

# Teaching Statement and Portfolio

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## 1. Courses

My past teaching experience and my areas of specialization make me competent to teach the following courses and topics at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

- Canadian Politics / Quebec Politics
- Introduction to Empirical Political Science / Research Methods
- Quantitative Methods / Experimental Methods
- Political Psychology
- Public Opinion
- The Comparative Politics of Ethnic Diversity

## 2. Pedagogical objectives

Throughout my doctoral studies I have demonstrated that I view teaching as an important part of my professional development. The courses I have taught show my ability to direct students whose goal is to continue to the graduate level, as well as my desire to introduce new students to the field and share with them the breadth of political science. Most of my teaching experience deals in one way or another with the methodological foundations of our discipline. I believe that this strong emphasis on the basics of social science inquiry is essential in achieving the two main goals I pursue in my teaching: to foster critical thinking in students and to help them gain the analytical skills necessary to be able to understand and evaluate the works that they will encounter during their undergraduate or graduate studies. As demonstrated by the excerpts from my teaching evaluations, students find my lectures and discussions to be challenging and highly motivating. This is especially important when teaching courses related to methods and research design, because it is often the only way to get them to engage with material that may at first seem remote from what sparked their interest in political science. This is achieved by encouraging students to move beyond

the substantive matter at hand, so that they engage with the material at different levels of analysis and become aware of what is happening behind the scenes.

Practically, I applied this teaching philosophy during the 2012-2013 academic year where I helped design, launch and teach a new, first-year introductory course on empirical political science. The goal of this new course is to introduce students to political science as a scientific enterprise with an emphasis on its logic and its set of tools. It is first and foremost a hands-on course, something I believe is essential when introducing students to complex concepts. This approach means asking students to do many short exercises applying the concepts at hand, whether it is to come up with their own causal mechanisms to explain a social phenomenon, or their own measures for a multidimensional concept such as democracy. It also means using real world examples to help students understand and connect with other important concepts. For example, we used the Arab Spring to clarify the differences between structural causes and triggers, and we explained and applied the idea of necessary and sufficient conditions by working through the 2012 U.S. Presidential election. These exercises really helped students grasp important but abstract concepts. Judging from their comments, many of them also felt it helped them engage with the material they encountered in other courses.

Although this class is specifically designed to deal with the underpinnings of empirical political science, I believe a class on a substantive topic should aim to foster the same skills in students. An introductory class in Canadian Politics demands that an important amount of factual information be transmitted, but this can be achieved while also insisting on the different approaches to the study of politics. This is what I emphasize in the course "Introduction to political psychology" that I developed. The political psychology subfield exemplify the methodological diversity of political science, and the readings are selected to reflect the breadth of the discipline. Throughout the class, I emphasize the need to pay attention to the strengths and weaknesses of different methods while reviewing the substantive findings in the literature. The syllabus for the undergraduate version of this course follows.

At the graduate level, the assumption is that most of these skills have already been developed. Here, I believe the goal is to help students apply these skills, gain the methodological and substantive knowledge necessary to pursue academic research, and help them acquire the discipline and the work ethic essential for this type of work. Although I have yet to teach at the graduate level, I already have experience in directing students. During the 2013-2014, I taught the Honours thesis seminar in collaboration with Pr. Antje Ellermann. In addition to lectures on research design, quantitative methods and different statistical packages, I was also supervising nine students writing quantitative theses. These theses spanned different subfields of the discipline and I directed students working on polarization in the U.S. Congress, civil wars outcomes, democratization in Singapore, to name a few. I met with these students weekly and help them through the different stages of their project: from the literature review to data collection and from analysis to presentation. The objective was to offer guidance but also to encourage and foster the autonomy needed to move on to graduate studies. Student's evaluations as well as the theses they produced indicate that I attained this objective.

