active and Collaborative Learning Workshop (2016)
- Students in Mind Mental Health Conference (2015)
- McGill University Learning to Teach Conference (Fall 2011, Winter 2012, Fall 2012, Fall 2013, Fall 2015)
- Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education National Conference (2012)

## COURSE EVALUATIONS

### DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT (POI 2207)

(Course Instructor)

**University:** Nipissing University (North Bay, Ontario)

**Term:** Spring, 2014

**Credits:** 3 credits

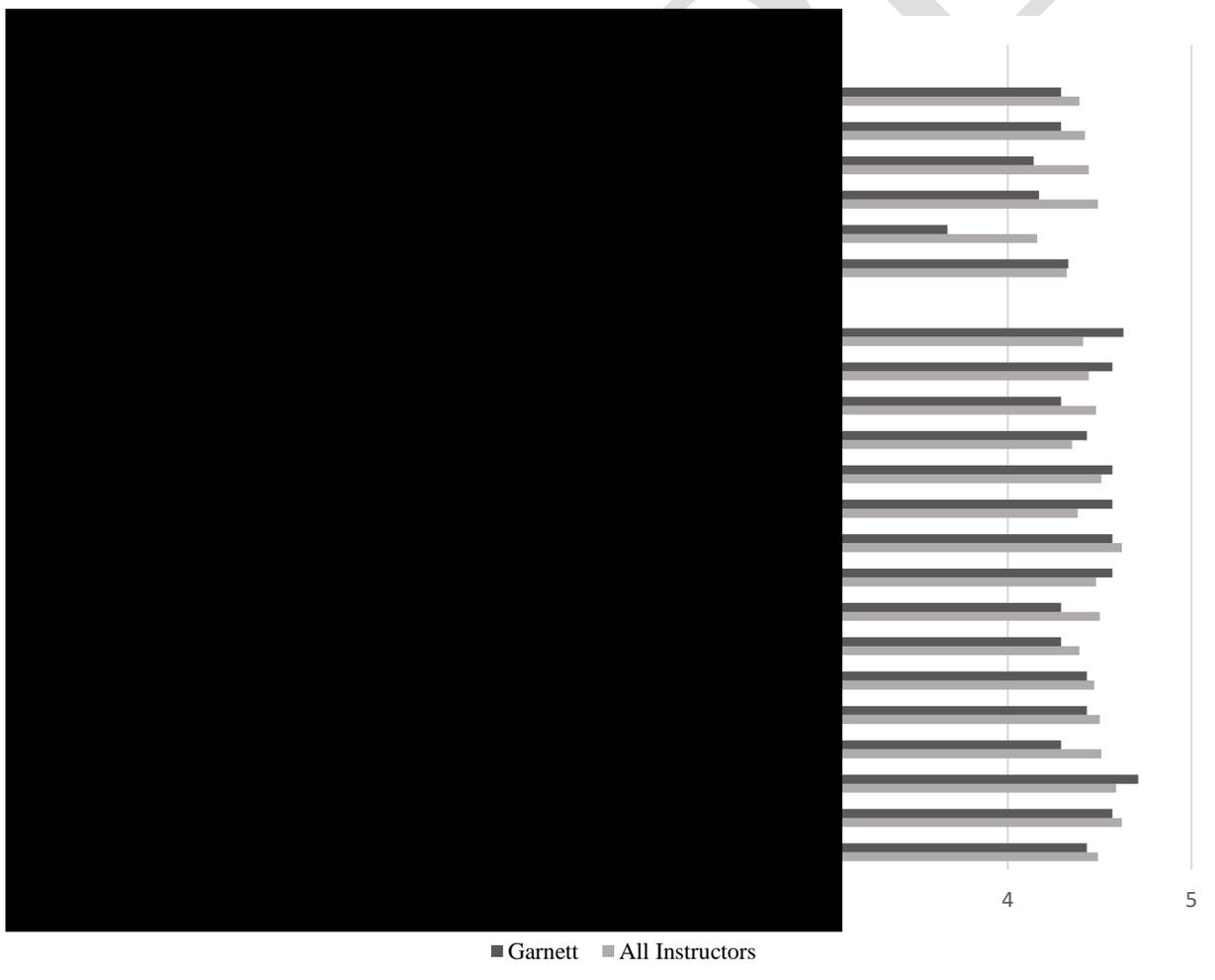
**Course Description:** “What is necessary for a country to be considered democratic? Does economic development promote democracy? This course will employ a comparative approach in the analysis of development and its relation to democracy. It will address various institutional, cultural, historical and economic contexts of democratization towards an understanding of how the success of democratic politics and of development can be judged in their relations.”

