POLITICAL SCIENCE EDUCATOR

A Newsletter of the Political Science Education Section of the American Political Science Association

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MESSAGE FROM THE SECTION PRESIDENT

As we end a busy spring semester, I would like to expand on my vision for the continued growth of the section. As I said in the last issue, I believe that our increasing diversity within the section—both personal and institutionally—is critical to our mission. I welcome suggestions on how to expand our efforts. To this end, I have already proposed to the Executive Committee that we amend our section bylaws to include a graduate student member of the Executive Committee, so that we can hear more clearly their concerns.

The Civic Initiatives Working Group (CIWG) within APSA led by J. Cherie Strachan (University of Akron) and Diana Owen (Georgetown University) has my support, along with the support of the Civic Engagement Section President, to convert the working group into a Standing Committee within APSA. The plan is to develop a more formal proposal with clear guidance for rotating section membership in the Standing Committee. This joint effort will also increase our visibility within APSA. The CIWG proposed three panels for the APSA Annual Meeting in Los Angeles. All three were accepted and are listed below:

- "Democracy Needs You! Advice for Launching Your Civic Engagement Research Agenda" (David Campbell, Amanda Wintersieck, J. Cherie Strachan, Diana Owen, Elizabeth A. Bennion, Katherine Robiadek)
- "Making It Count, Where to Submit your Applied Civic and Political Engagement Manuscripts" (Dick Simpson, Carah L. Ong Whaley, Allison McCartney, Elizabeth Matto, Joseph W. Roberts, John P. Forren)
- "Called to Service, Political Science Expertise and Civic Engagement Programming" (Bobbi Gentry, Karen M. Kedrowski, Jeremy Bowling, Mary McHugh, Judithanne Scourfield McLauchlan)

In our ongoing efforts to increase the visibility of the section within APSA more broadly, the section has entered into an agreement with Pi Sigma Alpha, the National Honor Society for Political Science, to sponsor the Craig L. Brians Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Research & Mentoring. As part of this sponsorship, the section was asked to provide a statement of its mission. After consulting with Terry Gilmore, we determined that it is the following: "promote exemplary undergraduate and graduate teaching within the political science discipline and the scholarship of teaching." While this is certainly accurate, is it the inspiring and inclusive one that we need to move the Section forward? I am going to propose to the Executive Committee that we convene a small subcommittee of 5-7 people to evaluate the mission statement, and ask them to make recommendations for the section to discuss and adopt at the Section Business Meeting at the Annual Meeting in Los Angeles. For me, I think that a mission statement should be concise, outcome-oriented, and inclusive. Currently, ours meets two of those three criteria, but I would like to see us make it more inclusive and present an updated mission statement

As we prepare over the summer to catch up on the work that we have set aside while focused on our teaching, please consider attending the TLC at APSA conference in Los Angeles. Like the stand-alone TLC that was such a success in Baltimore in February, those who attend will have many opportunities to discuss with peers their teaching experiences and expectations, new pedagogies, and new opportunities or obstacles (like AI, for instance). For many of us, we prepare our classes somewhat in isolation, but TLC at APSA allows us to see that others are doing similar things and asking similar questions. I strongly encourage everyone to attend. There is so much to learn and so many interesting discussions to be had. Also, please consider sharing your assessments, discoveries, and new pedagogies with your peers in the Newsletter. I know that I find the Newsletter to be an invaluable resource.

Finally, as the summer begins, I would like to be the first to congratulate all members of the Section who have won (or rather, earned) a campus teaching award for the 2022-2023 academic year.

Best Wishes,
Joseph W. Roberts
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<u>**The Teacher Scholar**</u>

OVERCOMING PARTY POLARIZATION IN THE CLASSROOM

By Elizabeth Bennion (ebennion@iusb.edu)

In the introductory discussion board for my Summer 2023 online U.S. politics course, *every* student mentioned how divisive politics is today. Many noted that they generally avoided politics because political disagreements had created rifts among their family or friends. Their responses were consistent with students in my previous classes.

As I was thinking about students' responses and how to talk to them about political polarization, I received an email advertising a webinar on *[Party Polarization in The Nation and the Classroom](#)*[1], featuring Thomas Patterson, the Bradlee Professor of Government and the Press at Harvard University discussing party polarization's roots, impact on U.S. politics, and influence on our classrooms. Having participated in past Patterson webinars and used his free short video lectures as supplemental materials in my online U.S. politics courses, I immediately registered to attend. In the essay below I pose several frequent questions students ask about political polarization and use Patterson's thoughtful presentation (combined with my own thoughts, citations, recommended resources, and experience) to provide tentative answers to these questions. This essay offers evidence, analysis, and advice to instructors on these thorny issues.

How did we become so polarized?

According to Patterson, the success of the Civil Rights Movement to help African Americans gain the right to vote, shifts in gender roles, and changes in the view of government brought about a political realignment between 1960-2000 where West Coast and East Coast became solidly Democratic while the South became solidly Republican. Richard Nixon developed the Southern Strategy in 1968 that courted

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[1] https://scholar.harvard.edu/thomaspatterson/2020

Whites in the South who disliked of the role of the Democratic Party in passing the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Changes in gender roles in the late 1960s and 1970s, women's access to work, and the role of Roe v. Wade in gaining access to abortion services fostered a conservative shift. Later, the expansion of federal programs in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s created a debate about the size of government that supported the successful 1980 campaign of Ronald Regan and the Republican Revolution in the 1990s (Abramowitz and Saunders 1998, Scofield, Miller, & Martin 2003).

A change in people's lifestyles, identities, and fundamental understanding of democracy also contributed to polarization. In the past, people held cross-cutting identities (e.g., religion, income, and geographic location) that did not easily align with a single political party or ideology. Along with a general acceptance of pluralism and incrementalism, these complex political identities created room for moderation, collaboration, and compromise (Goodin 1975). In contrast, Americans today often hold overlapping and reinforcing beliefs, creating sharp entrenched partisan identities and more distrust of those with different party label. When ideas about race, culture, and the size of government merge, Americans become sharply divided, creating mutually antagonistic parties in the electorate and in government (Lee 2021).

The intra-party takeover of the GOP has also contributed to party polarization. For many years, an establishment wing dominated the Republican Party. George H.W. Bush (1988, 1992), Bob Dole (1996), George W. Bush (2000, 2004), John McCain (2008), and Mitt Romney (2012) were part of this wing. Late in the George W. Bush administration, cultural conservatives began to push back against the establishment. The Tea Party developed in reaction to Democrats' approach to the economy and expanded healthcare access in 2009-2010, as well as establishment Republicans bailing out the banks, which many conservatives viewed as government overreach. The nomination of Donald Trump, and his subsequent Republican primary victory over establishment candidates, completed the takeover of the GOP by the cultural conservatives (Patterson 2023).

How polarized are we, really?

A Pew Research Center poll in 2015 provides clear evidence of intra-party division within the Republican Party. At a time when Republicans controlled the U.S. House and Senate, 31% of Democrats and only 23% of Republicans held favorable views of Congress (Pew 2015). Further evidence comes from 2016 primary exit polls that found a majority of Republican voters (59%) felt betrayed by politicians of the Republican Party, with 55% of these folks voting for Donald Trump (Gass 2016). In many ways, today's party system pits a Democratic party (forged during the 1930s-1960s as the party of economic security programs, civil rights, and cultural liberalism) against a Republican Party (transformed in this century into the party of economic and cultural conservatism). The Democrats moved from a states' rights party to a federal party while Republicans became the states-rights party (Patterson 2023).

Meanwhile, the parties have seldom been further apart. Partisan views on abortion illustrate this point. In 1975, Democrats and Republicans were equally likely to believe that abortion should be allowed in all circumstances. Today, Democrats and Republicans are polarized on this and other issues. Even more concerning, people in both political parties increasingly describe each other as "enemies" rather than political opponents. In an August 2022 YouGov poll, about half of all partisans reported seeing people who don't share their partisan beliefs as enemies: 47% of Democrats see Republicans as enemies rather than merely political opponents, and 49% of Republicans see Democrats as "enemies" (Salvanto 2022).

The rise of alternative realities (i.e. perceptual polarization) is also on the rise. In the mid-1990s there was little difference between Republicans and Democrats regarding beliefs about global warming. In the 2020s, the gap grew significantly with a 2023 Gallup poll showing that 88% of Democrats, but only 29% of Republicans believe that human activity impacts the earth's temperature (Gallup 2023). What's more, 85% of Democrats compared to 33% of Republicans believe that the effects of global warming have already begun (ibid 2023).

What role do political leaders and the media play in political polarization?

Unfortunately, any change in the amount of polarization seems unlikely in the short-term. The number of uncompetitive states and districts (increased by partisan gerrymandering) keeps growing. The "Big Sort" (where people vote with their feet, moving to places that better reflect their own political views) makes the red states redder and the blue states bluer. This can turn primary elections into general elections with extreme candidates from the Left and Right triumphing. Meanwhile, politicians appeal to our political divisions and the media benefits financially from exploiting partisan and ideological divides. Traditional and partisan outlets dominate the landscape. These outlets link to other sources in their own cluster and reinforce the insularity of information. Each cluster presents different versions of reality. Partisan outlets are less in number, but overwhelmingly conservative in their orientation. This causes and reinforces partisan gravitation toward specific outlets. The success of conservative news outlets like Fox News spurred progressives to follow this model, creating MSNBC to offer overt liberal and progressive commentaries. A 2019 Pew opinion poll found that 93% of those who listed Fox News as their primary news sources are Republicans while 95% of those who list MSNBC as their primary news source are Democrats. Similarly, about nine-in-ten of those who name The New York Times (91%) and NPR (87%) as their main political news source identify as Democrats, with CNN at about eight-in-ten (79%). Network news viewership was more diverse, but leaned Democratic, with 57% of NBC viewers identifying as Democrats versus 38% Republicans (Grieco 2020).

How can we bridge the divide?

Chris Bail, director of Duke University's Political Polarization Lab, suggests that people tend to overestimate the ideological extremity of those who don't share their view while underestimating the extremity of views on their own side, creating an exaggerated sense of polarization in which people think that ordinary people are more polarized than they really are (Bail 2021). Yet, there is no doubt that our

perceptions that those who disagree with us are extremists, combined with evidence of increased party polarization in Congress, creates a real problem in our ability to work together toward policies that benefit the nation.

If polarization is both pronounced and robust, how can we escape it? Patterson argues against any simple solution. First, he argues that the relative strength of the two major parties incentivizes polarization. The major political parties are closely matched. The Republicans have a 9-seat advantage, about the same size that the Democrats had before the 2022 midterm. We also see very narrow majorities in the Senate. Each party has a chance of winning majority status. This tight electoral competition furthers polarization as each party tries to weaken the other. Both are more interested in gaining partisan electoral advantages than governing together.

In contrast, when one party has a substantial electoral advantage over the other, the majority party is more focused on getting things done while the weaker party moves closer to the majority party as it tries to pull away some of the majority party's supporters (Patterson 2023). Patterson suggests that polarization will be reduced when either Republicans or Democrats gain a major electoral advantage. But which party will win? On the one hand, the Republican party holds greater support than the Democrats at the state and local levels. The Republicans control more statewide offices (e.g., governor and attorney general) and more state legislative seats than Democrats. The GOP has also begun to cut into the Democrats' lead among the nation's two fastest growing demographics: Asian Americans and Latinos. On the other hand, since 2004, young voters have favored Democrats in the midterm and presidential elections, with voters ages 18-39 giving 63 percent of their votes to Joe Biden in 2020 (Pew Research Center 2021). It is unclear which party, if either, will become dominant in the future.

How can we deal with polarization in the classroom?

Party polarization results in discomfort, disrespect, name-calling, silencing of minority voices, and close-mindedness. This makes for difficult discussions of politics inside and outside of the college classroom. This section of the essay

combines the ideas that Patterson outlined in his webinar with ideas with my own ideas and suggested resources to prevent party polarization from undermining student learning.

Patterson offers several ideas for dealing with polarization in the classroom:

1. Explain the purposed of the course and stress the goal of better understanding politics rather than settling policy debates between liberals and conservatives.

2. Set some ground rules including civility. Encourage respectful disagreement that focuses on ideas and evidence-based arguments rather than personal attacks. Focus on deliberation, the careful consideration of multiple viewpoints and policy options, rather than winning the argument. If you use formal debates, set clear ground rules and frameworks to avoid name-calling and enhanced polarization in the classroom.

   For example, my own teaching includes a political controversies course in which students engage in debates, as well as role playing, deliberation, and collective policymaking, I use structures and rules that make debates more productive. In class debates, I place students into teams with specific debate rules. I prep students by having them read and discuss a wide range of viewpoints and topics to better understand the complexities, consequences, and benefits of any policy solution. To keep students focused on key points and policy disputes, I also outline a wide range of key topics that each team will have to address during the in-class debate and after the debate we hold a class debriefing to discuss logical fallacies, unsupported claims, strong arguments, personal reflections, and new questions that emerged from the debate. More information about my approach to helping students understand why others may think differently than they do is featured in a September 2019 issue of the Chronicle of Higher Education (McMurtrie 2019).

3. Patterson also recommends using a keep-them-guessing strategy with your own political ideology as the instructor of the class. Avoid discussing who you voted for or normative judgments towards parties, candidates, and policies. Though, note that sometimes students may make assumptions about your political ideology based on your racial, gender, or occupational identity. In the Q&A portion of the Patterson webinar, a Black male instructor noted that his students automatically assume that he is a liberal Democrat before he opens his mouth, which makes it harder to pursue the "keep them guessing" strategy. There is also evidence that students will project ideological viewpoints onto instructors based on their overall relationship with the professor, regardless of the professors' ideological beliefs or openness in discussing them (Braidwood and Ausderan 2017, 2019).[2]

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[2] College professors, who tend to lean liberal (Gross and Fosse 2012; Rothman, Lichter, and Neil Nevitte 2005) are aware of public concerns about ideological bias (Selingo 2004), though several studies have shown such concerns to be largely unfounded (Marianai and Hewitt 2008, Woessner and Kelly-Woessner 2009). Students tend to project their own ideology onto professors whom they like, but the oppositive ideology onto professors they dislike (Braidwood and Ausderan 2017). This is important because students' perceived ideological distance between themselves and their professors substantially increases perceived political bias in the classroom (Yar and Sulitzeanu-Kenan 2015). Students also report more negative course evaluations when their professor does not share their ideology (Kelly-Woessner and Woessner 2006), while students who view their instructors as sharing the same ideology put more effort into a course and report higher levels of learning and enthusiasm (Kelly-Woessner and Woessner 2009; Linvill and Havice 2011; Braidwood and Ausderan 2017; Wood, Kiggins, and Kickham 2017).

On the whole, students and professors generally agree that ideological bias should be avoided in the classroom (Tollini 2010) and research shows that ideological shift among young people who attend college matches that of non-attenders, suggesting that students are not being ideologically brainwashed in the classroom (Mariana and Hewitt 2008). Moreover, ideological projection takes place many weeks into the semester as students form attitudes strong enough to justify ideological projection, especially for those with negative opinions of their professors (Braidwood and Ausderan 2022). This leaves room to build positive relationships with students that allow for greater flexibility when discussing political ideas in the college classroom.

4. Discuss the importance of political compromise in a democracy, the roots of party polarization, and the danger of polarization for representative democracy. Bring about the negative partisanship and how this tendency to act based on fear and hatred of the other party affects our politics and our relationships with other Americans, including our own neighbors and family members. By revealing the larger patterns and political context that embody their lives, students start to challenge their established routines, change the pattern, and become part of the solution.

5. Provide examples of strong bipartisan friendships and working relationships where people work together to achieve common objectives and treat each other with respect despite major differences in their political beliefs. Supreme Court Justices Ruth Bader Ginsberg and Antonin Scalia, President Ronald Regan and House Speaker Tip O'Neill, President Barack Obama and House Speaker John Boehner, Senator John Kerry and Senator John McCain, and President Bill Clinton's relationships with Presidents George H.W. and George H. Bush provide notable examples of these bipartisan relations.