# Introduction to Political Psychology

*POLI 3xx*

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**Office Hours: TBD**

## Overview and Objectives

The main objective of this course is to provide a broad introduction to the field of political psychology. To do so we will survey most of the major areas of political psychology, while focusing on more recent and ground-breaking empirical work. Readings are selected to reflect the breadth of the field in topics and approaches. This includes the role of emotions, socialization, group dynamics, and genetic predispositions in explaining political behaviors and attitudes. Readings and material presented during lectures will also offer students an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the many ways in which political psychology is conducted: from observational survey-based research to experiments in a natural setting or in a lab. During the first and second week of class, I will introduce and contrast these different methods and highlight their strengths and weaknesses. Although an effort will be made to cover all kinds of empirical strategies, be advised that most of this research is quantitative in nature. Consequently, a certain knowledge of multivariate statistics will be helpful, but is not required.

The class will consist of a mix of lectures and discussions. As such, students are expected to play an active role. This is especially true for students who are writing reviews during a specific week (more on assignments below).

## Administrative Issues and Course policy

*Attendance:* Attendance is expected of students in all classes. The University accommodates students with disabilities who have registered with the Disability Resource Centre. The University accommodates students whose religious obligations conflict with attendance, submitting assignments, or completing scheduled tests and examinations. Please let your instructor know in advance if you will require any accommodation on these grounds. All assignments must be completed and handed in. Students who do not attend regularly or fail to hand in an assignment may be disallowed from writing the final exam. Read the

university calendar so that you are aware of no-penalty drop dates, requirements for medical authorization (to defer an exam, for example) and other procedures that may affect you

*Appeals:* Students who wish to appeal grades assigned to their academic work may do so. The initial appeal should be made to the TA or to the course instructor. If the student remains unsatisfied with this process, he/she may proceed to the head of the department or further to a formal committee established in accordance with University policies.

*Late Assignments:* Late papers will be penalized 5% per day. The only exceptions are for students who have a medical, compassionate, or other legitimate reason for being late and can produce supporting documentation.

*Academic Dishonesty:* Any form of academic dishonesty will be severely penalized according to the university guidelines. Please review the University Calendar for the university policy on cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty. The Library also has a helpful web page on plagiarism.

## Required Texts

- No required text but a course package will be made available.

## Course Outline

### Introduction

#### Political Psychology or Psychological Political Science? (Week 1)

- Huddy, L., Sears, D. O., and Levy, J. S. (2013). *The Oxford handbook of political psychology*. Oxford University Press (Introduction)
- Druckman, J. N., Kuklinski, J. H., and Sigelman, L. (2009). The unmet potential of interdisciplinary research: Political psychological approaches to voting and public opinion. *Political Behavior*, 31(4):485–510

#### “Doing” Political Psychology: Contrasting Methods (Week 2)

- Druckman, J. N., Green, D. P., Kuklinski, J. H., and Lupia, A. (2011). *Cambridge handbook of experimental political science*. Cambridge University Press (Chapter 2, Chapter 6, and Chapter 8)

### Human Cognition: Limits and Possibilities

#### Cognition and Attribution (Week 3)

- Ross, L. (1977). The intuitive psychologist and his shortcomings: Distortions in the attribution process. *Advances in experimental social psychology*, 10:173–220
- Kahneman, D. (2003). A perspective on judgment and choice: mapping bounded rationality. *American psychologist*, 58(9):697

- Huber, G. A., Hill, S. J., and Lenz, G. S. (2012). Sources of bias in retrospective decision making: Experimental evidence on voters' limitations in controlling incumbents. *American Political Science Review*, 106(04):720–741

### **The Role of Emotions** (Week 4)

- Lodge, M. and Taber, C. S. (2005). The automaticity of affect for political leaders, groups, and issues: An experimental test of the hot cognition hypothesis. *Political Psychology*, 26(3):455–482
- Gadarian, S. K. (2010). The politics of threat: How terrorism news shapes foreign policy attitudes. *The Journal of Politics*, 72(02):469–483
- Brader, T., Valentino, N. A., and Suhay, E. (2008). What triggers public opposition to immigration? anxiety, group cues, and immigration threat. *American Journal of Political Science*, 52(4):959–978

