Teaching Statement

Jungmin Han

I consider teaching as a vocation, and it is one of the reasons that I chose to pursue an academic career. As a primary instructor, I have taught two courses at the University of Pittsburgh. In 2020, I taught *Foundational Mathematics in Political Science* to a class of first-year Ph.D. students. In the following year, I taught *Research Methods in Political Science* to thirty two undergraduate students. Moreover, I have acted as a guest lecturer for undergraduate-level courses, covering topics such as *Observational and Experimental Studies in International Relations*, *U.S. Foreign policy in the Asia-Pacific*, and *Content Analysis and Big Data*. As a teaching assistant, I worked for *Research Methods in Political Science* with a class size of one hundred undergraduate students over three semesters. My commitment to teaching is evident in positive student evaluations and the privilege of serving as the *Teaching Assistant Mentor* for graduate students at the University of Pittsburgh.

Teaching Philosophy

I base my teaching approach on four core principles: (1) fostering interactive learning, (2) engaging with real-world applications, (3) promoting evidence-based critical thinking, and (4) developing independent research skills.

First, I strongly advocate for interactive learning as the most effective means of genuine knowledge acquisition. As both an instructor and a teaching assistant at the University of Pittsburgh, I devoted myself to encouraging open interaction between myself and the students and creating a collaborative learning environment where everyone learns from and builds upon each other's insights throughout the learning journey. During the research method courses that I taught, I facilitated an interactive session, enabling students to engage in an open debate on the applications of methodological concepts to real-world problems.

Second, I am dedicated to supporting students in connecting what they learn in the classroom to real world events and problems. In the research methods courses, I recognize that many political science undergraduate students face challenges in understanding the value or applicability of methodological knowledge. To help students overcome these difficulties, I incorporated various news articles and essays into each session, initiating discussion on how real-world events could be analyzed using the methodological concepts they had learned in the course.

Third, I take pride in fostering critical thinking among students and guiding them to construct arguments grounded in evidence. During my classes, I observed that students were eager and capable of engaging in debates with their peers, but they faced challenges in providing critical evidence to support their arguments. In order to help students to critically evaluate theories in political science, I focused extensively on discussing what type of empirical evidence would strengthen or weaken the validity of a theory. To be specific, I instructed students on analyzing multiple datasets, such as the World Value Surveys and the Uppsala Conflict Data, and assigned tasks that required the students to use statistical evidence to explore various theories related to war and democracy.

Finally, I prioritize the development and growth of my students' independent research abilities. At Pittsburgh, my graduate students likely embark on careers that inevitably require them to engage in some form of research independently. Recognizing that the relevant skills may not come naturally to

most students, I consistently emphasized in my graduate-level class that it is essential to learn how to apply their mathematical and statistical skills to their own research. Moreover, I was committed to place importance in training independent research skills for undergraduate students. During the research methods courses, students were tasked with writing their own research papers, which involved formulating their research questions, developing theories, and analyzing quantitative data. I guided them through the basic use of statistical methods, utilizing software like R and Stata, to apply a variety of statistical analysis techniques in their research.

Teaching Evaluation

The table below present numerical scores on a 5 point scale from the students who submitted evaluations of my teaching effectiveness.[1] My exceptional performance in teaching has granted me the opportunity to serve as the Teaching Assistant Mentor for graduate students in the Department of Political Science at Pittsburgh during the semesters of Fall 2023 and Spring 2024.

	Main Instructor		Teaching Assistant		
	Math in Poli. Sci. (Fall 2020, N=5)	Research Method (Summer 2021, N=20)	Research Method (Spring 2020, N=66)	Research Method (Fall 2022, N=45)	Research Method (Fall 2023, N=26)
Preparation and Organization	4.40	4.55	4.67 (4.49)	4.51	4.23
Being Available to Students	5.00	4.65	4.77 (4.29)	4.25	4.00
Enhancing Students' Knowledge	4.00	3.95	4.23 (3.70)	3.73	3.96
Clarifying Difficult Concepts	-	-	3.97 (4.03)	4.00	4.00
Fair Evaluation on Students	5.00	4.50	-	-	-
Active Feedback to Students	4.80	4.45	-	-	-
Treat Students with Respect	4.60	4.65	-	-	-
Creating Engaging Atmosphere	4.60	3.75	-	-	-

Teaching Plan

Based on my teaching experience and research expertise, I would be enthusiastic about contributing to the delivery of general IR courses, including *International Relations theory* and *Foreign Policy Analysis*. I am particularly interested in engaging students at different stages of their academic training by helping them build strong theoretical foundations, develop methodological skills, and critically analyze major debates in international politics.

In addition, I am keen to develop new courses for upper-level undergraduate and postgraduate students that reflect my research interests and respond to evolving developments in the field. These courses would focus on areas such as *the US-China Relations* and *East Asia security*, with an emphasis on linking theory to real-world political dynamics and equipping students with analytical tools applicable to both academic research and policy-oriented careers.

[1]For the Research Method course in Spring 2020, I provide two sets of student evaluations – one prior to and another subsequent (within the bracket, *N=36*) to the course transitioning into a fully online format due to the Covid-19 pandemic. You can access full records of my teaching performances by using the following links: (1) Foundation of Mathematics in PS: Fall 2020; (2) Research Methods in PS: Summer 2021, Spring 2020, Fall 2022, and Fall 2023.