6. Anonymously poll the students in the course to determine the overall leanings of students in your course. Empower those in the minority to speak up, either by noting that their voices are especially important or by noting the absence of certain perspectives and raising those viewpoints in ways that encourage students who share the believes to speak up or that challenge the majority to consider these perspectives seriously. As an example, Patterson's classes contain more liberals than conservatives. He compares the graph of instant poll responses to a graph of the nation, and notes that the class does not reflect the country. He encourages conservative students to be a robust and outspoken minority so that both liberals and conservatives in the class will have an opportunity to understand how people with different perspectives think about politics.

7. Help students understand the ubiquity of confirmation bias (that all of us are susceptible to believing claims that support our existing biases and worldview). Getting students to study sources of bias, though websites like yourbias.is, shows the limits of our own perspectives and opens the door to learning from others.

8. Discuss the problem of misinformation and disinformation in today's world. Provide students with the tools they need to fight misinformation by refusing to spread it. Help students understand the bipartisan nature of the problem. Indiana University's Observatory on Social Media[3] provides helpful data tracking unsupported narratives in the 2020 presidential elections including false claims believed by Democrats, Republicans, and Independents, while Mike Caulfield *Web Literacy for Student Fact-Checkers*[4] provides a practical approach to quick source and claim investigation.

9. Help students understand the complexity and tradeoff of policy decisions, as well as how different decision-makers may come to different conclusions about the best course of action. Patterson uses the example of the Pandemic to note the difficult choices stemming from simultaneous health and economic crises. The rapid spread of the disease and filling up of hospitals coincided with a rapid rise in unemployment. States with Democratic governors had much higher vaccination rates and lower death rates, but states with Republican governors fared better economically. Democratic and Republican governors prioritized distinct aspects of the crisis with both positive and negative consequences for their constituents.

What resources can you use to fight polarization?

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[3] https://osome.iu.edu/
[4] https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/textbooks/454

I recommend the following free, high quality, low barrier resources to encourage productive conversations, deliberation, and dialogue in the classroom that helps students talk across difference.

1. [National Issues Forums](#)[5] provides free issue guides and discussion start videos, as well as moderating tips and training materials on their website.

2. Caitlin Quattromani and Lauran Arledge TEDx talk entitled ["How Our Friendships Survives Our Political Differences"](#)[6] provides a relevant example of everyday people learning to bridge the partisan divide. Based on their own discovery of their substantial political differences during the 2016 presidential election, the talk offers specific advice for promoting understanding and maintaining friendships despite deep political disagreements (Quattromani and Arledge 2017).

3. The free websites [yourbias.is](#)[7] and [yourfallacy.is](#)[8] offer free materials to teach students about logical fallacies and individual biases that clog our thinking and prevent us from logical, evidence-based reasoning and discussions.

4. The [Duke University Polarization Lab](#)[9] offers free online resources to help fight polarization by allowing students to measure the strength of their echo chamber, learn what their tweets say about their political ideology, and follow bots that help find conversation partners with views that differ from their own.

5. The [Constructive Dialogue Institute](#)[10] offers the "Perspectives" curriculum free online. The six interactive online lessons weave together psychological

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[5] https://www.nifi.org/
[6]https://www.ted.com/talks/caitlin_quattromani_and_lauran_arledge_how_our_friendship_survives_our_opposing_politics?language=en
[7] https://www.yourbias.is/
[8] https://yourlogicalfallacyis.com/
[9] https://www.polarizationlab.com/
[10] https://constructivedialogue.org/

concepts and practice scenarios. They also offer three peer-to-peer discussion guides and a dashboard to track learners' progress and quiz scores for instructors who want to assign the lessons as a required part of a graded course.

6. Unify America hosts [The Unify Challenge](11), including online college bowls that match people from different ideological backgrounds for one-on-one guided conversations online. The easy-to-use online platform provides everything participants need to engaged in a one-hour guided activity appropriate for extra-curricular, co-curricular, and curricular use. Unify America offers twelve date options for easy scheduling, handles all reminders to students, and even records which students participated and how many questions they answered for instructors who wish to assign the Challenge for credit.

These approaches engage students in critical thinking, self-reflection on their own values and beliefs, democratic dialogue, and skills building. Students can use these skills outside of the classroom to resist dismissing almost half of the country as ignorant, uninformed, deluded, or evil; and to consider political difference in more productive ways through constructive dialogues and coalition-building.

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[11] https://www.unifyamerica.org/unify-challenge

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THINKING POLITICALLY ABOUT AP US GOVERNMENT

By Michael Christopher Sardo (msardo@tarbut.com)[12]

This academic year, I taught AP United States Government and Politics (APUSG) to about sixty high school juniors and seniors. My students are among the nearly three hundred thousand high school students who took the APUSG exam, one of the most popular AP exams (College Board 2022b). While we might celebrate these numbers as an advance in civics education, College Board's course and exam structure should worry political scientists in its limited engagement with core political science concepts and depoliticized conception of US government and politics. If 2022 is representative, every year around one hundred fifty thousand students earn a passing score for potential college credit (College Board 2022b). My concern is that APUSG and its associated exam have become the default national civics curriculum, while leaving students at best unprepared for upper-level political science courses, and at worst, if the exam satisfies their social science requirements, with a narrow and limited conception of politics and governments as they enter the world of adult citizenship.

According to College Board's Course and Exam Description (CED), APUSG provides "a college-level, nonpartisan introduction to key political concepts, ideas, institutions, interactions, roles, and behaviors that characterize the constitutional system and political culture of the United States" (College Board 2020, 7). The CED provides a detailed course framework, breaking down five units—on Constitutional foundations, formal institutions, public opinion, political behavior, and civil rights and liberties—into nearly one hundred pages of daily lesson plans with specific topics, learning objectives, pedagogical suggestions, and supplementary sources to prepare students for the AP exam's 55 multiple-choice and four free-response questions.

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[12] The views and opinions express in this article are the author's and do not necessarily reflect the views of the author's employer.

While this undoubtedly mirrors many college-level introductory political science courses, a closer look at the CED is revealing. The concepts "collective action" and "polarization" only appear in the titles of optional supplemental readings (College Board 2020, 60, 120). "Rational Choice" is mentioned once and only in the context of voting behavior (College Board 2020, 115). "Power" is frequently mentioned but only in abstract constitutional terms like the "separation of powers" (College Board 2020, 46). These are not only core disciplinary concepts, but they are crucial both for helping students analytically study US government and politics—seeking to explain and not just identify political behavior or institutional dynamics—and for empowering students to critically interrogate US government and politics. A rich understanding of collective action problems, polarization, and power can help students understand why certain pieces of legislation don't get passed, or even introduced, or why the two-party system functions the way it does. The course is similarly narrow in other ways. Neither racial and ethnic politics nor immigration are explicit topics of study, and while there are dedicated topics on social movements, they focus almost exclusively on the African-American Civil Rights Movement and women's rights movements (College Board 2020, 89-92). State and local governments are only mentioned in the context of federalism with no specific attention paid to their structure, powers, or behaviors.

The College Board does, however, mandate two sets of required documents: nine "Required Foundational Documents"[13] (RFD) and fifteen Supreme Court cases.[14] While College Board has undoubtedly chosen important texts, this selection is strikingly narrow in scope and authorship. Eight of the nine documents are from the 18th century and all focus on the nature of the Constitution or the grand principles

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[13] *The Declaration of Independence*, *The Articles of Confederation*, *The Constitution of the United States*, *Brutus* 1, *Federalist* 10, 51, 70, and 78, and King's "Letter From a Birmingham Jail" (College Board 2020, 30-31).

[14] *Marbury v. Madison (1803), McCulloch v. Maryland (1818), Schenck v. United States (1919), Brown v. Board (1954), Baker v. Carr (1962), Engel v. Vitale (1962), Gideon v. Wainwright (1963), Tinker v. Des Moines (1969), New York Times Co. v. United States (1971), Wisconsin v. Yoder (1972), Roe v. Wade (1973), Shaw v. Reno (1993), United States v. Lopez (1995), McDonald v. Chicago (2010), and Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission (2010) (College Board 2020, 32-33). Following the ruling in Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization (2022), College Board removed Roe from the list of required cases for the 2023 exam.*

of US government. All are written by men and only one is written by a person of color. There are no documents from the 19th century, despite the importance of the Civil War and Reconstruction in the development of the US's constitutional order. While any list of RFDs will be somewhat arbitrary, by focusing on the founding period almost exclusively—King's "Letter" providing the sole exception—College Board is constructing an image of US government and politics that emphasizes constitutionalism and relates all aspects of politics back to 19th century debates. The AP exam's fourth free-response question makes this explicit, requiring students to respond to a prompt with an argument supported with evidence from one or more of the listed RFDs (College Board 2020, 169). These prompts focus on broad normative questions about the role or structure of the federal government, often connected to contemporary issues. On recent exams, students were asked to evaluate competing strategies for civil rights movements using Federalist 78, The First Amendment, and King's "Letter" (College Board 2022a, 6) and identify whether environmental policy should be a federal or state issue using Brutus I, Federalist 10, and the Preamble of the Constitution (College Board 2021, 6). These prompts implicitly suggest that the answers to contemporary political questions should be found in the United States' founding documents and debates. These prompts shape the way students think about government and politics. Students are trained to treat the writings of the founding period as a canon of almost sacred texts, within which lie the answers to all political disputes. Thus, the selection of the RFDs when paired with these questions is not simply arbitrary, but provides College Board's imprimatur to a particularly conservative and narrow understanding of US government and politics, This image may be non-partisan, but it is not ideologically neutral.

This image is consistent with the 15 required Supreme Court Cases. Again, while the list appears arbitrary—why Citizens United and not Buckley v. Valeo (1976); why Yoder and not Lemon v. Kurtzman (1971)—it advances a particular conception of judicial politics by narrowly focusing on certain types of rulings while also casting the Court as an agent of rights expansion. All of the cases involve high-level Constitutional questions, which reinforces the course's Constitutional focus while

also framing the judiciary's sole purpose as ruling on constitutional questions. For example, why not include Chevron v. NRDC (1984) to emphasize the importance of bureaucratic rule-making and to show that the Court is often engaged in questions of statutory and not Constitutional law? Similarly, most of the required cases focus on the Bill of Rights, and almost all of them—with the exception of Schenck— involve the Court expanding or defending rights and liberties. However, this elides the role of the Court in restricting civil liberties, especially for minority groups, throughout its history, such as in Dred Scott v. Sanford (1857), Chae Chan Ping v. United States (1889), and Korematsu v. United States (1944). This frames the Court as focused solely on questions of Constitutional theory and protecting civil liberties, rather than as a political body. That there is no required list of Acts of Congress further idealizes the Court, placing it as the sole arbiter of Constitutional meaning.

This is reinforced by the AP exam. In addition to multiple-choice questions on specific cases, there is a dedicated SCOTUS free-response question, where students compare an unfamiliar case described in the prompt to one of the required cases, focusing on their shared constitutional question, the facts of the cases, and their political implications (College Board 2020, 169). By requiring students to explain how the Court came to similar or different holdings solely on the facts of the cases and the shared Constitutional issue, the exam implicitly frames the Court as apolitical. Tellingly, students are not encouraged to think about how political considerations such as the composition of the Court, different historical contexts, or changes in statutory or case law may have led to different rulings. Questions of power, institutions, self-interest, collective action, and historical change are confined to a single topic on "Legitimacy of the Judicial Branch" but are clearly secondary to these high-level abstractions (College Board 2020, 66).

The CED admits this focus. "Command of the Constitution lies at the center of this course," College Board's CEO writes; "the aims of this course framework are timeless, and its roots are deeply embedded in the American experiment and the intellectual traditions that animated our founding" (College Board 2020, 11) This

ahistorical approach is particularly worrisome. For example, with no attention to historical and political change it is impossible to understand the significance of the Reconstruction or Progressive Era Amendments. Additionally, despite including topics on social movements, the CED's course framework elides that the concepts, principles, institutions, laws, and precedents, presented to students as fixed and static are themselves continually subject to critique, contestation, and revision by both political agents and political scientists. In short, College Board's vision of US government and politics is nearly devoid of politics.

Of course, the CED does not prohibit going beyond these required topics, RFDs, and Court cases. It maintains that the Unit Guides provide merely a "suggested sequence" that "respects new AP teachers' time by providing one possible sequence they can adopt or modify rather than having to build from scratch" (College Board 2020, 25). Furthermore, in a recent statement, College Board contends that "AP frameworks are flexible by design so that teachers use their experience and creativity to expand and enhance the curricula. No two AP classes are alike" (Jaschik 2023). The CED should be interpreted as a guide for teachers to then modify and adapt to their needs not as a complete curriculum.

However, such flexibility is nominal at best, especially given the course's required source materials and the incentive structures faced by teachers and students. Teachers have limited time and expertise, and following the CED to the letter provides both ready-made lesson plans and easy access to College Board's online AP classroom assignments that include both mini-lesson videos and practice questions for each topic. Given AP Classroom's adoption across the disciplines, students have been normalized to expect that the actual class strictly follows AP Classroom (Abrams 2023, 105-121). Students, in an increasingly competitive college admissions environment, have also been socialized to prioritize their AP exam scores. I have been told by experienced AP teachers and exam readers that students would not be rewarded by using more technical political science concepts (such as path dependency, collective action problems, or principal-agent relationships) on free-response questions. In my classes, students would

immediately ask if an assigned reading was one of the texts required for the AP exam. This behavior is reasonable; students are rationally responding to their incentives. However, it further suggests that the claimed flexibility is formal rather than substantive.

My point is not to demean the efforts of the scholars and educators who contributed to the CED, nor the thousands of APUSG teachers and hundreds of thousands of APUSG students. Instead, my goal is to point towards the limitations of APUSG as the de facto national civics curriculum. It is to suggest the importance of collaboration between scholars of US politics and the high school educators, which as Abrams (2023) notes, was the original model of the AP program. It is to finally to imagine an alternative possible APUSG curriculum that provides a general framework of learning objectives, but encourages and empowers teachers to select texts, Court precedents, scholarly sources, and other materials that speak to pressing contemporary debates and the needs of their specific student body and community. Rather than rehearsing the ratification debates and entrenching an image of an apolitical Court, APUSG courses could study the structures of their own state and local governments and identify opportunities for civic engagement, debate Court precedents that affect the lives of members of their particular communities, and read political and scholarly texts that better reflect the diversity of the nation and their own political worlds. Such an approach begins by trusting and empowering teachers, encouraging collaboration, and foregrounding the politics in US government and politics.

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CONFESSIONS OF A POCHO PROFESSOR: TEACHING LATINX POLITICS WHEN NO ONE KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS

By Matt Lamb (Matt.Lamb@ttu.edu)

"What is Latinx Politics?"[15] I start the first day of my class "Introduction to Latinx Politics in the United States" with this question. The students don't know it yet, but I've just launched the opening salvo of a discussion that will dominate the first few weeks of the course. The students quickly suss out the "politics" part. Someone brings up Lasswell's definition of politics (as "Who gets what, when, and how") that sometimes gets coupled with Dahl's definition of politics (as the pursuit of power between groups). The Latinx part, though, eludes them. "The politics of those with Mexican heritage?" someone usually answers. "Colombian Americans, Cubans Americans, Puerto Ricans, and a host of others are going to be shocked that they're not Latinx," I respond. "What about culture or heritage that is associated with the Spanish language?" another student asks. "Well, Brazilian-Americans are going to be dismayed to discover they are not Latinx," I say. "And Spaniards are going to be dumbfounded that they *are*!"

