

## Teaching Statement—Dawid Tatarczyk

I treat teaching and research as complementary. Research makes me a better teacher because I am able to bring my substantive knowledge of politics into the classroom. Teaching, on the other hand, improves my research since students' questions frequently prompt me to investigate new topics and force me to rethink some of my unquestioned assumptions.

I make it my priority to get to know my students, both as a group and individually. Albion College is a private liberal arts college with a heterogeneous student population. Most students live on campus, and the student-to-faculty ratio is about 13:1. Small class sizes allow me to interact with students and place a lot of emphasis on hands-on participation. When teaching "Politics of American Democracy" and "Introduction to Comparative Politics," I use three types of in-class activities: (1) Monday exercises are distributed and completed in class; (2) Wednesday discussion questions are a one-page answer to a question related to the readings; (3) Friday group discussion questions are also distributed and completed in class. The in-class activities are meant to provide students with instant feedback and help them internalize the new material. In addition to mid-term and final exams, students enrolled in my two hundred level classes are asked to give a presentation focusing on one of the case studies analyzed throughout the semester. The exercise is meant to simulate real world experience and includes a question & answer part that teaches students how to ask meaningful questions and how to handle professional critique. My teaching evaluations at Albion College are outstanding (e.g., Introduction to Comparative Politics [PLSC 102] 4.5/5.0; The Catholic Church in Comparative Perspective [PLSC 289] 4.8/5.0; Research Methods in Comparative Politics 4.9/5.0 [PLSC 389]).

I am also able to bring my research into the classroom. Last summer (2018), I obtained a grant to hire a student research assistant to work on a project that examines the effects of Open List Proportional Representation electoral rules on political parties in Poland. Data from this project will also be used in my "Democratic Transitions" to demonstrate the importance of political institutions and their impact on procedural democracy. My teaching style can be best described as Socratic since I like to interact with students during lectures to keep them engaged and focused. While I use technological solutions in my classroom, chalk and chalkboard are indispensable for my teaching style. I have learned that even the crudest illustration can make grasping of a difficult point much easier. Moreover, using a chalkboard helps me preserve the framework of my lectures keeping them fluid and organized, while also allowing me to deviate from my lecture plan when teachable moments arise.

In addition to my academic teaching experience, I also have ten years of pedagogical background as a swim coach. I have coached at every level, from kindergarteners to adult master swimmers. Coaching is similar to teaching because both require the ability to successfully communicate complex sets of ideas. Both the best researcher and the smartest coach will fail as teachers if they are not able to make themselves understood. What I value most are the close relationships I was able to develop with my swimmers. Many of them secured college scholarships and, as student-athletes, continue to exemplify the values I was able to instill in them. The ability to form and sustain such fruitful relationships has also helped me create a better learning environment in the classroom, as I am able to relate to students of different ages and from diverse backgrounds.

Overall, I believe I am a demanding teacher who can bridge teaching and research. Because of my extensive teaching and pedagogical experience, I am able to communicate ideas effectively, and my excellent teaching record is reflected in my evaluations.