**Teaching Format:** 3-hour lectures, bi-weekly for 6 weeks

#### Duties:

- Delivered all class lectures, seminars and activities
- Graded students on participation, assignments and exams

#### Evaluations

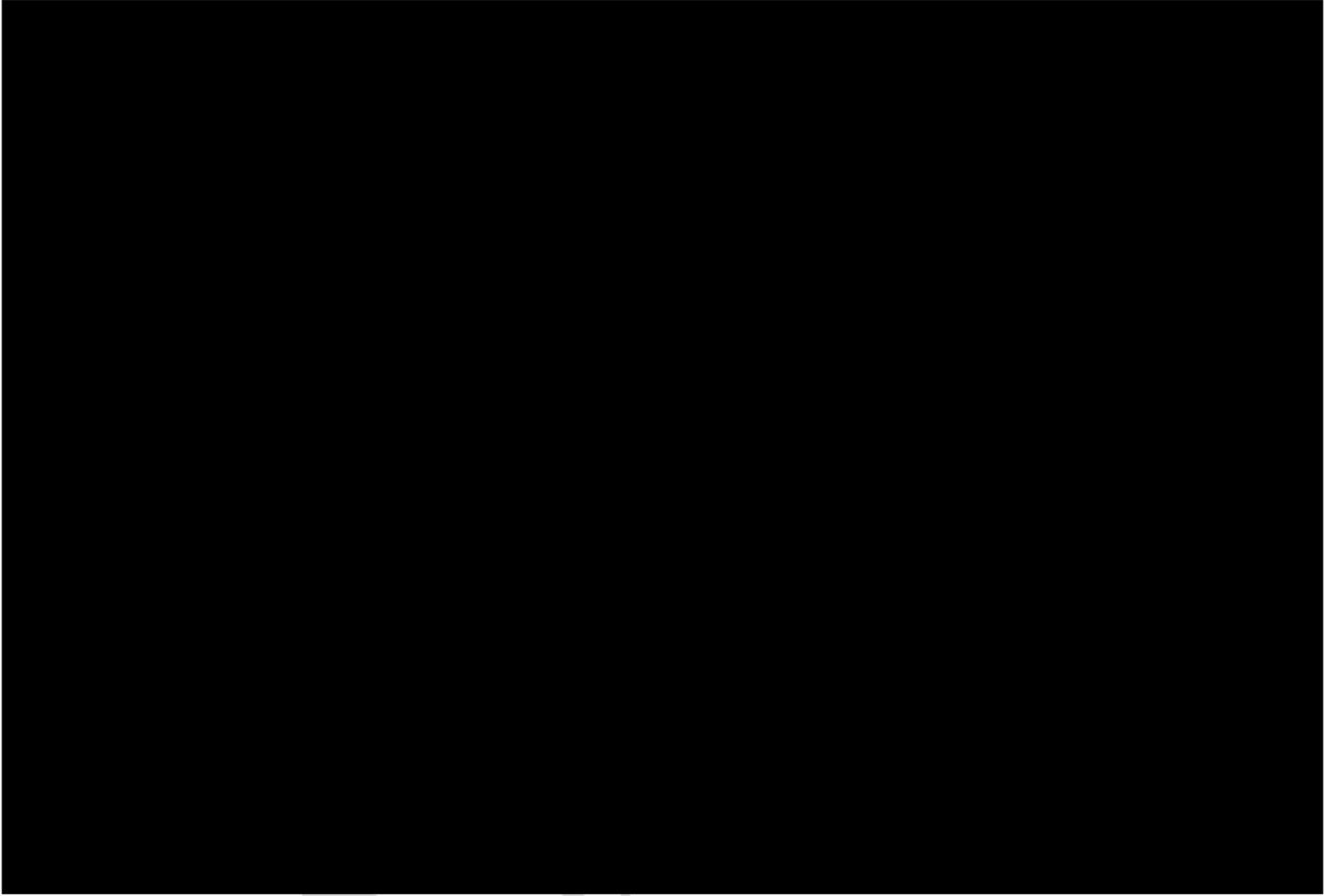


**Full Set of Comments:**

*Note: comments were optional and few students filled out the comments section*

Course Presentation:

- Course was presented well



SAB

**CANADIAN POLITICS (POLI 2706)**

**(Course Instructor)**

**(Similar to above)**

SAMPLE

**INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL SCIENCE (POLS 110)**

**(Teaching Assistant)**

(Similar to above)

SAMPLE

**SAMPLE SYLLABI**

**Nipissing University  
POLI 2207: Democracy and Development  
Spring 2014**

Full Syllabus here.

SAMPLE

**Nipissing University**  
**POLI 2706: Canadian Politics**  
**Spring 2012**

Full Syllabus here.

SAMPLE

## ELECTORAL INTEGRITY AND MALPRACTICE (E-LEARNING MODULE)

Master in Electoral Policy and Administration (MEPA) E-learning Module 14

**Course Objectives:** To understand the typologies of electoral malpractice, the tactics used by perpetrators and investigation techniques by enforcement stakeholders in order to be able to prevent (or reveal and halt) electoral malpractice.

*The following is the contents page from the e-learning module on Electoral Policy and Administration:*

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