Their difficulty in defining "Latinx" is understandable. Politicians, journalists, and even academics face the same dilemma. All three of these groups regularly use the term to refer to different concepts and populations. This creates a challenge for those who teach Latinx politics to undergraduates in the United States, especially for those at a Hispanic Serving Institution (HSI) in Texas. How can we possibly discuss the politics of a subpopulation that we have such difficulty defining? As though the predicament were not sufficiently cumbersome, the ethnic composition of my students in this class are invariably and predominately Latinx. This is the only class I have ever taught without a majority of non-Latinx, White students (because ethnic studies courses disproportionately attract students from that ethnic group).

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[15] My class discusses the origin and appropriateness of the term Latinx. The term remains a standard amongst academics, but relatively few Latinxs use it in their lives. Many have never heard of it, and we cannot avoid this reality. In class, my students tend to use the term Latino, Latinx, and Latine interchangeably in the course of class discussions. I use Latinx here because of the academic normalization of the term. While I acknowledge that we can argue about using the term, I avoid addressing that argument here.

How does one wade through the challenges with a room full of students who cannot easily separate the course material from their lives? Here I offer general insights from my own teaching to suggest instructors should simply ask these important questions, facilitate substantive discussions, and avoid offering any easy answers.

Personal Experiences Can Be Informative of Larger Academic Concepts

Treating a group as diverse as Latinxs as a cohesive population is not without controversy. Some have accused academics and activists of treating "Latinxs" as a cohesive unit simply for the ease of academic analysis (see Beltran 2010). However, others have noted that increased racialization of political issues and policies may have increased "pan-ethnic" sentiments of *Latinidad* (Gutierrez et al., 2019; Zepeda-Milan 2017). Even if one accepts this argument, Latinxs are still a culturally and racially diverse group with cross cutting social cleavages that do not necessarily fit into socio-political categories. As Junn and Masuoka (2008) note, "making the connection from shared classification in a racial category to group-based political behavior is neither simple nor obvious for nonblack minorities."

Latinx and non-Latinx students come into the classroom with the sum of their collective experiences. When teaching a course on Latinx politics, it is difficult to ask Latinx students to disentangle their personal experiences from the course material. Some students come from mixed status households. Others go back four or five generations before they come across an immigrant ancestor. Some Latinx students lack an immigrant origin story in the traditional sense. Their families never crossed the border; the border crossed them as a result of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Their knowledge of the Spanish language varies. Many are "No sabo kids"[16] – a label some wear with pride, others with vergüenza.[17] Some are children of Trump supporters. A few *are* Trump supporters. Others are the children and grandchildren of former *La Raza Unida* voters.

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[16] "No sabo kid" is a slang term used to describe someone of Latinx descent who has no, or limited knowledge of Spanish, and thus may be prone to making simple grammatical mistakes, such as incorrectly conjugating the irregular Spanish verb *saber* as "Yo no sabo" instead of "Yo no sé".
[17] "shame"

Key to engaging students is explaining how their different experiences may impact their interpretation and critique the academic literature. By pointing out the varied experiences of the Latinx students in the class, I ask how that might inform the way they critique the conclusions of the various articles we read. Each week, I assign academic articles that tackle a particular subtopic within the field of Latinx politics (i.e., group consciousness, linked fate, behavior, ideology, representation, etc). As a weekly assignment, they complete aggregate reading summaries that boil the article down to the main takeaways and offer critique of those arguments.

The written assignments ask the students to utilize their newfound knowledge of the social scientific literature on Latinx politics to respond to a current event on Latinx politics. Such assignments may include a prompt asking whether we find academic credence to the punditry that suggested Latinxs were ripe for a political realignment with the Republican party, a common media narrative in the aftermath of the 2020 election and the leadup to the 2022 midterms. The final assignment asks the students to come up with an informed research question that addresses a topic that they feel the current literature under-develops or leaves unaddressed. While they draw upon the previous literature, they also use their personal experiences to demonstrate bigger concepts that the current literature insufficiently addresses.

Engage with Practitioners

I always invite nonacademic speakers, who engage in civic mobilization of the Latinx communities, to address my Latinx politics classes. This includes Latinx community organizers, local officials, and journalists. My students often grapple with how what these "practitioners" of Latinx politics say sometimes diverges or contradicts the academic literature. I always remind students that they are comparing anecdotal experiences of the speakers with peer reviewed, quantitative work. Exposing students to the practical implications of academic work and the challenges of practical knowledge to it helps students see the limits of the current state of academic knowledge, and invites them to explore the subfield further. It

also makes Latinx group less abstract by emphasizing that Latinx voters exist as real people with political agency that changes over time.

The Importance of Teaching Latinx Politics

According to the U.S. Department of Education, Latinxs between 18 and 29 are the least likely to be enrolled in college or have a bachelor's degree compared to African Americans, Asian Americans, and non-Latinx whites. At the same time, the Latinx student population has grown exponentially in recent decades, making up approximately 4% of the student population at postsecondary institutions in 1980, to approximately 20% in 2020. That percentage is likely to grow as the overall share of the U.S. population grows. It will be important to offer more courses on Latinx politics in order to more directly engage this population. Especially as Latinx students are unlikely to encounter this material before college. Latinxs generally talk about political issues amongst family or friend with less frequency than other racial and ethnic groups (Lamb 2021) and teaching civics education usually privileges the experiences of white students over non-white peers (see Nelsen 2019, 2020). This often appears, as my Latinx students usually remain completely unaware of key historical facts in Latinx political history, such as the border lynchings of Mexican nationals and Mexican Americans, Operation W*tback, *Hernandez v. Texas*, and the rise and fall of *La Raza Unida*.

As the Latinx population grows, it will also become increasingly diverse. This will only complicate defining "Latinx" politics. I always end the semester with the same question that I ask at the beginning: What is Latinx politics? Student almost invariably offer more comprehensive responses than at the beginning of the semester. Sometimes they respond that with some version of the notion that they simply cannot define it but they know it when they see it. What students say demonstrates a desired learning outcome in my view. Scholars should approach Latinx politics as being constantly in flux. The term Latinx remains a highly contestable term as it encompasses a wide variety of experiences. The term also invites scholars to engage in further exploration.

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THE IMPORTANCE OF DATA SOFT SKILLS: REINFORCING DATA ACQUISITION, CLEANING, AND COMMUNICATION IN THE QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS CLASSROOM

By Steven Perry (sp52@rice.edu)

Over the past few years, I have taught a series of undergraduate and graduate courses on policy analysis and methodology, data visualization, and R programing for quantitative analysis. In each of these courses, as an exercise in data exploration and overcoming the challenges of working with real data, I assign my students to explore a seemingly simple public policy question: What happens to the animals dropped off at municipal animal shelters?

As part of the activity, I provide students a dataset of animal records from the animal shelter of a major Southern US city. The dataset contains records on almost 77,000 animals across a three-year time span, and is the epitome of a challenging, unclean dataset. For example, there is no codebook or uniform coding scheme, multiple variables have incorrect or illogical information (such as a variable on an animal's duration in the shelter with many negative observations), and many values are missing or are mistyped. To further complicate analysis, many observations are identical duplicates, but some apparent duplicates are records of the same animal entering the shelter more than once.

In small teams, students must wade through the data to uncover insights and identify trends about what features and characteristics affect an animal's likelihood of being adopted, and how long they remain in the shelter. Each group is assigned one specific question to investigate, and by the end of class, the team is responsible for cleaning the specific variables they need for their analysis, generating descriptive or summary statistics, running a model, and creating at least one visual that effectively communicates their results.

While this activity is not focused on traditional methodology-course topics such as statistical modeling, empirical analysis, or model selection, from my perspective

learning to overcome the obstacles and challenges of real-world imperfect data is one of the most valuable lessons we can provide our students. In our statistics, methods, and research design courses, we too often focus on the math and programing sides of the project, to the detriment of the other skills students need to actually carry out a data analysis project.

According to Anaconda's 2022 State of Data Science survey, data science practitioners report spending almost 40% of their time on data preparation and cleaning, an amount far greater than the time they invest in selecting, training, and implementing models (Anaconda, 2022). This is particularly troubling given that data practitioners routinely report that data cleaning is the area of their work that they enjoy the least, and (to some extent) that the received the least formal training on. In addition to acquiring and cleaning data, survey respondents also report spending an additional 29% of a project on reporting, presenting, and visualizing their results and data-driven insights. From these results, it is clear that there is a substantial imbalance between the time practitioners devote to data soft skills, and the attention we give these topics in our standard statistics and methodology curriculum.

As we look to how to best prepare our students to be effective data-literate practitioners outside of our classrooms, we cannot overlook the need to expose our students to these vital skills. If we want to prepare our students to meaningfully engage with data in their own research projects, their careers, or in graduate school, we must make sure that the data knowledge and familiarity they gain inside the classroom effectively mirror what they will encounter later, when working on real-world projects. When we focus solely on data modeling, statistical techniques, and other end-of-the-project analysis, we remove a key opportunity for our students to learn from the struggles of locating, acquiring, and cleaning their own data.

When we only prepare our students to work with data that has already been acquired, cleaned, and sanitized of any coding errors, nonsensical values, and/or

mistakes, we do a great disservice to our students and their data literacy skills. Real world data is messy. It has coding errors and mistakes, is incomplete, has missing observations, and often lacks any semblance of a useful codebook. Learning to work with the realities and limitations of real-world data is a skill no less important than effective research design or empirical modeling. We do our students no favors by focusing solely on the analysis portion of a data project, while simultaneously ignoring the hard work of data collection, cleaning, and transformation that are students will need to undertake in any data-related career. As we work to build our student's skills in quantitative analysis, coding, and general data literacy, it is critically important that we focus not only on the hard skills of statistical analysis and empirical modeling, but also on the soft skills necessary to successfully carry out a data project: how to find data, how to clean it, and how to communicate its insights to others.

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IN PART USAGE OF AI AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

By Cristina Juverdeanu (C.Juverdeanu@leeds.ac.uk)

In academic integrity and assessment and feedback circles, we had merely started talking about the challenges of artificial intelligence (AI) for academic integrity when *we were introduced to ChatGPT, the most advanced model to date, which had commenced its operations in November 2022*.

At these initial stages, the bulk of our discussions centre around the scenario where students request ChatGPT or other AI technologies to generate an essay from scratch. However, Harte and Khaleel (2023) present a compelling argument that this capability is not a new risk, but rather a technological advancement. They contend that in the past, students had the option of hiring ghost-writers via essay mills, and now, they can [simply] *do so in a more convenient, accessible, and cost-free manner.* As an Academic Integrity Lead at a UK University, however, I came to see that most academic misconduct cases are not outright buying papers. Arguably, with this technological advancement, these clear-cut cases will multiply. For the time being, the majority consists of partially plagiarized essays. Indeed, our institution defines plagiarism as "presenting someone else's work, in whole or in part, as your own" (University of Leeds, n.d.).

Currently, a plethora of text classifiers are being developed, capable of identifying with a certain degree of confidence whether a text has been generated by an AI. However, we face a significant Academic Integrity problem in that there are no established policies to guide us on how to handle this issue. Many students should know better than to copy-paste an answer provided by ChatGPT, but many still use ChatGPT. Hence, my question is: are we ready to deal with "in part" use of ChatGPT? Its "in part" usages are countless and challenge the boundaries of academic integrity. ChatGPT can be used "in part" to summarize the literature. It *is capable of quickly finding and summarizing information, providing literature reviews, and performing various other related tasks within a matter of seconds*. I asked the AI to summarise

an article I wrote and published a few years ago. It did so, and it correctly identified my main argument. While it applied it to three case studies, these were different from the three case studies I discussed. The answer, well written and convincing, ticked all the boxes of a correct answer, as I did make that argument based on three case studies. However, ChatGPT invented case studies not present in my article. One of them employed a concept I never touched upon in my article, but still relevant to the discussion.

In essence, this highlights the fact that ChatGPT is capable of generating a response that may seem plausible, but [might] *ultimately* [be] *untrue.* OpenAI's own Educator webpage acknowledges this by stating "while tools like ChatGPT can often generate answers that sound reasonable, they cannot be relied upon to be accurate consistently or across every domain" (OpenAI, n.d.). Here is where the misrepresentation of authors' contribution will challenge the boundaries between some marking criteria (such as lack of research, poor understanding) and academic integrity infractions (such as fabricated references).

Some students might, as advised by the OpenAI guidelines (OpenAI, n.d.), choose to disclose the use of AI and reference ChatGPT in their assignments, thus creating another illustration of "in part" reliance on ChatGPT. Even if we are to accept ChatGPT as a reference (and we will probably do that in the near future), the difficulty of ascertaining the boundaries between what the student read, understood and wrote, and what they did not still stands. Even when wanting to credit the AI, what for and how remain two key questions. I thus asked ChatGPT how to reference its contribution:

"As an AI language model, I do not require a specific type of reference. However, you may reference this conversation as a personal communication with an AI language model or simply cite the information provided as general knowledge about the impact of AI on academic integrity and plagiarism. If you need to cite specific information provided in the response, you may include a direct quote and attribute it to "ChatGPT, an AI language model" or similar phrasing" (ChatGPT 2023).

This is also expected to challenge what is accepted as common knowledge. If we are to take the definition that common knowledge "is widely accessible, is likely to be known by a lot of people, and can be found in a general reference resource, such as a dictionary or encyclopaedia" (University of Cambridge, n.d.), we can easily discover that not all information provided by ChatGPT, and put forward to be referenced as general knowledge, will fall under these criteria. *On the contrary, ChatGPT has the ability to provide highly specific and specialized information generated by distinct authors that may not be widely known.*

Last, but not the least, ChatGPT can be used "in part" to paraphrase. I wrote the content above and asked ChatGPT to improve my writing on certain paragraphs. All sections in italic have been improved, or should I say, paraphrased by it. So, are they mine, or are they ChatGPT's? I copied them back into ChatGPT and asked it who wrote them. The AI said it did.

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A BRIEF REFLECTION ON SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

By Adil Yildiz (ayildiz@go.olemiss.edu)

Throughout history, social movements have played an essential role in shaping society and promoting change. From the Women's Suffrage Movement to the Civil Rights Movement, they have empowered individuals to challenge injustice and advocate for their rights. As a society, we owe a lot to those who have fought tirelessly to create a better world for future generations. The Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s was a turning point in American history, as it led to the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. This movement, led by activists such as Martin Luther King Jr., helped to end segregation and ensure equal rights for African Americans (Ralph and Carson 2016, chap. 2). Similarly, the Women's Suffrage Movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries was a crucial movement that paved the way for women's right to vote. Women like Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton were instrumental in pushing for women's suffrage and women's other rights (June-Friesen 2014).

I have always been fascinated by social movements, particularly their ability to mobilize large groups of people around a common cause. As Michel Foucault (1978, 95-96) remarked, "where there is power, there is resistance" and "where there is resistance, there is power." Before studying political science, I felt that the power was mostly coming from political elites, then came resistance. I began to desire more participation in the political environment. During my bachelor's studies, I witnessed the impact of the Gezi Park movement in my community, as people took to the streets to oppose the construction of a shopping mall and to resist an oppressive authoritarian government that stifled alternative lifestyles (Özdemir 2015, 251). I grasped onto social movements like Gezi Park as a means to observe how people have their voice heard against political elites.

When I compare my understanding then to now, I realize that living through a social movement has had a meaningful impact on my perceptions of political

science. For example, I have recently read Robert Putnam's (1995, 67) "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital", where he argues that political participation promote "generalized reciprocity" and "social trust". I related his arguments to my experience as a participant in a movement, where I realized I gained a direct understanding of these concepts, which I believe my firsthand experience helped my comprehension. This is to say that by participating in a movement, students can gain direct experience of the political process and develop a better understanding of the theories and concepts they study in the classroom. Through their involvement in the movement, students can observe directly how power is exercised and challenged, and they gain a more nuanced understanding of the intricacies involved in the political process.

I believe that the impact of movements on policy outcomes can be highlighted more in standard political science curricula. My experience as a student tells me that while it is clear that movements are successful in raising awareness and mobilizing collectively thanks to the curricula, the extent to which they can affect policy change is often unclear. Political science courses can benefit from including a more nuanced discussion of the relationship between social movements and policy changes. Students might be inspired to become active participants in their own communities through understanding the transformational potential of social movements. They can build a feeling of agency and better understand their own ability to bring about change. Consequently, such motivations would create a more vibrant civic life, contributing to the advancement of society.