### **Political Knowledge** (Week 5)

- Carpini, M. X. D. (1996). *What Americans know about politics and why it matters*. Yale University Press (Chapter 2 and 3)
- Prior, M. and Lupia, A. (2008). Money, time, and political knowledge: Distinguishing quick recall and political learning skills. *American Journal of Political Science*, 52(1):169–183

### **Overcoming Complexity?** (Week 6)

- Lupia, A., McCubbins, M. D., and Popkin, S. L. (2000). *Elements of reason: Cognition, choice, and the bounds of rationality*. Cambridge University Press (chapter 8)
- Lupia, A. (1994). Shortcuts versus encyclopedias: information and voting behavior in california insurance reform elections. *American Political Science Review*, 88(01):63–76
- Lenz, G. S. and Lawson, C. (2011). Looking the part: Television leads less informed citizens to vote based on candidates' appearance. *American Journal of Political Science*, 55(3):574–589

## **Intergroup Relationships**

### **Intergroup Conflict** (Week 7)

#### *Social Dominance Theory and Social Identity Theory*

- Sidanius, J. and Pratto, F. (2012). Social dominance theory. *Handbook of theories of social psychology*, 2:418–438
- Brewer, M. B. (2001). The many faces of social identity: Implications for political psychology. *Political psychology*, 22(1):115–125
- Huddy, L. (2004). Contrasting theoretical approaches to intergroup relations. *Political Psychology*, 25(6):947–967

**Prejudice** (Week 8)

- Huddy, L., Sears, D. O., and Levy, J. S. (2013). *The Oxford handbook of political psychology*. Oxford University Press (chapter 25)
- Greenwald, A. G., McGhee, D. E., and Schwartz, J. L. (1998). Measuring individual differences in implicit cognition: the implicit association test. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 74(6):1464
- Valentino, N. A., Hutchings, V. L., and White, I. K. (2002). Cues that matter: How political ads prime racial attitudes during campaigns. *American Political Science Review*, 96(01):75–90

Do the Implicit Attitudes Test yourself before the class: [projectimplicit.com](http://projectimplicit.com)

**Overcoming Conflict?** (Week 9)

- Enos, R. D. (2014). Causal effect of intergroup contact on exclusionary attitudes. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 111(10):3699–3704
- Transue, J. E. (2007). Identity salience, identity acceptance, and racial policy attitudes: American national identity as a uniting force. *American Journal of Political Science*, 51(1):78–91

**Nature versus Nurture****Genetic Foundations of Political Behavior** (Week 10)

- Johnson, D. D., McDermott, R., Barrett, E. S., Cowden, J., Wrangham, R., McIntyre, M. H., and Rosen, S. P. (2006). Overconfidence in wargames: experimental evidence on expectations, aggression, gender and testosterone. *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*, 273(1600):2513–2520
- Fowler, J. H., Baker, L. A., and Dawes, C. T. (2008). Genetic variation in political participation. *American Political Science Review*, 102(02):233–248

**Socialization** (Week 11)

- Erikson, R. S. and Stoker, L. (2011). Caught in the draft: The effects of vietnam draft lottery status on political attitudes. *American Political Science Review*, 105(02):221–237
- Stoker, L. and Jennings, M. K. (1995). Life-cycle transitions and political participation: The case of marriage. *American political science review*, 89(02):421–433

**Political Psychology and Foreign Policy** (Week 12)

- Huddy, L., Sears, D. O., and Levy, J. S. (2013). *The Oxford handbook of political psychology*. Oxford University Press (Chapter 10 and Chapter 11)

## **Conclusion and Review (Week 13)**

### **Assignments and Exams**

Evaluations will include four components:

- Reviews (2) (10% each)
- Outline for term paper (10%)
- Term Paper (30%)
- Final Exam (40%)

I describe each in more details below, but handouts with more specific guidelines and directives will be given closer to due dates.

