

Statement of Teaching Philosophy

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I do not lecture! I engage students and facilitate learning via *active teaching and learning*. In this regard, I define myself as a *facilitator* of learning, not as a *messenger* of facts. In short, my teaching philosophy is based on the following pillars: *setting measurable learning outcomes, engaging students in class, constructive assessment* and *continuous improvement*.

My teaching model is all about learner-centered education where the focus is on the learner, not on the lecture. I make clear distinctions between *teaching, learning, and knowledge*. I believe that knowledge is a function of learning; and learning is a result of *active teaching*. For me, active teaching is the process of engaging and challenging students by making them active participants in the process, setting clear and measurable learning objectives and effective usage of teaching aides (e.g.,



Figure 1: *Core components of my teaching*

podcasts). That is, students must be actively engaged in all processes at all times. In this regard, I attempt to awaken minds by encouraging discussion, meaningful connections to the real world and critical-thinking (see Figure 1).¹

My mission is to accomplish every learning outcome specified in my syllabus.² It is only possible by setting *measurable, specific and attainable* goals. Next, an effective assessment system to *substantively* monitor the learning progress (learning outcomes) is critical.³ I utilize clear and structured assessment rubrics. I think it is imperative that students understand “how” their work will be evaluated so that expectations are clearly communicated while “deadly assumptions” are minimized or eliminated.

¹ To assist in this awakening, I will engage each student in real-time applications of theoretical and substantive information that *we* (not solely “I”) process in the class.

² In every class I teach, I explicitly specify the course objectives and learning outcomes expected from students.

³ This monitoring process involves setting *specific* benchmarks and developing *practical* rubrics. I prefer to give copies of my all assessment rubrics to students well in advance (on the first day of class) so that they know how I will be evaluating their work.

While working towards my major (*Comparative Politics*) and minor (*Political Methodology*), I have heavily invested in sharpening and enhancing my teaching skills by enrolling in the “**Certificate in College Teaching**” program at the University of Arizona. I have successfully completed this program by gaining eye-opening, invaluable insights on undergraduate *learner-centered* teaching. As a result, my average teaching evaluations has reached **4.7** (out of 5.0).