In conclusion, participating in a social movement has improved my comprehension of political concepts and theories. Students can gain a better understanding of the aspects of the political process by witnessing how power is exerted and challenged through a movement. Movements have a vital role in collective actions and raising public awareness, yet the degree of their ability to bring change should not be underestimated as it seems to often be in our classrooms. In fact, it is critical to recognize and explain the complex link that exists between movements and policy results. Better incorporating this into political science courses might help students

understand deeper how movements drive governmental decisions and subsequently have an impact on people's lives.

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LEARNING BY DOING: THE POWER OF ACTIVE LEARNING AND AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENTS IN THE POLITICAL SCIENCE CLASSROOM

By Nicholas Kapoor (nicholas.kapoor@fairfield.edu)
and Carrie LeVan (calevan@colby.edu)

As students, many of us experienced years of passive learning, where teachers act as the primary agents of education as experts who thoughtfully pass down knowledge to their students. Through this sage-on-the-stage model, teachers lectured to the students for 75-90 minutes and then made students regurgitate back information on assessments. While lecturing contains some merit, it can render students passive learners who are less likely to learn or retain the content. Passive learning means that the brain retains very little. To learn and remember, students must work with the information—test it, recap it, and explain it; teachers cannot learn for them (Oakley 2011; Lang 2021). Learners must use the information in class in meaningful ways, making deep neural connections between the learner and the information (Ambrose, et al. 2010).

Active learning, in contrast, includes any activity in which every student must think, create, or solve a problem. As an unattributed quotation tells us, "Tell me something, and I will forget. Show me, and I will remember. Involve me, and I will learn." Teachers engage students in the learning process and connect them to the course material. Rather than listening to the instructor deliver content, students engage in activities that require them to think critically, argue, reflect, and analyze as they process course content. As Gonzales (2018) tells us: "To learn, students need to **do** something." Active learning gets beyond activities and gives students the space to understand the rationale for the task. Meta-narration--explaining to students the reasoning for the task--offers more engagement with the lessons' material than just handing students an activity with no context.

Active learners retain more information, understand the material at a deeper level, develop critical thinking skills, and perform better on course assignments and

assessments (Oakley 2011). Mcmanus and Taylor (2009) describe the core tenants of active learning as student activity; student engagement; student reflection; and analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. An activity may last 5 minutes, 10 minutes, 30 minutes, or longer. The structure of the activity and the rationale provided to the students remain vital components of the activity's success.

In this essay, we invite you to bring active learning to your classroom and provide a framework for doing so.

Active Learning in the Classroom

Lesson planning remains vital for successful active learning. If you find the lesson plan boring, your students will also find the class dull. Moreover, if having an empty room maintains the same learning outcomes, you should rethink your lesson. Below are three example class sessions with built-in active learning strategies.

Class A - Sample 50-minute class - Lecture, Activity, Repeat

| Welcome! Previously On… 3 – 4 mins | → | Mini-Lecture #1 10 – 12 mins | → | Activity #1 3 – 4 mins | → | Mini-Lecture #2 10 – 12 mins | → | Activity #2 3 – 4 mins | → | Mini-Lecture #3 10 – 12 mins | → | Summarize Next Time On 3 – 4 mins |
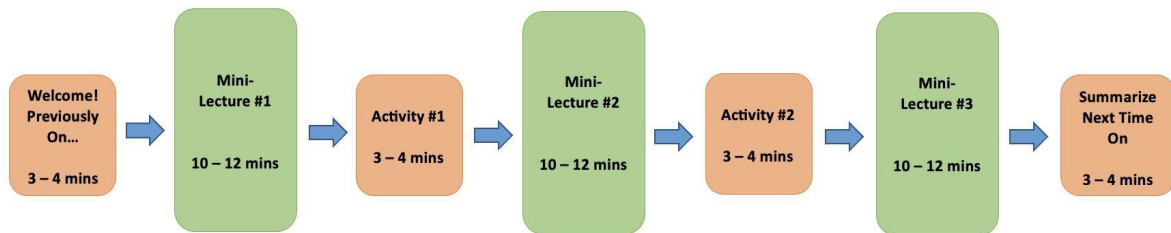
Class B - Sample 50-minute class - No Lecture

| Welcome! Previously On… 3 – 4 mins | → | Case Study 10 – 12 mins | → | Debrief Case Study 8 – 10 mins | → | Activity 10 – 12 mins | → | Debrief Activity 8 – 10 mins | → | Summarize Next Time On 3 – 4 mins |

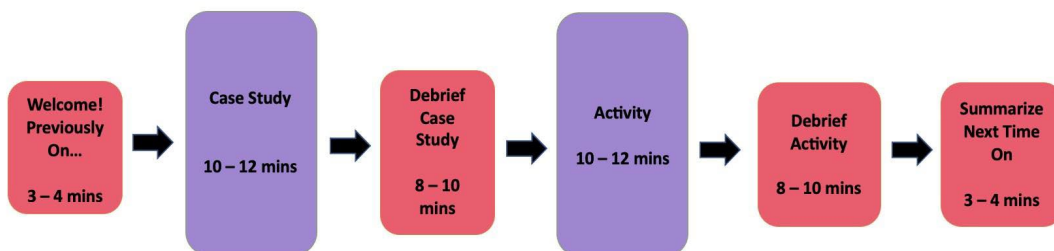**Class C - Sample 75-minute class - Mini-Lecture, Scaffolded Activity**

| Welcome! Previously On… 3 – 4 mins | → | Mini-Lecture #1 15 – 18 mins | → | Activity Part 1 8 – 10 mins | → | Debrief Activity Part 1 8 – 10 mins | → | Activity Part 2 8 – 10 mins | → | Debrief Activity Part 2 8 – 10 mins | → | Activity Part 1 and 2 Synthesis 10 – 12 mins | → | Summarize Next Time On 3 – 4 mins |
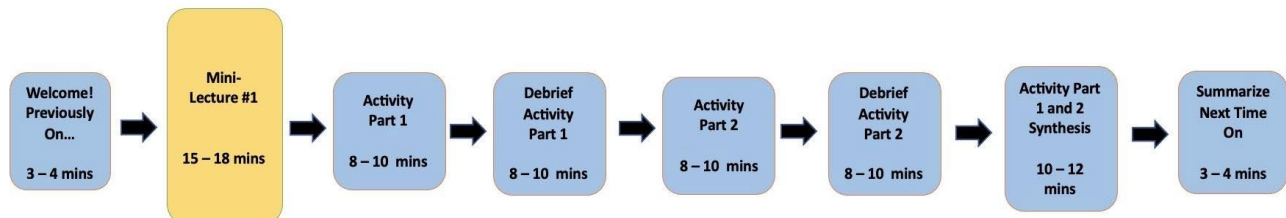
Each of the class sessions above begins and ends the same. Each class begins with the "Welcome/Previously On…" and ends with a "Summary" The students should utilize this repetition because they need to recall and think about what they learned in the past class and what they just learned in the instructor. Students should make the meta-connections between class materials, but teachers can make the meta-connections for students if they cannot. As teachers, we know the full arc of the story of our course from the beginning of the semester to the end, but for students to see it for themselves through each class lesson enriches the experience and continues to make deep neural connections around the information, as Kapoor can attest from personal experience.

What happens between the beginning and end of the semester, however, differs. Each example illustrates how active learning can be incorporated in various forms. In Class A, active learning comes in quick bursts between short lectures. Alternatively, in Class B, active learning takes the whole class. In this example, students work through a single challenge, assignment, or activity, having check-ins as they make progress. There is no one way to incorporate active learning into one's class, but the goal should be allowing students to apply information and see it in a new light. Activity and mini-lecture lengths may vary based on the goals of the activities and mini-lectures. Flexibility and the ability to pivot based on the classroom flow are also essential. Do not be afraid to have an entire class of just active learning activities, as in Class B above. To understand this further, check out this lesson on Federalism that can be found online at https://educate.apsanet.org/federalism-in-practice.[18]

But how do I do it?

Below are some ideas for classroom activities. Remember that passive learning prevents retention of information. Students need to grapple with the information—test it, recap it, and explain it. We invite you to review the ideas below, pick a lesson, and create an activity around it.[19] You should consider the following questions when planning your activity. How would you describe the activity? Why would students want to engage in this activity? How would students reflect on what they learned during the activity? How would the instructor provide feedback to the students?

Speed Dating: Organize the students of the course into two concentric rings, each containing the same number of students. (In very large courses, it may be helpful to use several pairs of concentric rings so that each group contains no more than

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[18] https://educate.apsanet.org/federalism-in-practice
[19] You can find more about this process online at
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1SnA4tXxDh4h_ls3ppaczjDADvUoJyWRQWRA3C73QmiM/edit?usp=sharing

about twenty students.) Assign the students a problem or topic to discuss in pairs consisting of one student from the outer circle and one from the inner circle. After a set period of time (usually only one to five minutes), have one of the circles rotate to change the pairs. Repeat this exercise three or four times until each student receives many different perspectives on the topic, ways of solving the problem, or opportunities to explain how to accomplish a task.

Pass a Problem: Divide the students of the class into groups of approximately six to ten. Have each group develop a problem or discussion question based on the material covered in the unit currently under study. They should also devise their solution to the problem or set of key points to discuss that issue. Each group then sends its problem to another group and receives a problem in return. After each group makes it through each problem, the entire class comes back together and discusses the different solutions.

Top Ten List: Working in groups, students create lists in reverse priority order of the top ten facts or observations about a particular unit. The activity helps students weigh the significance of different aspects of the course material. Students may produce humorous answers. List-making is a particularly effective way to begin and end your class when trying to get students to either recall what they learned last time or reflect on what they just learned. For example, when introducing several key terms from a previous class, hand out different colored post-its that correspond to a term. Have students write what they believe that term means and then write it on a virtual board like Padlet or Mentimeter. This allows the instructor to return to material that confused students.

What are Authentic Assessments?

Wiggins (1998) defines authentic assessments by connecting realism with active learning. Authentic assessment realistically replicates the test of a person's abilities in real-world situations; requires judgment, innovation, and originality; asks the student to "do" the subject; and carries out exploration and work within the

discipline. It draws upon the key components of active learning. It simulates the contexts in which adults are "tested" in the workplace, civic life, or personal life. It assesses the student's ability to successfully employ a repertoire of knowledge and skill to negotiate a complex task. It allows appropriate opportunities to rehearse, practice, consult resources, and get feedback on and refine performances and products.

Fink (2013) explains the positive impact of authentic assessment on students: "Authentic tasks are so important if we want to create testing situations that will teach and improve student learning, not just measure it. Assessment is authentic when we anchor testing in the kind of work people do, rather than merely eliciting easy-to-score responses to simple question" (95). Imagine how many times as an instructor you have gone to a department meeting and been given a multiple-choice quiz. Fink continues, "The idea is to focus student learning on realistic and meaningful tasks through cycles of performance – feedback – revision – new performance. This is essential to help them learn to use information, resources, and notes to perform effectively in context. Rather than create questions and problems with no context, the teacher should strive to create a problem of question that has a meaningful, real, authentic context that the students might face in the future and that allows the students to actually use recently acquired knowledge and skills" (113).

Fink reminds us that assessments should allow students to struggle, receive feedback, grow, and learn by demonstrating mastery of a particular learning outcome. Traditional assessments give students a single opportunity to demonstrate learning. If they fail, they lack further opportunities to improve. Authentic assessments allow students to operate as we do in the real world. For example, as faculty, we develop our scholarship with multiple stages of feedback. We take it to conferences to receive feedback, make revisions, submit for publication, receive feedback, revise and resubmit, edit, and so on.

How do I do it?

We look at creating authentic assessments through Bloom's Taxonomy outlined below.
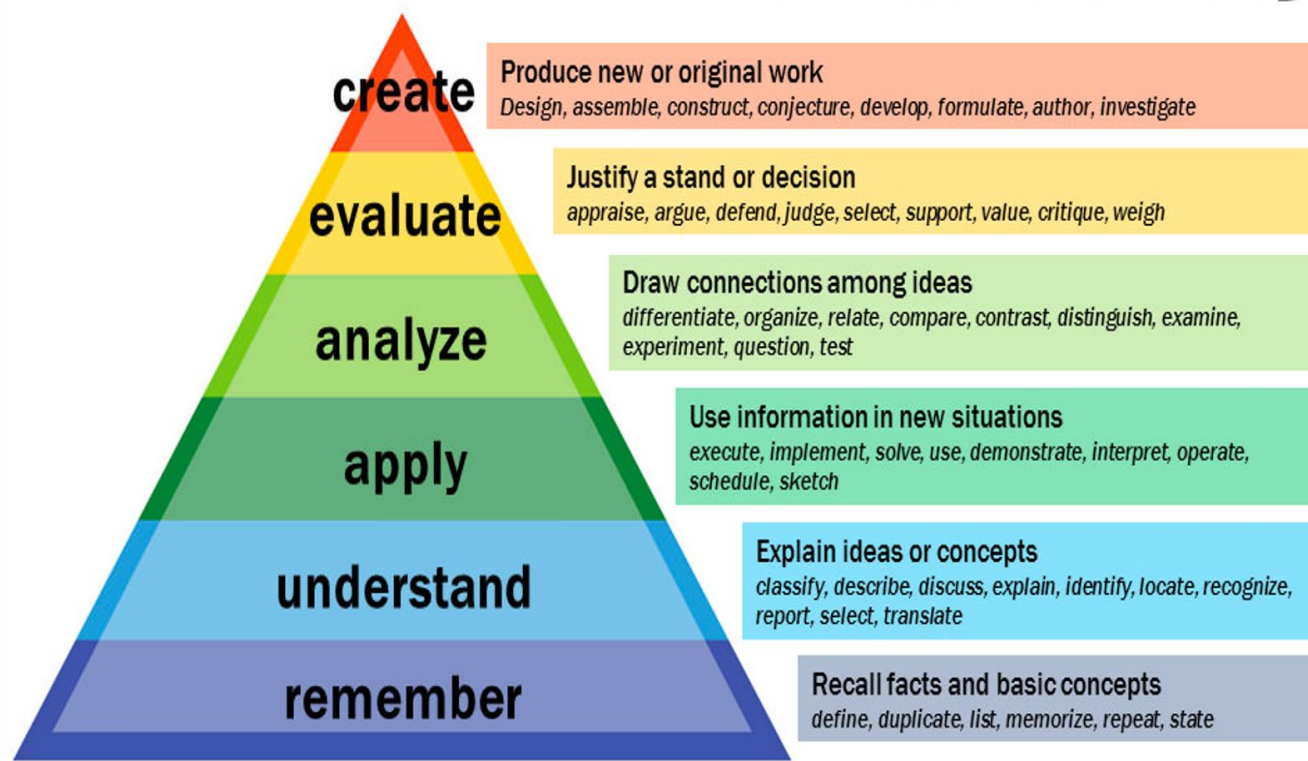
Adapted from Armstrong (2010)

Bloom's taxonomy defines and distinguishes between different levels of human cognition—i.e., thinking, learning, and understanding. Political scientists and other teachers from across the academy employ the taxonomy to explain their educational and assessment choices. We employ this taxonomy below.

Let's say you are teaching Introduction to American Government in early September and want to create a take-home assignment assessing students' understanding of the Declaration of Independence. What authentic assessments can you create using Bloom's Taxonomy as a guide?

