

Teaching Philosophy

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I believe that pursuing higher education should be a fundamental human right accessible to all. Through education, students should not only acquire specific knowledge and skills but also cultivate a mentality of lifelong learning. As an educator in the social sciences, I strive to ensure that my students gain not only substantive knowledge but also develop critical thinking skills, apply theoretical concepts to real-world cases, and foster habits of continuous learning that will serve them beyond their academic careers.

To develop critical thinking, I encourage students to engage in structured debates on topics such as why some authoritarian regimes collapse while others endure, using theoretical frameworks like modernization theory and survival theory. To bridge theory and practice, I assign case studies that require students to apply theories of democratization to contemporary cases such as democratic backsliding in Turkey or the United States, or regime resilience in China. To promote lifelong learning, I design semester-long projects in which students monitor political developments in a country of their choice, thereby cultivating habits of sustained political inquiry and engagement with global affairs.

As an international student from a modest background, I recognize that many students face structural barriers in their pursuit of higher education. I am committed to creating a supportive and inclusive classroom environment that acknowledges these challenges. I offer flexibility through assignment extensions when appropriate, hold additional office hours for individualized support, and maintain open lines of communication with students to ensure they can succeed. Furthermore, I will incorporate *Universal Design for Learning (UDL)* strategies—such as providing captioned videos, multiple content formats, and varied assessment methods—to accommodate different learning styles and needs and to promote equity and accessibility for all students.

Throughout my academic journey, I have been fortunate to learn from instructors who have profoundly influenced my intellectual and personal development. I aspire to emulate these mentors by creating a classroom environment that nurtures students' voices, passions, and professional aspirations. For example, I recall a professor who always took time during office hours to discuss not only course material but also students' broader academic and career goals, encouraging us to pursue research opportunities and internships that aligned with our interests. Another mentor structured his course assignments in a way that allowed students to choose their own case studies or policy topics, giving us ownership over our learning and inspiring deeper engagement. Drawing from these experiences, I aim to create a similarly *supportive environment* where students feel empowered to take intellectual risks, develop independent research projects, and connect course materials to their personal and professional goals. By fostering this kind of environment, I hope to inspire students to not only master course content but also to cultivate a lifelong commitment to learning, critical inquiry, and civic engagement.

Although I have not yet had the opportunity to teach my own course, I am scheduled to do so for the first time this upcoming fall semester. I plan to implement a learner-centered approach, beginning with an anonymous student survey to understand students' goals,

challenges (such as balancing work and study), and accommodation needs. A mid-semester feedback survey will further guide course adjustments to better support student learning. Additionally, I will foster community by encouraging students to introduce themselves through short video presentations at the beginning of the course. Classroom activities will emphasize *active learning* through group discussions, collaborative projects, peer reviews, and multiple presentation formats.

Ultimately, my goal is for students to leave my classes not only with a deeper understanding of course content but also with transferable skills in *critical thinking*, *analytical application*, and *self-directed learning*. I am deeply committed to helping students grow intellectually and personally, and I hope to become the kind of educator who inspires lasting positive impact. As Han Yu, an ancient Chinese scholar, once wrote, “*A teacher is one who transmits knowledge, provides for study, and dispels confusion.*” I aspire to fulfill this ideal in my teaching career.