#### **Reviews**

You will need to choose two weeks where you will write a detailed review of the week's readings (starting in week 3). The review must be 3 pages long (double-spaced, Times New Roman, Size 12, 2.5cm margins). Points will be deducted if the review is significantly shorter or longer. If the week has more than two assigned readings, you can choose to review only two. The review must include a summary of the main arguments presented in the readings and a critical assessment of their contribution to the literature. You do not need to cite any sources other than those under review and you will be evaluated on the originality and accuracy of your assessment.

As a general guideline, you want to make sure that your reviews address the following issues:

- What is the authors main point? What is the question that they are trying to answer?
- Why is this argument important? How is it improving our existing knowledge on the topic?
- What is the answer that the authors are giving?
- Is the answer convincing? What kind of evidence do they use to back up their claims?
- Which are the strengths and weaknesses of the argument? Is the argument overlooking important aspects of the problem? What about the methodology?

#### **Term Paper**

The term paper will be an opportunity to get creative. It is divided in two parts: an outline (10%) and the paper itself (30%). Throughout the term we will survey different findings as well as different experiments, surveys, or ways of learning about political and psychological processes. In this term paper, you will be required to apply these findings and methods to a specific issue or problem of your choice. Here are three examples:

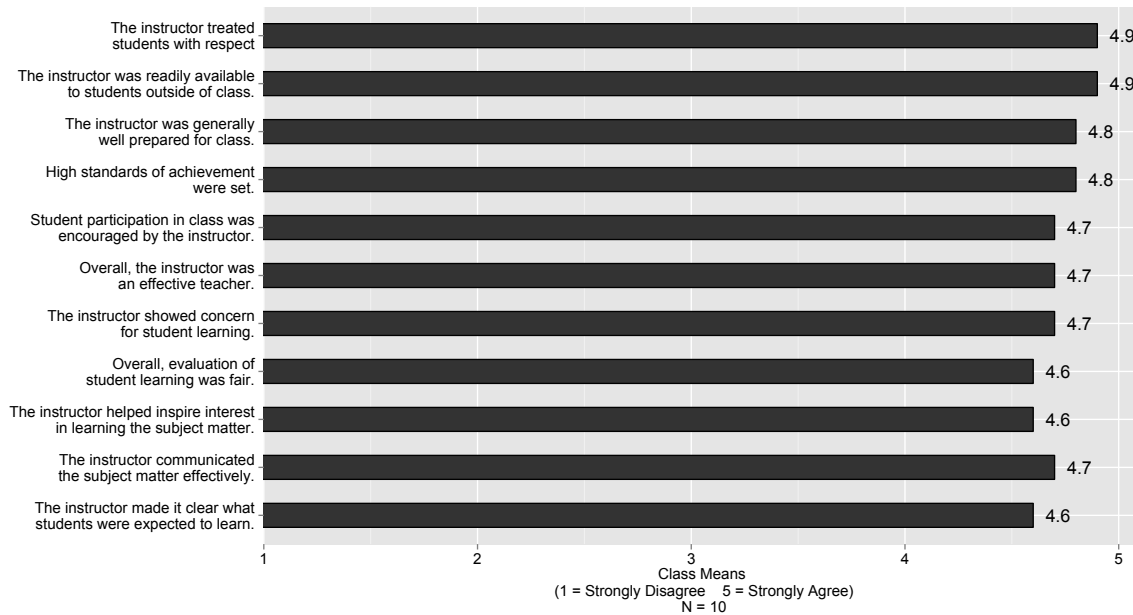
- Design a fictional lab experiment to better identify a causal mechanism hypothesized in observational research.
- Design a fictional natural experiment or an observational study to overcome the external validity issues of lab experiment findings.
- Write a detailed memo, grounded in findings from political psychology, advising a political campaign on its advertising.