Topic: The Declaration of Independence	
Bloom's Level	**Question/Assignment**
Create	You are King George III and you have just received the *Declaration of Independence* from the "rebels" of America. Draft a letter of 500 words responding to their concerns and listing your next steps.
Evaluate	You are Thomas Jefferson's proofreader. Copy and paste the *Declaration of Independence* into a Google Doc. Then, using the comments feature, critique Thomas Jefferson's words. Would you have changed the tone? Is it too harsh? Not harsh enough? After you make some comments and possibly some edits, explain why you made them and what impact you expect on the King's attitude towards America.
Analyze	There have been many documents whereby groups have declared their independence from another group. Choose another "Declaration of Independence" from around the world at www.Monticello.org/declaration.[20] Compare and contrast America's 1776 *Declaration of Independence* with one of the others. What are common themes throughout them? Research the effect of non-US *Declaration of Independence* and its effect. Did both documents work to make both groups independent?
Apply	Imagine that you are spearheading a campaign for your home state to secede from the United States of American. Using the *Declaration of Independence* as a guide, write a 250-word Declaration of Independence addressed to the President as to why your state will be leaving the USA.
Understand	Describe the two main parts of the *Declaration of Independence* and summarize their meaning.
Remember	Who wrote the *Declaration of Independence*?

We view Bloom's Taxonomy similar to American Federalism today, as a marble cake instead of a layer cake. A particular assignment may not fit nicely into one layer of Bloom's but may cross over layers or even skip layers. Again, we encourage the

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[20] http://www.Monticello.org/declaration

reader to pause, think about Bloom's Taxonomy and the example above, then devise a few assessment examples for various topics.

The Internet and our smartphones offer us the entirety of human history at our fingertips. If we ask an assessment question that Google can answer, a student can type in the question and get the answer. Moreover, with the advent of AI, students can even put in a prompt and have AI generate a novel answer. We must continually ask about our assessment choices and what we want students to learn from our assessments.

AI spotlights the need for us to ask why we assign what we assign and to explore multiple ways for students to demonstrate the knowledge and skills we seek in our assessments. We must remember that when our students leave us, AI will be there, better and stronger than ever. Publications are coming out every day about AI in the classroom. We are sure there will be many more in the coming months and years.

We acknowledge that many of our assessment examples can be answered by ChatGPT. However, utilizing ChatGPT in the classroom in conjunction with authentic assessments is powerful. For example, the instructor can break the class up into groups and give each of them the same "Create" prompt from above to put into ChatGPT. Then, students can reverse outline ChatGPT's answer in each group and write what they gathered from it on the board. Then, the class, as a whole, can compare and contrast the different answers ChatGPT gave to each group. What did ChatGPT put in all of the answers? What did it only put in one answer? Did it capture the sentiment of what the students would have written? How would the American Revolution have turned out differently if this was the real answer given to the rebels? Moreover, students can create an alternate history with ChatGPT and extrapolate what might have happened to the formation of the American government in its early years.

Conclusion

Why should we care about active learning and authentic assessment in our classrooms? First, it promotes inclusivity. Active learning strategies, such as group discussions and peer teaching, can promote inclusivity by allowing students to share their experiences and perspectives. This creates a more diverse and inclusive learning environment. Second, it fosters critical thinking. Active learning encourages students to think critically about the topics discussed in the classroom. Authentic assessments, such as creating policy briefs or drawing gerrymandered maps, require students to apply critical thinking skills to real-world scenarios. Third, it builds skills for future careers. Most careers require strong communication, research, and analytical skills. Active learning and authentic assessment help students develop these skills and prepare them for future careers. Fourth, it addresses social justice issues: Active learning and authentic assessment allow students to explore these issues meaningfully, and develop solutions that address the root causes of social injustice. We hope you will try some of these strategies in your classroom soon!

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LIBERTY AND RESPONSIBILITY: CREATING A WORKSHOP CLASS IN APPLIED POLITICS FOR UNDERGRAD AND GRAD STUDENTS

By Niva Golan-Nadir (niva.golan@post.runi.ac.il)

An applied politics workshop that pairs abstract theory of politics with conventional politics provides a textbook example of hands-on instruction and lively student participation for advanced undergraduates and graduate students. To demonstrate how you might develop such a course at your institution, I discuss my experience leading the *Liberty and Responsibility Workshop in Politics for Honors Students* in Reichman University's Institute of Liberty and Responsibility. Students actively make policy in the workshop. Last year, they presented a policy paper to Knesset members who wrote a bill based on student recommendations.

The annual workshop offers a selected group of students with a grade point average of 88 or higher from across the university a unique program that combines theory and practice. Students apply with a CV, a transcript, a letter of recommendation from a lecturer at the school, an essay explaining why they wish to be in the workshop, and a commitment to participate in all workshop activities. I worked with a teaching assistant to interview prospective students and select 20 students from among the 40 applicants. Two of the best students from the previous year also get to participate by guiding the new students through the learning and the implementing process.

Practically, workshops in applied politics should place theory before implementation. Thus, I introduce a theoretical framework that offers several ways to analyze "real life" politics. It then continues with a series of guest lecturers that discuss their political activity with the students. It concludes with the students presenting their working papers that combine theory and practice to offer a practical policy solution to the investigated phenomenon. The class shows students how political science can provide them with the tools to become thoughtful policy makers.

The design of the workshop exposes students to political activity and uses abstract theory to explain how significant change can happen in Israeli politics. The students delve into three different points of view for analyzing Israeli politics: formal and informal institutions, politicians, and civil society. These lenses help students constructively analyze controversial issues in Israeli politics.

The topic investigated by the students in the workshop changes each year, but always concerns a challenge in the Israeli political system that imposes administrative burdens on different groups in society. In the 2021-2022 academic year, the workshop dealt with the lack of public transportation on Saturdays because of religious constraints. In the current academic year 2022-2023, it addressed the crisis in the Israeli education system, specifically the contested relationship between the Ministry of Education and the teaching staffs that has brought about multiple strikes across the years.
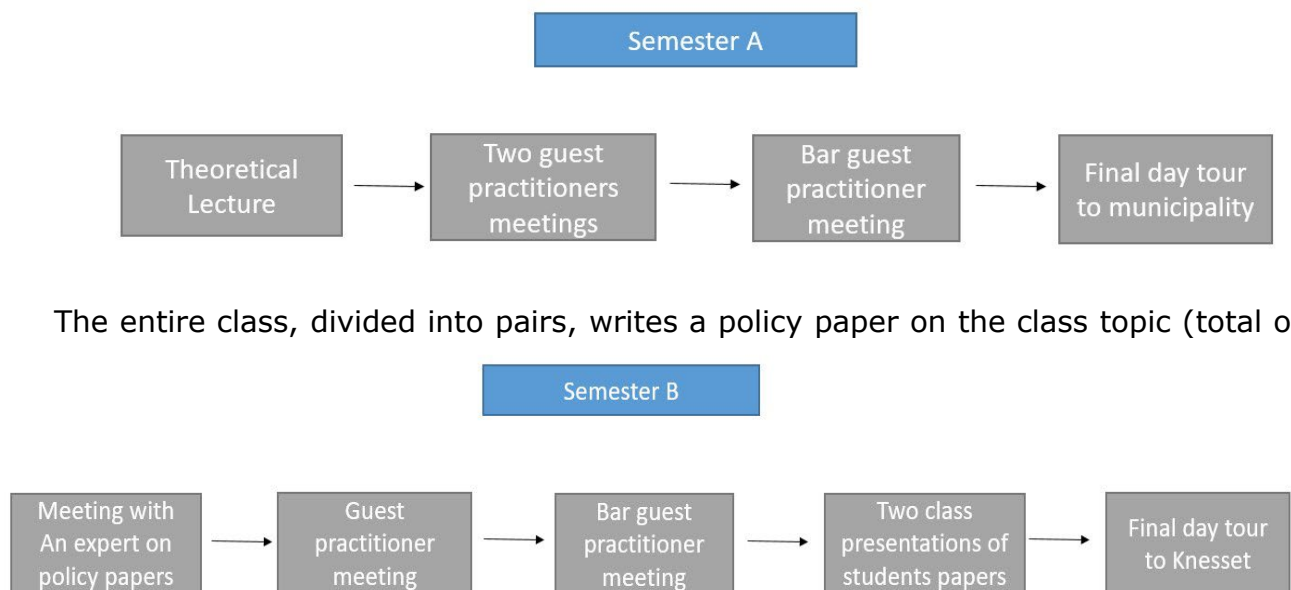
Workshop students participate in a two-day retreat before the academic year. The retreat takes place in a guest house in the green north of the country, where the students go through enrichment lectures with local politicians and faculty, as well as social activities guided by a social psychologist. Students also vote on the topic for the subsequent year's class.

Over the course of the class, students get to know the work of the Knesset, the government, and the local authorities. Students learn through lectures, group activities, and meetings with senior figures in the political sphere. They also go to sessions on Reichman University campus, evening sessions in bars, and one-day tours in government institutions. The lectures draw upon distinguished experts in the political realm in Israel.

The workshop is worth two academic credits, and graded on a pass-fail scale. As figure 1 below illustrates, the workshop spans two semesters. In each semester, students experience a theoretical lecture, meetings with varied practitioners (with one of the meetings in a bar with dinner and drinks), and a day tour. In the first

semester, the day tour takes place in a municipality and includes meetings with its officials in the second semester, the workshop concludes in the Israeli Knesset with students presenting their working papers to Knesset members, offering their policy modifications.

Figure 1 – The course of the semesters

Semester A

| Theoretical Lecture | → | Two guest practitioners meetings | → | Bar guest practitioner meeting | → | Final day tour to municipality |

The entire class, divided into pairs, writes a policy paper on the class topic (total of

Semester B

| Meeting with An expert on policy papers | → | Guest practitioner meeting | → | Bar guest practitioner meeting | → | Two class presentations of students papers | → | Final day tour to Knesset |

10 policy papers). This highly professional policy memo pulls together substantial and credible evidence, as well as best practices from the policy area, to advance an innovative idea for improving policy. Students only undertake this memo after serious study, preparation, and reflection. As figure 1 above shows, an expert in the policy field teaches students how to write a real-world policy paper in the first session of the second semester. The class session highlights the differences between academic writing and policy writing. The latter--more goal oriented, succinct, and normative in nature -- presents a *To Do* list to improve existing policy. The audience of the policy paper is the decision maker, who usually decide whether to accept or decline the proposal in their first read. During two successive class meetings, students present their ideas to the class, and the students peer review each other for the soundness and applicability of their ideas. Students examine the following criteria for their peer

review: a brief description of the specific policy malfunction the paper wishes to resolve, a relevant group of politicians it should address, a succinct solution to the policy problem, a coherent explanation of the team building that the proposal foresees, and a cost-benefit analysis. Students address these components in a presentation that lasts 10-15 minutes. Students and faculty in the audience evaluate the presentation and comment on it in a following class discussion. Finally, in a celebrative concluding day tour to the Knesset, the students present their ideas to Knesset members, who adopt and intend to initiate a bill based on some of the recommendations by students. Though previous Knesset members accepted student policy recommendations by writing a bill, it still awaits passage by new government.

In conclusion, I strongly believe that this multi-activity design for a workshop provides students a tool they need and want in the course of their studies. It offers a memorable experience that makes political science a vital discipline for empowering our students to solve complicated and contentious problems, and reminds us of the growing need of our discipline in a difficult world.

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TEACHING UNDERGRADUATES TO WORK WITH ARCHIVAL DOCUMENTS

By Erica De Bruin (edebruin@hamilton.edu)
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An essential part of helping students to think like political scientists is teaching them about how research is conducted—including the different sources of evidence scholars use, and the challenges involved in drawing inferences from them. Research that works with archival documents is increasingly accessible for undergraduates as important archival collections are digitized. Such materials can shed unique light on the motivations of important political actors and the internal working of institutions that may be difficult to glean through secondary sources alone.

However, getting started with archival research can also be quite intimidating—it often requires sifting through vast quantities of material and weighing conflicting information. Moreover, using archival materials to test hypotheses in political science can be particularly prone to confirmation bias (Lee 2022). As a result, students can benefit from the opportunity to practice working with archival documents in a controlled context before using them in their own research (Elman, Kapiszewski, and Kirilova 2010).

In this research note, we share reflections on our experience introducing students to working with archival documents in the context of a substantive course on nuclear politics. We describe how we prepared students for archival research, selected documents for them to work with, helped address challenges that they encountered, and had them debrief on the lessons learned.

Preparing students for archival research

In our specific exercise, we asked students to draw upon a set of archival documents that we compiled for them to evaluate competing explanations for the

decision-making of American officials in the Berlin Crisis, 1958-1962.[21] The crisis began when the Soviet Union demanded the withdrawal of all armed forces from Berlin. In response, American officials considered a limited nuclear strike against Soviet military targets, but ultimately decided not to pursue it (see Kaplan 2001).

We found that providing students with specific hypotheses to test, rather than asking them to develop an argument inductively from the documents, helped focus the assignment on teaching the research method at hand. Specifically, we had students consider whether American officials were primarily concerned about the potential for Soviet retaliation, the costs and feasibility of using nuclear versus conventional weapons, or moral considerations when deciding against a nuclear strike.[22] We had students work in groups to reduce the grading burden, and so that they could benefit from discussion with one another.

Prior to reading the documents, students were given brief instruction on working with archival materials. We emphasized the need to understand the context of the document (e.g., who wrote the document, when, for what purpose and which audience?). We also encouraged them to focus on specifying the observable implications of competing arguments before diving into the documents. Finally, students were directed to read the archival materials with an eye to compiling evidence that might support or cast doubt on each argument, rather than attempting to "prove" a particular argument was correct.

Selecting documents for students to work with

Selecting a limited set of documents for students to work with helped reduce the potential for students to miss crucial documents or become overwhelmed with the sheer volume of material. We first identified documents by searching for relevant terms (e.g., "nuclear weapons," "nukes," "deterrence") in existing sets of documents on the Berlin Crisis compiled by the National Security Archive and the

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[21] This exercise adapts the "methods lab" approach to teaching students about research methods (Sullivan and De Bruin 2023) for use in a substantive course on nuclear politics.
[22] These three explanations were drawn from course content that students were already familiar with.

Foreign Relation of the United States series online.[23] Next, we narrowed those to be used in the exercise down based on their readability and content. We excluded documents that were particularly brief, dense, or that would be difficult to interpret without substantial technical knowledge.

We wanted to ensure students would be able to work with different types of documents (including meeting transcripts, internal memos and briefing papers, correspondence between leaders, and public statements and speeches). At the same time, we sought to include documents that would accurately showcase the wide variety of concerns policymakers raised in their deliberations. In this way, the project was designed to highlight some of the challenges in drawing inferences about motivations from the archival record.

Troubleshooting common challenges

Students were given time to work in their assigned groups in class. This provided us the opportunity to troubleshoot issues as they came up. Students found two aspects of working with archival materials particularly challenging. First, it was not clear to many what the observable implications of a particular argument would be. Some looked for explicit statements about how actors arrived at a particular decision—statements that did not exist in the archival record and, if they did, may not have reflected "true" motivations in any case.

Second, and relatedly, students were confused about how to navigate the conflicting viewpoints in the documents. In particular, students were unsure about how to come to a conclusion about what drove U.S. decision-making, given that there was some evidence potentially consistent with each hypothesis in the set of documents they read. Key advisors to the president held conflicting opinions,

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[23] Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 1961-1963, Volume XIV, 1961-1962, eds. Charles S. Sampson and Glenn W. LaFantasie (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1993); National Security Archive, "Berlin Crisis 1958, 1962," available at https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/events/berlin-crisis-1958-1962. The full assignment, including the set of archival documents we compiled, can be accessed at https://www.ericadebruin.com/research.

appeared to change their minds from one meeting to the next, and typically ended policy discussions without a clear resolution of issues under debate.

While students worked in class, we stopped by each group to help them troubleshoot. In these discussions, we emphasized that their analyses could acknowledge the presence of multiple motivations and discuss the extent of disagreement within the documents. We also reminded students that bringing up a topic is insufficient evidence that it drove decision-making. For example, simply because the president expresses concern about the number of fatalities that could result from the use of nuclear weapons, or how he might be judged for using them, does not mean that this consideration was the most important. Instead, it was important to consider how frequently moral considerations surfaced in discussions, in what context, and how key actors responded. Students reported that these discussions helped them move forward when they felt stuck.

Debriefing lessons learned

Once students had submitted memos summarizing their conclusions about what motivated American decision-making, we dedicated a full class session to debriefing the experience. We first asked students to describe the approach their groups took to the documents and the challenges that they ran into. Almost all reported dividing up responsibility for reading the documents between group members. This approach helped them manage the workload, but also meant they sometimes depended exclusively on one group member's interpretation of a document when more eyes on it might have been useful. The groups that used the documents most effectively tended to be those that reported extensive debate that forced them all to look over the most important documents again and push themselves to weigh conflicting evidence.

Debriefing was also an opportunity to reiterate the importance of understanding the context of each document, and explaining that context to the reader. As one student emphasized, you need to "know the cast of characters" in order to

understand their role in the decision-making process and what their motivations for a particular statement might be. Other students reported realizing, through trial and error, the importance of distinguishing between documents intended for private versus public consumption.

Most impressively, some students noted that the experience of working with archival documents had made them think more critically about how they had approached research in other classes. One recounted, with some chagrin, searching for quotations to support their thesis, rather than attempting to grapple with uncertainty and conflicting evidence. Another student reflected that the exercise had made them realize "how messy" internal policy deliberations can be—and, as a result, shifted their understanding of what constitutes evidence of motivation in the historical record.

Conclusions

Overall, our experience suggested that providing students with a hands-on opportunity to practice working with archival documents is an effective way to illustrate the strengths, limitations, and potential pitfalls of archival research. For our students, the experience highlighted in particular the importance of providing adequate context for evidence drawn from archival material and helped them identify strategies to adjudicate between conflicting information present in the archive. In this way, similar exercises can help students become more savvy consumers of scholarship in the discipline. They can also better equip students to use archival materials in their own research papers and senior theses.

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ANY QUESTIONS? PODCASTING AS A WAY TO FLIP THE CLASSROOM

By Louise Pears (L.K.Pears@leeds.ac.uk), Marine Gueguin (pt17mg@leeds.ac.uk), and Harry Swinhoe (H.P.Swinhow@leeds.ac.uk)

The public increasingly relies on podcasts to know important things about the world. Edison (2023) suggests that 62% of Americans have listened to a podcast, with regular listening habits higher amongst younger Americans. Increasingly podcasts are being used to disseminate research findings and engage audiences both within and outside of academia. At the same time, podcasts and audio recordings are generating increasing impacts in higher education and are part of wider conversations about the role of digital technologies in learning. McGarr (2010) identifies three ways in which podcasting is used in relation to lectures- substitutional (where lecture content is recorded), supplementary (where recorded information is put out in addition to a lecture) and creative use (where students are involved in the production of podcasts). Faculty have effectively used podcasts in politics and international studies classrooms in each of these ways in the past.[24] In this essay, we reflect on using a lecture to record a "live episode" of a podcast and recommend the format as a way to empower students as emerging political scholars, flip the classroom, and enliven the delivery.

In this project, we used the final lecture of our Security Studies course to record a live podcast with a panel of scholars answered questions from the students. Questions came in advance and real-time through Padlet, as well as from students in the room during the session. We then edited and published this as an episode of the podcast "Insecure: a security podcast" (a podcast series hosted by the Centre for Global Security Challenges).

Often the incorporation of podcasts into classes means asking students to produce a podcast. While this has real advantages (such as upskilling students in media

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[24] See for example Ralph, Lightfoot and Head (2010) who use podcasts as supplements to lectures or Krain (2022) who assessed using podcasts.

creation), we didn't do this because the teaching (and where assessed grading) of the technical aspects of podcast creation would have to come at the expense of the course content (in a university where essay assignments are still the norm). Furthermore, where students produce the podcast on a large core module such as this it would result in the production of a high number of podcasts that might struggle to achieve a large listenership. Instead, the output in this case is the co-creation of an episode of a pre-existing podcast of international standing. This podcast lecture exercise is authentic in that it asks students to reflect on the skills and knowledge that we want them to obtain from the course whilst contributing to a scholarly output in the field of security studies.

And its final advantage is that podcasts can be engaging, or as a student said:

"I love listening to podcasts, it is how I get most of my information."

Or after the session:

"It was great to do something that was interactive."

The entire module is already centered around security questions, rather than a more traditional school or security event weekly structure. Inspired by Holland and Lister (2014) and a wider feminist curiosity (Enloe 2004), the use of this question format helps students to realize that the discipline is not "settled" but that key ideas are fluid and reactive to the ever-fluctuating security landscape. The aim is to get students to always consider what is at stake in security theory and practice. The final lecture has always been about the "future of security studies". By turning to the students to ask questions for this lecture, we encourage critical thinking and engagement with the course content, and center them in the pedagogical practice of the discipline. This was clear during the course of the session with the panel critically reflecting on their own limitations, particularly with regard to engaging with the changing social media landscape and its relationship with Security Studies

and the ways in which a younger generation of students could contribute to scholarship and understanding in this area.

In informal feedback after the session one student said:

> "it was good to have questions that we put forward to be answered and we felt the next generation of security scholars."

And another:

> "Brought the whole module together and also felt good to be able to engage in those conversations due to the foundation of knowledge that has been built over the module."

We received an interesting selection of questions both in advance and during the session, which demonstrated very in-depth understanding of the module from students. The conversation on the day went well, in part because we had the existing podcast format to use as well as due to the generosity of colleagues who offered their time. We also thought about the composition of the panel to bring in a range of career stages, an even gender bias, and some spread in research expertise and geographic specialisms.

The first area to improve is the logistics and technology. Leeds University has a new Makerspace in the library that rents podcast microphones and provides some technical support. This was great and ensured a reasonable audio quality, but we faced some technical and other issues. We lacked a microphone per speaker. Wire lengths meant some microphone juggling. Timetabling issues meant an awkward room layout. Small issues but worth having these more logistical elements worked out more smoothly.

Also, engagement was patchy. The students who submitted questions and attended the lecture seemed very engaged and informal feedback was good, but many

students did not submit questions or attend. In the future, we hope that having past examples of published podcasts will help students to understand the format and motivate them to contribute. It would also help to use class time to think about and write questions on the module because having it as an extra-curricular activity gave already busy students little time to engage. As a new and unfamiliar activity students would likely have benefitted from having in class time for it to be explained and to build questions suggestions with their classmates.

In the future, we hope to build this into the formal assessment of the module by asking students to submit a question and a short justification of their question as a part of the summative assessment. Our plan is to run a focus group with students where we work with them to design this assessment in ways that they would find most beneficial.

Overall, we felt that this approach to lectures held real potential to engage students and to give them the opportunity to ask important questions about the discipline. As critical pedagogues, we seek to create students who do not just passively receive the accepted knowledge, but critique and question it. This seems like one small way to make that real.

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ASSESSING MEDIA LITERACY APPROACHES IN INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

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Political scientists have long recognized the importance of the news media in shaping foreign policy and public opinion (Entman 2004; Baum 2002). However, the discipline possesses room for improvement for teaching media literacy in the classroom. While some quality media literacy assignments for the international politics classroom exist (Brown 2021), most recent scholarship focuses only on introductory US politics courses (Feezell 2021; Mancillas and Brusoe 2016; Schiffer 2021). Teaching and studying international politics create additional hurdles when compared to US-centric classes. First, foreign press may be the primary news source and thus remain unfamiliar to US audiences. Second, state censorship and state sponsored media further confound the ability to understand news from different parts of the world.

We experimented with an approach to help students think critically about sources that highlighted additional issues related to how students think of credibility in the news. All materials for these lessons are available through a Creative Commons license and can be accessed freely online.[25] In this essay, we reflect upon our experience.

Vertical Reading Techniques

Common checklists taught at colleges and universities, such as CRAAP, RADAR, and RADCAB, direct students to read the source itself to determine its reliability. This process relies on vertical reading that seeks out surface level information from the source itself by reading the source in question (Caulfield 2018; McGrew et al. 2019; Wineburg and McGrew 2019). Wineburg, et. al. (2020) found that these methods not only failed to help students identify misinformation, but they actually led students to mislabel poor sources as reliable.

Lateral Reading Technique

As an alternative to vertical reading, lateral reading (or fact-checking through other sites) has been shown to increase students' ability to correctly identify the

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[25] https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1YIqDiOi25AbGs2u77peMqa83Yy6pi9Lm?usp=share_link

reliability of different sources (Brodsky et al. 2021; McGrew et al. 2019; Wineburg and McGrew 2019). One specific method for teaching lateral reading includes The Four Moves, also known by the mnemonic SIFT (STOP, Investigate the Source, Find better coverage, Trace claims, quotes and media back to the original context) (Caulfield 2019a).[26] When teaching students to practice these strategies, they practice lateral reading by opening separate browser tabs from their original source and investigating information from other sources before committing to reading the information (Wineburg and McGrew 2019).

Lateral Reading in Practice: Introduction to International Relations

We decided to test the results of vertical versus lateral reading in the context of current events about China in introductory international relations courses.[27] The instructors introduced these concepts and the SIFT method (Caulfield 2019b) through a short video (Lateral Reading 2020) and discussion.

Next, the instructors divided students into groups to complete the vertical and lateral reading in-class assignment. The instructors identified four articles: two from legitimate sources (Mastro 2020; Stevenson 2022), and two from much less reputable sites (Catenacci 2021; Zhang 2022).

Two articles (Stevenson, 2022; Zhang, 2022) examined how Hong Kong is dealing with the Covid-19 surge. Instructors chose the *New York Times* in part because they guessed students would find this source legitimate given that articles from this source had been discussed previously in this course. This also allowed for discussion of a potential/perceived liberal bias. The *China Daily*, on the other hand, was not a source that had been assigned or discussed previously in this course. The article itself did not have overt bias, and if a student read vertically, they would not necessarily realize that the *China Daily* is state-run (Fitfield, 2020). Two other articles came from the Council on Foreign Relations and *WND*, formerly WorldNetDaily (Catenacci, 2021; Mastro, 2020). The Council on Foreign Relations is a respected U.S. think tank. WND is a site known for spreading conspiracy theories (Massing, 2009) and thus had not been assigned for either class previously. Both articles related to territorial disputes in the South China Sea.

After discussing Chinese censorship in the context of comparing lateral reading to vertical reading, faculty divided students into random groups. Each group examined

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[26] Caulfield's SIFT method is built on the work of Wineberb, McGrew, et al. with the Stanford History Education Group's Civic Online Reasoning project (https://cor.stanford.edu/curriculum/collections/teaching-lateral-reading/). Both methods are for the purpose of teaching students to evaluate social and political information online irrespective of the media format.

[27] The authors received IRB approval from their respective institutions for this project.

two articles: one using lateral reading, and another using vertical reading. In addition to reading, students completed an editable Google document as a group.

Worksheet Analysis

The results of the worksheet assessment were mixed. Even when instructed to use lateral reading, some students saw the articles from *China Daily* and *WND* as valuable. Others, however, questioned their legitimacy. Students generally found the *New York Times* and Council on Foreign Relations articles to be more reliable. Figure 1 captures some student comments from the activity.

Figure 1. Sampled Responses to Articles from Students

	China Daily & *WND*	*New York Times* & Council on Foreign Relations
Vertical Reading	Positive: • There isn't a clear bias. They seek to give you solely the truth. They claim they are an independent news channel that seeks truth and justice. They also state they are open to free and open debate. • On the website we clicked they linked other credible websites. We think it is credible because they cited more than one. Neutral or Mixed: • From reading it we don't see any visible bias, but there is a tab for correction, which could lead to misinformation. Negative: • The website seemed cheap with ads everywhere on the page. It also only quoted people instead of writing their own article. • My first impression is that the article reads as if it is click bait, trying to create drama that may not be there. The website has a lot of links to seemingly politically biased articles. One linked headline states "Democrats Think more with Their Emotions."	Positive: • It seems like a credible, and well established website. There are graphs which cite research institutions, and pictures of events/interviewed people. There's also a subscription, which means enough people trust it to pay for their service • From looking at the website, it doesn't seem like they are biased. Most of their headlines seem neutral/uncharged. They have a separate column for opinions Neutral or Mixed: • The linked article does not appear to have any bias but the articles linked under "More on China" all have negative titles concerning China. Negative: • [No purely negative assessments]
Lateral Reading	Positive: • It seems somewhat credible. The story was originally published on another website. It seems professional. It has a similar layout to the other article, and they have several links to outside sources (including the Associated Press). Neutral or Mixed: • They tweet and talk about the daily things that happen in China, almost like a news site. Negative: • Other sources[28] say that WND is a fake news website. • When first looking at the site, it seems to me that there are just a lot of odd things that were added into this source. At first sight I immediately knew the article was biased. This is because it was in the China daily. We know China censors it's media so the observation is logical	Positive: • Wikipedia[29] says it is ranked the 18th newspaper in the world which would lead you to believe it is a credible source. • Most sources are saying that the New York times is the most reliable News paper source in the United States. It should be able to be trusted because of its reliability and how many people read it. • The council is a non-profit and non-partisan organization made in the 1900s. They have a high accountability and transparency rating. According to sources they have a clean fact check record as well. They have representation and members from all over the world. The members are diverse and from all different regions. Neutral or Mixed: • These sources are saying that the NYT is a long and storied newspaper, but it has been accused of liberal bias in the past, especially their editorials. Negative: • [No purely negative assessments]

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28 https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/extremist-files/group/worldnetdaily
29 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_New_York_Times

Note: Quotes modified by embedding links instead of listing them to save space.

In total, these comments suggest that students can critically consume information, but that the skills related to media literacy need to be built and reinforced throughout a student's college career. As a department, political scientists could work to incorporate media literacy into all of their courses. Faculty members could partner with librarians and other media professionals to design activities and lessons for upper and lower division courses to meet student needs.

Citation Analysis

In addition, we conducted a citation analysis with a newly constructed rubric. This methodology for assessment exists in multiple disciplines (Carbery and Leahy 2015; Dobbs 2017; Flaspohler et al. 2007; Goodman et al. 2018; Tuñón and Brydges 2006). Drawing from these established rubrics (Flaspohler et al. 2007; Goodman et al. 2018; Tuñón and Brydges 2006), the new rubric (available online[30]) assesses student-found news articles through source type, relevance, and trust factor on a four-point scale for a total of 12 points per source.

We analyzed two samples of student work through the rubric. The first assessment followed the in-class activity, and the next assignment came four weeks later. Across the two assignments, 37 students utilized 73 sources. On average, students scored 10.52 out of 12 points on the rubric for selecting news sources. Figure 2 summarizes the results.

Figure 2. Citation Analysis Results

	Source Type (Out of 4)	Relevance (Out of 4)	Trust Factor (Out of 4)	Average Source Score (Out of 12)	Average Student Score (Out of 12)
Quiz directly following in-class activity (n=18)	3.59	3.59	3.59	10.76	10.76
Assignment due four weeks after in-class activity (n=19)	3.29	3.61	3.43	10.32	10.32

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[30] https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1YIqDiOi25AbGs2u77peMqa83Yy6pi9Lm?usp=share_link

Conclusion

We found lateral reading to be a useful technique for teaching media literacy in international politics classrooms. The approach proves relatively easy for students to grasp, and it lessens the chance of them falling for bogus sources. We have also found the technique to be adaptable to many different classes and assignment formats. The lessons are worth reiterating in all the classes that we teach.

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THE BENEFITS OF EARLY STUDENT INVOLVEMENT WITH CIVIC ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS

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Political scientists have long been instrumental in establishing and promoting a campus culture that fosters civic engagement among students, faculty, and staff. While accreditors have started to incorporate civic engagement into their evaluation criteria (CLDE Coalition 2022), many institutions lack the capacity to form and maintain civic engagement programming. Students are excellent partners in this effort, not only because their presence allows for capacity-building, but also because students know how to develop programming that resonates with their peers more effectively than do faculty (Bergan, et al. 2021; Shea and Harris 2006). While extensive literature in political science has examined student participation in maintaining civic engagement programs (Howard and Posler 2012; McCartney 2006) and the benefits from student involvement in these programs (Bardwell 2011; Rank and Tylock 2018), student perspectives about their involvement in the initial process of starting to plan and develop civic engagement programs are mostly missing.