In other words, I'm looking for applications of some of the knowledge gained throughout the class. A more detailed description with more examples will be given to you in week 3.

## **Final Exam**

The final exam will be a take-home and will have an enforced 24 hrs time-limit. You may use books or notes. In its form, this take-home resembles what is asked of Ph.D. students writing a comprehensive exam in a given field. In this take-home you will have to answer two questions out of a list of four. More details will be given later in the term.



**TEACHING EVALUATIONS<sup>1</sup>****Course:** POLI 492 - Honours Thesis**Term:** 2013-2014**Instructors:** Charles Breton**MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS****OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS**

*Please comment on any aspects, positive or negative, of your instructor's teaching, attitudes to students, class atmosphere, or any other matters affecting the quality of instruction that you consider worthy of note.*

- Charles was definitely one of the most attentive, passionate, and effective instructors I have had. I appreciate his clear instruction on quantitative methods, and his ability to explain concepts I had previously not understood (though learned about several times!). Moreover, Charles' passion for the subject of political science, teaching, and the success of his students is not only apparent in the classroom but also contagious and inspiring.
- Charles was very attentive and helpful when you needed him.
- Helpful discussion comments during seminars. Not my supervisor, did not work with him extensively.
- Charles was a fantastic instructor who was extremely respectful to students and always available to help. His positive attitude and good character improved the class atmosphere and made for a positive learning environment.

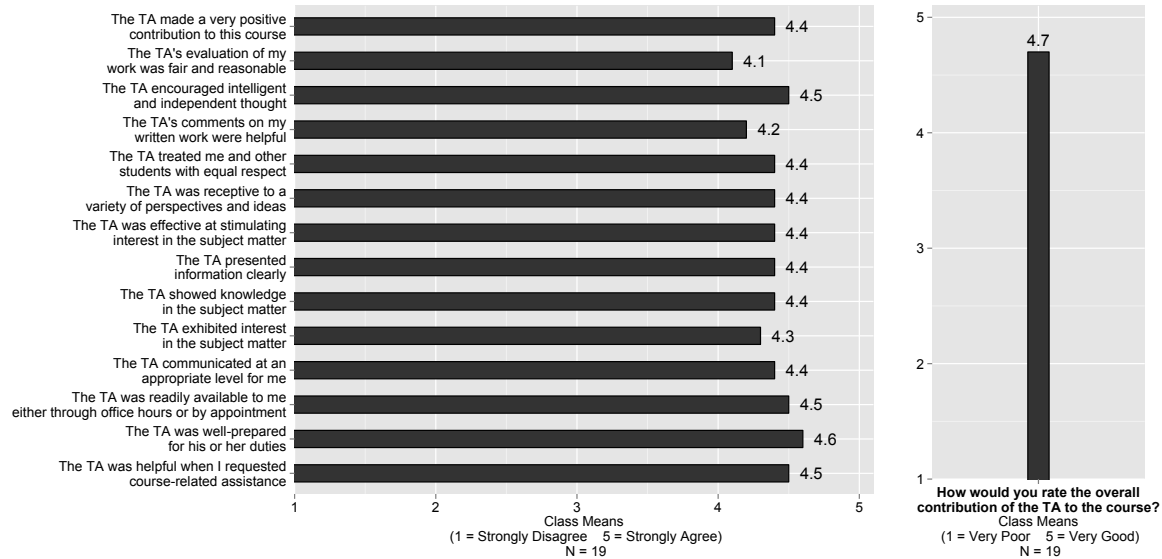
<sup>1</sup>The results and comments presented here have been reformat for easier reading. Students' comments have not been modified and may include spelling or grammatical errors. Original evaluations are available upon request.