In what follows, I (Anthony) attempt to provide that perspective by describing what other students and I learned while leading a two-year project to begin a civic engagement program at Louisiana Tech University. This experience illustrates that involving students in the early stages of civic engagement program creation can provide meaningful learning opportunities and allow institutions with fewer resources to effectively make civic engagement a priority.

The project involved developing a proposal to justify the need for civic engagement programming, designing and implementing a student survey to measure current levels of civic knowledge and engagement, administering focus groups with key student constituencies, and presenting a plan to our university president to

establish a university-wide committee responsible for managing civic engagement programming. Within the written proposal was a framework for a civic engagement action plan. After researching such initiatives at comparable institutions, we determined that the most efficient way to increase civic engagement was to first understand the level of civic engagement and knowledge of our student population. Therefore, the rest of the proposal included the creation of a civic engagement action plan development committee, which would analyze the results of a survey to craft and then implement a civic engagement initiative designed to meet the needs of our students. According to conversations with Dr. O'Brochta and my peers about the proposal process, writing the proposal had many positive effects on both students and faculty. First, students played a role in assessing a workable approach to bolstering civic engagement. In other words, we incorporated a framework that placed emphasis on understanding that Louisiana Tech students lacked both civic engagement opportunities and civic knowledge. Second, we determined that innovative solutions to students' lack of civic engagement required teaching them prerequisite knowledge about local issues. We read civic engagement action plans from comparable institutions and interviewed faculty leading those programs. This research led us to conclude that civic engagement initiatives should be both informative and engaging. In our case, focusing on civic engagement opportunities within the classroom would help strengthen students' civic engagement knowledge while also ensuring that all students could participate.

A classroom dedicated to drafting a civic engagement proposal was most students' first, eye-opening experience of applying their skills to improve their community. My peer Julie Cupples, a senior political science major, described her experience like this, "It was an opportunity that was rewarding because of its implications outside of the classroom. I was able to develop sincerely meaningful and practical skills within the classroom that I could then apply directly to my community involvement."

I participated in the administration of the university-wide student civic engagement survey, the results of which showed that most students are interested in becoming

more active participants in their community, but that they are unsure how to do so, defaulting to a near complete lack of involvement. We created a civic engagement survey team of students who were interested in implementing a civic engagement initiative on campus. Building a civic engagement program that emphasizes co-creation such as this cultivates a sense of investment ownership among team members. The forty student team-members who administered the survey were able to gain practical experience by interacting with people and places in a new way. While the survey expanded my perspective on the community, the most exciting aspect of the focus groups was learning how qualitative data collection worked and understanding how, as political science majors, we have learned skills that can help to improve community understanding. By reaching out to various groups and organizations on campus, we were able to determine what exactly a collaboration between the groups might look like. In a way, we were setting a foundation for effective community-wide communication regarding civic engagement, a topic we were eager to apply our skills to. Allowing students to actively participate in the system upfront, by encouraging them to initiate projects like focus groups, was beneficial because of its impact on deepening the student team members' education, the opportunity for diversifying classroom teaching techniques, and the presentation of reliable and informative data to university administration to aid in decision-making.

In short, my experience suggests that building civic engagement projects into classroom experiences is beneficial because of its positive impact on a student's education and the opportunity for innovative classroom design it offers to professors. I have benefited from my involvement with this project by gaining a heightened understanding of community projects, meaning that I have a more concrete understanding of the many ways in which I can participate in my community. Since this project began, my increased knowledge of civic engagement has prompted me to explore opportunities to support voter protection and civic engagement efforts outside of the classroom. The faculty involved in this project have been able to expand their view of student capabilities while exploring ways to diversify their classroom experience. Moreover, a university with scarce resources

can significantly increase student involvement without excessive spending by incorporating students into initial civic engagement proposals using both in-classroom and extracurricular activities.

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MODEL UN AS ACTIVE AND ENGAGED LEARNING: AN INTERVIEW WITH CHERYL VAN DEN HANDEL

This interview is the second installment in a Q&A series focused on education and politics. Matt Evans, Professor of Political Science at Northwest Arkansas Community College, interviewed Dr. Cheryl Van Den Handel about Model United Nations as an experiential learning rework. Dr. Van Den Handel works as an Associated Professor of Political Science at Northeastern State University (in Tahlequah, Oklahoma), and for a decade has advised her school's Model UN team. She teaches courses on American politics, comparative politics, foreign policy, gender and politics, and international relations. Her research focuses on women in developing countries, women's movements in red states within the US, and immersive learning in political science. This interview took place on Feb. 24, 2023 at the Midwest Model UN conference, and was edited for clarity and space.

What motivated you to get involved with Model UN?

I had never been at a school where it was at, and during my time in graduate school, one of the topics that we talked about was how to make our discipline more immersive, more interactive. When I was hired at NSU, they had Model UN. My predecessor was running it.

I started sitting in on conferences in 2011, but I came with a team in 2012. It became my baby, and by then I had learned what it was. I basically had to figure it out on my own because at that time there weren't any tools to assist new advisors, so once I got here and that Ruby [Libertus, the Model UN advisor at Oral Roberts University] told me there's this [UNA group in Tulsa](https://unausa.org/chapter/eastern-oklahoma-chapter/)[31], and she was a member, and asked me to join. That took me a little while to do, but Ruby helped me figure out how to run a Model UN team. Once the digital age really became a thing, UNA USA put materials up, and then we went to Chicago to [American Model UN](https://www.amun.org/)[32] and I grabbed all of their materials that I could and began working on improving how I taught when at NSU.

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[31] https://unausa.org/chapter/eastern-oklahoma-chapter/
[32] https://www.amun.org/

In terms of Model UN, there are probably different models for how you setting it up in terms of class or club. How do you approach doing it at your school?

We are half-class, half-club because there's this new thing with financial aid that came down a couple of years ago that if a course is not part of your discipline for your degree, financial aid won't pay for it…We were totally dependent on a budget that wasn't being generated by income from students, so then we lost our budget. Majors and minors can take the one-credit course for three consecutive semesters and get a whole three credit[s] for an upper division elective; people who are not in our discipline are on the club side and they don't have to enroll because financial aid won't pay for it. They constitute the club side so that we can pull in other disciplines—which is what it used to do, is to go and knock on doors and try to get students from other disciplines because the UN has so many different issues and so many different disciplines and fields and problems. Now the class side is graded and they have the same things they have to turn in. It's just a little more formalized now…they're paying for the credit so that at least is pulling some student fees into the program.

You mentioned that you didn't have a lot of resources for Model UN when you first started, but now you do have some resources. What sort of resources? What might you suggest faculty looking to figure out how to get resources?

I do use the Council for Foreign Relations Model Diplomacy[33], I use the United Nation Association's My Diplomat[34] resources, and then I have a few small simulations that I've written myself. A really, creepy story is that I had developed an earthquake scenario on Java, and then the following year, the big earthquake occurred at Banda Aceh. It was creepy.

Some of the Model UN students focused on position papers. Are there other sorts of things that you're assessing?

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[33] https://modeldiplomacy.cfr.org/
[34] https://unausa.org/model-un/my-diplomat/

A lot of it has to do with participation in making the effort right. I teach them how you write a position paper. It's like, here's the model. We would talk back and forth verbally about what would go in the position paper. "Okay, so now take a few minutes and write down what you just said"—I'm helping them to think through the process and think about how to think about the process. They spend time in our class time to do part of their research, part of their writing, and submit it to our Google Drive folder, and from there I assigned points. I am not full-out grading, you know. I am encouraging them to learn the skills.

So they have to turn in a position paper for each of their topics. They have to write a full resolution together in the Google Drive and that means that I can see them writing because their names popped up and we've got all got our laptops…then they're required to attend a conference in the fall and a conference in the spring. I don't grade the conference. It's that you attend and you learn and you make the effort. If they came and they stayed in the room the whole time they participate, that's 30% of the grade. For roll call, you fully participate. Otherwise you come, you show up. I'm roaming around, I see you making an effort. You know you're not sitting at the table like this [doing nothing]. I mean, I've had students who were very introverted and over the time they were with Model UN between freshman and senior, they came out of their shell, right, so you don't have to write this down. I believe [in] immersive learning and I provide them with the support that they need a sympathetic ear. They can ask me questions if I think it's appropriate. I will answer those questions, or I will say something like: "Where do you think you can find the information?" By this point, they should know where to find the information for whatever it is, and they do. They haven't asked me a single question about where to find information on something because we've covered all of that before. We got here, went out, and they have resources that they put in the Google Drive for themselves that they can refer to while they're here, so it's like a digital notebook for them to use, and they construct it.

What sort of resources that you give your students? Guidelines for researching? Do you have them read like books like Karen Mingst UN

[book](#)[35]**? Do you give them like various places to look to find out about these policies?**

Yeah, I make buying the book optional; most of them buy it anyway. I have the bookstore stock it. But I take them directly to the UN website and we go through all of the organs. We go through the [United Nations] [Charter](#)[36]. This is fall semester, and then we start talking about how to do the research: where to look, what kind of things you want. Once the background guides are available for whatever the first conference is, we dive into the background guides and I have them go to the links in the bibliography, and so we spend time going through where the information and of course the [CIA World Factbook](#)[37]. [The students] divide up their country study, and they decide what topic interests them most. You take control of filling in that space and then once it's filled in, then we go around the table and everybody verbalizes, so part of this is public speaking. As we approach the conference, we're working on learning how to write resolutions with the preambles and the operatives, and how to balance the preambles with the operatives. We practice giving one-minute speeches. We practice the parliamentary procedure. I have a gavel and block, so I play the dais [which is the chair that runs the committee in formal session]. They do dialogue, and then after this conference in February we spend the spring running through my small simulations and some from Model Diplomacy and it's a lot of practice. Then we're trying to recruit new members from our classrooms, so that's more or less how we do it before this conference too.

In terms of like resolution writing and opening statements and parliamentary procedure, are you primarily having them look at like the UNA material and conference material? Or are other resources that students are looking at to help them prepare stuff?

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[35] https://www.routledge.com/The-United-Nations-in-the-21st-Century/Mingst-Karns-Lyon/p/book/9780367481551
[36] https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter
[37] https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/

I have some resources left from [AMUN](38), and so I have some sheets…I use that I use the [fairly-new resources that that MMUN](39) has now put in there – web pages, videos, and stuff. That was something that I worked on with them when I was on the board [of MMUN] was emphasizing a need for more resources so that students could see how does this work and what does it look like. For newbies, it's really hard to explain to them exactly how this works and it's like, you got to have the numbers. I can teach you all of the skills that you need and you're going to practice them here but when you go to conference that's when the light bulb is going to go on.

When you see how all these pieces really fit together. That's why a conference is written into the syllabus…It's like you have to understand that going to conference is part of this immersive learning experience. It's between 30 and half of everything that they do. I mean they learn the skills, then they need to practice the skills and they need to go to the conference so they can see how this works.

In terms of faculty that are just getting started with Model UN, how do they get things rolling?

There are other faculty in their area that they could talk to, or [I] would say just google it.

I mean, today all you have to do is [use] Google, you know. If you're in the upper Midwest or you're on the West Coast or on the East Coast, there are conferences. I get emails from every conference around the country. I think one of the best things for a new faculty member is to show up and talk to other faculty, because all of us know where to look for things. If you're at a new school, at least we have digital resources today that we can look for. They could contact the Secretary General or the Assistant Secretary General at any conference and say I've just inherited this. I'm brand new. Could you help me with some resources?

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[38] https://www.amun.org/teach-mun/
[39] https://mmun.org/delegate-resources/

Students are learning about international organizations. What else do you think they gain from being part of Model UN?

I think the skills of interfacing with people face to face, learning to read body language and understanding people. That's important. They practice negotiation skills, so we talk about negotiation.

We talk about diplomatic language—about how you might be irritated with someone, maybe you don't like another delegate, but you have to be diplomatic and bite your tongue, and you can complain to me. That's what I'm here for. Otherwise, practice the diplomacy of trying to understand the point of view of other countries, and when you disagree, be diplomatic in your disagreement. Because, remember, they're supposed to be holding up the position of their country. Don't make it personal.

To finish this interview, if you had some advice to give to yourself when you started, what would you tell yourself?

Be less afraid to reach out, really to people that you don't know, and ask questions. When I started, I didn't know what I didn't know. I just knew that I didn't know and my predecessor was not a good teacher. I learned more from the students and then when I got here, learned from Ruby [Libertus]. What I would say is show up the conference even if you don't have students yet. Go to a conference and see how it works, and don't be afraid to talk to other faculty.

THE UPSWING: A HETERODOX APPROACH TO READING MATERIAL IN THE INTRO TO AMERICAN CLASSROOM

By Justin Curtis (justin.curtis@utrgv.edu)

A perennial concern for instructors of Introduction to U.S. Government and Politics revolves around which textbook to assign. Among many considerations, instructors must weigh the methodological approach favored in the book, the coverage of key substantive topics, the supplementary teaching tools—including lecture slides, homework, and reading quizzes—that come with the book, and the book's price as a burden on students.

In this short reflection, I share my experience relying on a heterodox book choice for an introductory course in American politics: Robert Putnam and Shaylyn Romney Garrett's 2020 book *The Upswing*.

Political scientists are aware of the wide variety of textbook options available for use in intro to American courses (Knutson 2017; see also, Adams 1974 and Cushman 1993). However, as Knutson's (2017) excellent review of textbooks makes abundantly clear, difference across these books are often marginal. Books differ in their overall approach—cultural, rational choice, civic engagement, or historical institutionalism—but the substantive content of each book is remarkably similar. Chapters are generally organized around the Founding, federalism, civil rights and civil liberties, public opinion (including ideologies, and political culture), branches of government (including the bureaucracy), state and local government, and policy-making. To varying extents, many of these books also provide students with tools to enhance engagement and critical thinking by interpreting data presented in tables and graphs and highlighting real-world examples of the topics in each chapter. These tools give students the opportunity to utilize the intellectual skills that political science courses often advertise: critical thinking, quantitative reasoning, and civic engagement.

The innovation of inexpensive or free electronic textbooks—including open educational resources (OER)—provides one alternative to traditional texts in introductory American politics courses. These books increase course engagement among students who report low levels of interest in politics and government (Kalaf-Hughes 2021). However, online textbooks are associated with lower average course grades than traditional textbooks (Slocum-Schaffer 2021), are less compelling for students who report ex-ante interest in politics (Kalaf-Hughes 2021), and suffer from the same omission of historically underrepresented groups as traditional textbooks (Brandle 2020). Thus, it is not clear whether these books are a worthwhile alternative.

I consistently wrestle with the observation that the vast majority of students in these courses are not political science majors and are, on average, not enthusiastic about taking a class on U.S. politics. The structure of many political science textbooks—both traditional and OER—presents the study of American politics and government as, simultaneously, 1) a positivist social science with an emphasis on empiricism in the form of public opinion, historical institutionalism, and political economy, and 2) a venue to become a model democratic citizen who understands the importance of civic engagement and the opportunities for engagement at various levels of government. However, the first approach is motivated by an implicit assumption that open empirical questions about U.S. government and politics are intrinsically interesting—thus neglecting the vital "logic of discovery" in the research and learning process (cf. Day and Koivu 2019). The second approach often provides little opportunity for students to internalize the value of democratic citizenship (see Brennan 2016 for an argument that students may find persuasive against the value of democratic citizenship altogether). For the last couple of years I have relied on a different style of book to motivate class sessions in my intro to American classes: Putnam and Garrett's *The Upswing* (2020). Below I briefly review the text and then discuss one approach to using it in class.