- Charles was a great co-teacher who I felt provided invaluable help in solving challenges that came up during thesis-writing.
- Charles is an approachable, effective and helpful teacher. He readily points out areas of improvement in student's work and is willing to spend time and considerable effort to improve students' work. The introductory segment on quantitative methods was clearly lectured.
- Charles was an excellent instructor, possibly the best I've had at UBC. His knowledge of methodology and research methods, willingness to give advice and his guidance were invaluable for me as I wrote my thesis. Without Charles, it would have been a far more daunting task. He was very much willing to go above and beyond the call of duty to help us work through our tough problems, and was there to calm us whenever we felt as though our project was falling to pieces. In short, he has all aspects of an excellent teacher: knowledge, enthusiasm, patience and inspiration.
- Charles was a great teacher. He gave us really thoughtful critique and communicated his thoughts very effectively. He made us all feel comfortable to communicate our ideas and comfortable to fail at times (and then learn from those mistakes). Charles was honestly one of the best teachers I've ever had at UBC and I feel so lucky that he was there to help me through my thesis.

**Course:** POLI 110 - Investigating Politics:  
Introduction to Scientific Political Analysis  
**Instructor:** Alan Jacobs

**Term:** 2013-Winter

### MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS



### OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

*Please comment on any aspects, positive or negative, of your teaching assistant's (TA's) teaching, attitudes to students, class atmosphere, or any other matters affecting the quality of instruction that you consider worthy of note.*

- Charles was enthusiastic, knowledgeable, approachable, and helpful. His method for teaching class content was very effective.
- Charles is a very bright and dedicated TA. He is passionate about the material, and does a excellent job explaining the theories and their applications.
- Friendly, intelligent atmosphere. Encouraged deeper consideration and application of the course content via the examples and corrections he made in our discussions.
- Charles was a significant contribution to my learning from the course. Tutorials were well prepared and interesting.
- Charles is one of the two best TAs that I've had in UBC in the last two years. He is very well prepared for each and every discussion, and he is willing to take extra discussion time to discuss and answer any additional questions regarding lecture materials and tests. However, his marking is a bit hard, though fair.
- Charles is a great TA, and he was very helpful. He made everything clear, and he spoke with enthusiasm to keep his students engaged. He always knew what he was doing, and he always wanted to help his students the best way he can. I really enjoyed having him as a TA.
- An intellectual man, the TA had a powerful influence on the quality of understanding of course content. I would commonly takes notes during discussions, as what he had to say aptly and succinctly summarized the concept(s) at hand.

- The tutorials were really well organized and helpful.
- I thought he was great. Learned way more in tutorials than in the lectures.
- Very knowledgeable, clear in his explanations, stimulated critical thinking.

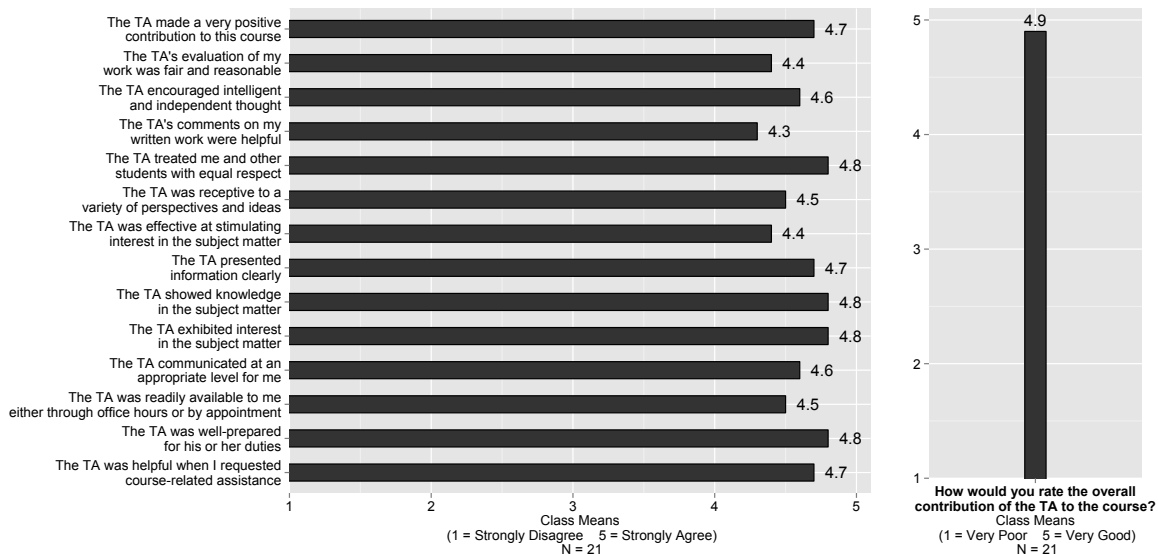
*Please comment on any aspects, positive or negative, of the format and content of the course as they may have affected the teaching assistant's performance.*