The Upswing provides a compelling "sweeping historical perspective" (Putnam and Garrett 2020, p. 9) on the development of contemporary American politics—broadly

defined. Its motivation lies in the glaring similarities between the United States'
Gilded Age and contemporary America that are summarized in a compelling
narrative on pages 2 through 8 of the introductory chapter. Certainly, Putnam and
Garrett are not the first writers or scholars to draw this connection, but their
introduction provides students with opportunities to reflect on broad political
conditions that have evolved slowly since the Gilded Age. The author's fundamental
proposition is that the twentieth century is best understood as a long move away
from and then back towards the conditions of the Gilded age; they term this
evolution and devolution the "I-We-I" century. This central thesis is summarized in
a simple curve shape embedded into the cover image of the book that tracks trends
in economic, political, social, and cultural change over the course of the twentieth
century. The curve is an inverted-U, and the repeated appearance of this shape
throughout the book provides students with multiple opportunities to engage with a
variety of presentations of data, thus fulfilling one of the core learning objectives of
many intro to American courses: quantitative social science reasoning.

The book proceeds, chapter by chapter, to uncover the "I-We-I" trend in the
evolution of economics, politics, society, and culture, respectively. Each of these
chapters is nicely conceptualized, and draws on monumental sources of data, both
quantitative and qualitative. The authors then turn to race and gender as potential
limits to the early twentieth century movement towards a "We" understanding of
American identity. They consider that these dimensions of identity may have been
at the heart of the faltering that pushed the U.S. back towards an "I" identity since
about the 1960s. Each of these chapters provides a context for students to see the
mechanisms of government, policy-making, elections, public opinion, identity
politics, social movements, interest groups, and political parties. Rather than
treating these topics as pedagogical ends themselves, they are the setting for a
compelling narrative about how the U.S. political system—broadly defined—became
what it is today. These topics also serve as potential solutions to many of the
problems that students may be interested in or affected by. As these topics are
presented contextually in Putnam and Garrett's work, class time can then be
devoted to both consider the implications of these institutions or behaviors on the

"I-We-I" curve and in other contexts more traditionally found in the American politics classroom.

A culminating experience that I have used *The Upswing* to build students toward is a "American political culture project." Students are tasked with 1) identifying and conceptualizing an economic, political, social, cultural, racial, or gendered problem in contemporary America, 2) tracing the origins of the problem through the "I-We-I" century discussed in *The Upswing*, 3) identifying how the United States began to solve this problem in the mid-twentieth century, and 4) exploring what actions would need to be taken today to solve it. This project enables students to put themselves and the issues they care about into the context of American political development. In relatively small course sections, this assignment culminates in a presentation where students can share their ideas with their peers. In larger sections, where presentations are not feasible, I have used short essays or templated worksheets for students to present their ideas to me. Student have presented projects about reproductive rights and connections between the Civil Rights Movement and Black Lives Matter, but also less typical subjects such as the teenage experience in popular culture and transportation infrastructure. The range of topics with which students engage and the investment they make in the project is unlike any assignments I've used connected to traditional intro to American textbooks. Facilitated by *The Upswing* as the central reading material in the semester, students plug their interests and themselves into American government and politics as agentive participants who can identify problems and build potential solutions.

With its emphasis on a singular historical narrative, its reliance on data-driven explanations, and its timely framework of political, economic, and social upheaval, *The Upswing* provides students with a compelling context to becoming introduced to American government and politics. While traditional textbooks emphasize topics, modules, vocabulary, and review questions, using *The Upswing* in a classroom provides students with an insight into the causes and effects of everyday politics

and pushes them to place themselves in the political narrative of the United States rather than watching it unfold from afar.

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TEACHING POLITICAL SCIENCE THROUGH THE MIND OF PHILIP ROTH: A 2020 ELECTION CASE STUDY

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Introduction[40]

Kanye West's recent antisemitic, pro-Hitler tirades alarmed many people, made him into a pariah for mainstream society, and turned him into a hero for the alt-right, white nationalists, and nativist movements. This episode revealed how social media content creators displaced K-16 teachers and educators from their traditional roles. The Kyrie Irving and West controversies revealed how little both men know about Judaism and Jewish history (Sriram 2022). Now, more than ever, students must learn the centrality of Jewish American history to American history and the importance of the Holocaust for understanding the modern world. In this research note, we reflect on our experiences teaching students about antisemitism and Jewish culture through the Philip Roth novel *The Plot Against America* in our political science classes.

Comparisons and Counterfactuals

In the fall 2020 semester at Butler University in Indianapolis, Indiana, we used *The Plot Against America* as a required text in "Introduction to U.S. Politics" (an introductory course on American politics for non-majors), "Voting and Elections" (an upper-division seminar aimed primarily at political science majors), "Religion and American Politics" (an upper-division seminar with a course theme of "Jewish American Voices"). In addition to the book, students in this last course interacted with ten Jewish American guest speakers (including a rabbi, a cantor, professors,

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[40] We virtually presented a previous version of this paper at the 2021 Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association.

activists, and people who represented the breadth of the Jewish American experience).

The novel follows a fictionalized version of Philip Roth's own parents, sibling, and childhood in New Jersey. The novel draws upon several important historical figures in an alternative American reality: President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Charles Lindbergh, Senator Burton K. Wheeler, journalist Walter Winchell, and Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia. These counterfactuals follow what Douglas (2017) declared the novel's most creative aspects: "its narrative of historical elasticity: one might curve the normal course of history out of its natural path, but when we let it go it snaps back to how it had been going to go all along." Returning to *The Plot* or reading it for the first time during the Trump presidency makes American politics feel nightmarish. We hope to awaken and find "the bad dream of foreign intervention, probable collusion, and the growth of Christian authoritarianism passes" (Douglas 2017).

Thus, we challenged students to draw parallels between the novel's depiction of the 1940 presidential election, where incumbent Roosevelt *loses* to Lindbergh, and the 2020 election, which formed the backdrop to the class. Is it fair to draw comparisons between Donald Trump and Lindbergh (or should it be Wheeler)? Would the German American Bund wear MAGA hats? How do non-Jewish students comprehend Jewish identity? Students generated these and other questions throughout the semester.

The class required that each student submit five reflection essays over the course of the semester. Students engaged in critical analysis and comparison rather than just summarizing the reading. A content analysis of the student reflections yielded some key themes unique to each course. Students in the religion seminar engaged in more religious and political analysis and were also more likely to address individual characters in the novel. As expected, 97 percent of the essays in the voting seminar focused on the 2020 election. Essays contained more personal anecdotes than the other classes. The most common themes were Trump, protest,

and marginalization. However, the introductory course students found the reading the most challenging. These essays reflected the fact that students were recent high school graduates and matriculated at the height of COVID and distance learning. They did not know how to write reflective and critical essays, but were good at summarizing and providing historical details. These students responded the most to the character of Alvin, who becomes a disillusioned amputee veteran, connecting him to the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

It became apparent after the first week of discussions that students required a framework to guide them on terminology and historical questions. To that end, the lead instructor posted a handout to the learning-management system (LMS) every week that included definitions, Roth quotes to spark discussion, and critical-thinking questions. Yiddish and Hebrew in the book often confused students: Gentile, *pogrom*, *schmuck*, "adonoy," "Kibbitzers," *goyim*, "Ghetto Jews," Kristallnacht, Zionism, Zionist, High Holidays, and *keister*. Based on student feedback submitted through their essays and takeaway cards, the instructor lectured on topics to elucidate the novel. Lectures addressed, in an interdisciplinary fashion: antisemitism and philosemitism; historical revisionism; family dynamics; discrimination; mental health; nativism vs. patriotism vs. nationalism; civil rights vs. civil liberties; Jewish denominations; and white supremacy.

Conclusion

More political scientists should teach *The Plot Against America* in their classes. It is not an easy novel to work with at times, but we firmly believe that the novel helps produce quality conversation that address the fundamental political problems of our times. Unfortunately, few political science faculty assign novels in their courses anymore. That is a shame.

Before teaching Philip Roth, faculty must use trigger warnings to make students aware of certain content like sex, masturbation, violence, and antisemitic language. Some students expressed shock, but also a satisfaction in working through these

difficult issues. A sample trigger warning might be: "This week's reading includes a frequently repeated anti-Jewish slur. If this makes you feel uncomfortable, you may skip the material on pages X, Y, etc."

Perhaps, most remarkably, we chose to use *The Plot Against America* as an allegory on white nationalism and its ugly spectacle in electoral politics, but students seemed most impacted and interested in Judaism and Jewish history. The instructor's academic training helped facilitate this interest. Though, this could present a challenge for instructors keen on using *The Plot* who lack sufficient knowledge of Judaica. While the three courses only had one Jewish student, the focus on the Jewish American experience helped other students reflect on the marginalization of Jewish culture and people in American politics.

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SHORT REVIEWS:

Harvey, Mark, James Fielder, and Ryan Gibb (Eds.). 2022. *Simulations in the Political Science Classroom: Games without Frontiers*. Taylor & Francis.

By Matt Evans (mevans8@nwacc.edu)

This edited volume contains a mix of faculty reflections, explanations about the benefits and drawbacks of simulations, and practical advice on utilizing simulations in the political science classroom. It includes simulations for the branches of the US government, as well as for different situations in international relations. These chapters examine simulations that last single and multiple class periods, and use role-playing real-world people or groups developed by established groups (like Council on Foreign Relations) or the authors of the chapters. Even as someone versed in CFR Model Diplomacy and Model UN, I felt like I gained something from reading these chapters.

The book does have a few limits. First, the book lacks any simulations for comparative politics or political theory. The presidential and federalism simulations that each have their own chapter could be translated into subfields with some modifications. The chapters providing a set of practical skills for the development and deployment of simulations might be helpful, but there are no discussions on parliamentary democracy, economic and political development, political cultures, civil society, or social movement simulations. Political theory also never appears in the book, and it poses a fundamental problem insofar that it remains a subfield and a comportment focused on reading difficult texts (that typically cannot be as easily translated into other modalities like videos, textbooks, and outlines). The Reflections on History game feels like a missed opportunity to ask: how might simulations help draw students into reading texts that they lack no interest or ability to read?

Second, the book (perhaps intentionally) distances itself from critical theory. The chapter titled "I am Che Guevara" does not address the Cuban revolutionary or

Marxist theories, but practical guidelines for engaging simulations. The reader of this volume never hears arguments about how happy Karl Marx, Antonio Gramsci, or Theodore Adorno might be with these simulations or what they might play to help their students escape their lecturing. The Situationists in 1970s France developed movies and board games to teach 20th century Marxist theory; Marx himself was a fan of acting; and either topic might make for an interesting topic. We get glimpses of a possible solution with the chapter a "Game of Difference" that seeks to build empathy with different standpoints in the social system (and perhaps intersubjective understanding) through a simulation. The chapter addresses the limits of knowledge and the way people's location within different social systems structures our experiences and perceptions of realities. While useful, this single chapter cannot fully cover the diverse, conflicting, and converging literatures of critical theory.

The authors of this volume avoid unraveling some of the power relations hidden behind groups like the Council for Foreign Relations, the United Nations, or even the construction of various subfields (like American politics). While agency threads throughout the chapters in different theoretical and topical contexts, the notion of helping students understand agency through the conflict theoretical frameworks that compose political science might be developed and explicated at much greater lengths throughout the chapters.

Nguyen, C. Thi. 2020. *Games: Agency as Art*. Oxford University Press.

By Colin M. Brown (colin.brown@northeastern.edu)

Nguyen examines the underlying epistemology of games—how games allow us to experience new forms of agency and provide us a language for communicating and recording agential experiences. In other words, games go beyond a superficial empathy that simply teaches us the logic by which others might think. Well-designed games allow us to temporarily inhabit the perceived choices that others face, and even letting us experience their emotional responses to these choices through fictional-but-meaningful stakes. Playing a game, we can fundamentally learn new ways *to be*—we can see what we might really do in another person's place and can develop an even deeper empathy. Games constrain us and temporarily limit our autonomy, but for Nguyen, those voluntary limits bring us an awareness of our agency and of the things that can and cannot be done.

The book lacks any specific practical classroom tips (it does have some great game recommendations, though!), but it fundamentally changed the way that I think about games and simulations in courses. The ability to learn about new forms of agency "from the inside" can be much more powerful than we may think. It is worth remembering that our games are not only teaching about other ways of being, but are also *requiring* our students to practice these forms of agency. When we teach cooperation in politics—or treachery, or pure rational maximizing—we reinforce our students' abilities to access and identify these ways of being well beyond the end of class. This is usually good and can often increase empathy for excluded or forgotten others. But when we try to demonstrate a purely selfish view of politics through a game, for example, we cannot always guarantee that these new forms of agency will be used purely for "good" or that the intellectual exercise ends when the game is over.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Call for Editors: Are you interested in being the managing editor of the Active Learning in [Political Science blog](http://activelearningps.com)[41]? Chad Raymond, the current editor, must step down to focus on other projects as of January 2024. Duties consist of writing content, soliciting and editing guest posts, and simple back-end maintenance of the blog's Wordpress website. The blog requires no coding knowledge. Soomo Learning, the digital textbook company, shall continue paying for the blog's web hosting costs in exchange for an ad on the blog's homepage until mid-June 2024. There blog requires no attention to raising funds or commercial matters, as it is non-commercial. Questions? Interest? Email the current editor at chad.raymond@salve.edu**.**

Deardorff Receives Chancellor's Medal of Excellence: Michelle Deardorff received the Chancellor's Medal of Excellence at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga commencement ceremony on Dec. 17, 2022. She became the award's first recipient. She currently serves as the Adolph S. Ochs Professor of Government and Department Head of Political Science and Public Service at UTC. Her teaching focuses on constitutional law, judicial politics, and political philosophy; her research focuses on the constitutional and statutory protections surrounding gender and race and explored the insights provided by political theory. In 1997, she helped found the Fannie Lou Hamer National Institute on Citizenship and Democracy, a coalition of academics who promote civic engagement and popular sovereignty by examining the struggle for civil rights in the United States. In her career, she served on the American Political Science Association's (APSA) governing council, chaired the Political Science Education section of APSA, and worked on the editorial boards of PS: Political Science and Politics, the Journal of Political Science Education, and College Teaching, as well as on the Advisory Board of the Consortium for Inter-Campus SoTL (Scholarship of Teaching and Learning) Research. She most recently co-authored *Pregnancy and the American Worker* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2016) with

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[41] http://activelearningps.com

James Dahl, professor at the University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana. Before joining UTC in 2013, she taught at Jackson State and Millikin University.

Archived issues of The Political Science Educator can be found here: https://web.apsanet.org/teachingcivicengagement/political-science-educator/

Submissions: Please send any article submissions or announcements for future newsletters to the editors at editor.pse.newsletter@gmail.com. Please include "PS Educator submission" in the subject line of your email, and include a short, two-sentence biographical statement. Research notes, reviews, and reflections are all welcome. Research notes in this newsletter should be considered as working papers and have received editorial review but have not undergone peer review.

The general policy of this newsletter is to publish all teaching-related articles that are submitted, as far as possible. We will, however, offer suggested revisions to improve the quality of the presentation, to verify academic integrity and citation standards, and to make the writing more accessible. We may occasionally require significant revisions or require authors to hold their submissions until a later issue, in order to ensure that ideas will be suitably ready for distribution, and we may occasionally refer articles or research notes to better-suited outlets.

Submission deadline is April 15 for the Summer/Fall newsletter, and December 15 for the Winter/Spring newsletter. Contributions may be as brief as 200–500 hundred words, but should not exceed 1500 words. Please use APSA citation style for in-text citations and a list of references at the end of your submission. Research notes, reviews, and reflections should include in-text citations for relevant academic literature. The editors reserve the right to make minor corrections for style, clarity, readability, grammar, spelling, or factual errors.

Many thanks to Nick Kapoor for help in soliciting and proofreading articles, and to the PSE Section for its continued support.