- Workshops were interesting and always helpful in understanding the course content.
- Charles marked a little tough but he was fair.
- The format of the course went well with the tutorial Charles taught.
- This discussion is the only discussion that I've found extremely helpful (question and clarification)
- I really liked the Tutorials. They were interesting and kept used current events to teach us ways of understanding the analytical aspect of this course; thus making it very interesting. It was a joy going to his classes.
- A fascinating course, however, the lack of a textbook makes outside-of-class studying difficult.

**Course:** POLI 110 - Investigating Politics:  
Introduction to Scientific Political Analysis  
**Instructor:** Anjali Thomas Bohlken

**Term:** 2012-Fall

### MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS



### OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

*Please comment on any aspects, positive or negative, of your teaching assistant's (TA's) teaching, attitudes to students, class atmosphere, or any other matters affecting the quality of instruction that you consider worthy of note.*

- Charles' passion for the subject is evident and is also infectious. Every discussion is interesting and engaging. He promotes independent thought and is very open to all perspectives in the room.
- Very effective TA. Did a good job of inspiring discussions in tutorial.
- Charles' teaching style was very engaging which made him a very effective ta. He was very personable and well prepared for tutorials which created a great learning environment.
- Charles is quite a funny person, and was very engaging in the discussion sections. Information was presented clearly, with his own examples and student generated ones. Charles was the best TA I had this semester, and he is very deserving of that title.
- The TA showed good knowledge and interest towards the course and also encouraged interaction and group work among the students.
- Presented information in a very understandable way. I felt that Charles' tutorials were more informative and clear than the lectures, which felt muddled and conflicting.
- He was flawless.
- Very helpful TA. Always prepared for discussion groups and encouraged students to think about the concepts rather than just lecturing about them. Always available after class to answer any question.
- Quality TA, was more helpful than Professor Bohlken at times.

- Breton is absolutely intelligent and completely aware of all that he is teaching. In tutorial he splits us up into groups and firstly gives us the opportunity to think and work out the answers to anything material he provides. He never gives us the “answer” but rather works through a thought process with us in order to arrive at an answer which helps me reason better.
- Charles was really on board with the instructors expectations, and extremely knowledgeable about the subject matter. If he made a mistake he was quick to communicate it to us so that we accurately knew what was going on. He was also quick to communicate via email if I had any questions or needed help. I felt I was being kept well updated on course material and in tutorials he effectively helped understand concepts. Also he marked very fairly and reasonably.
- Charles’ tutorials were the most helpful and engaging aspect of this course. His tutorials are much more intelligent and thought provoking than the actual lectures, and his explanations were always clearer than those we heard in class. The level of teaching was much more suited for our class, as they were more challenging and was not demeaning of our intelligence, as the classes often were.
- Really knew the material well. Was always available when assistance was required. Fair evaluations. Helped the students really understand the material. Helped to clarify any questions on any in-class concepts. Amazing, engaged teaching style.
- I liked it, the tutorial was the best part of the class. Sometimes I felt I lost marks, not because I didn’t understand the material, but because I wasn’t sure exactly what to include in my answers.

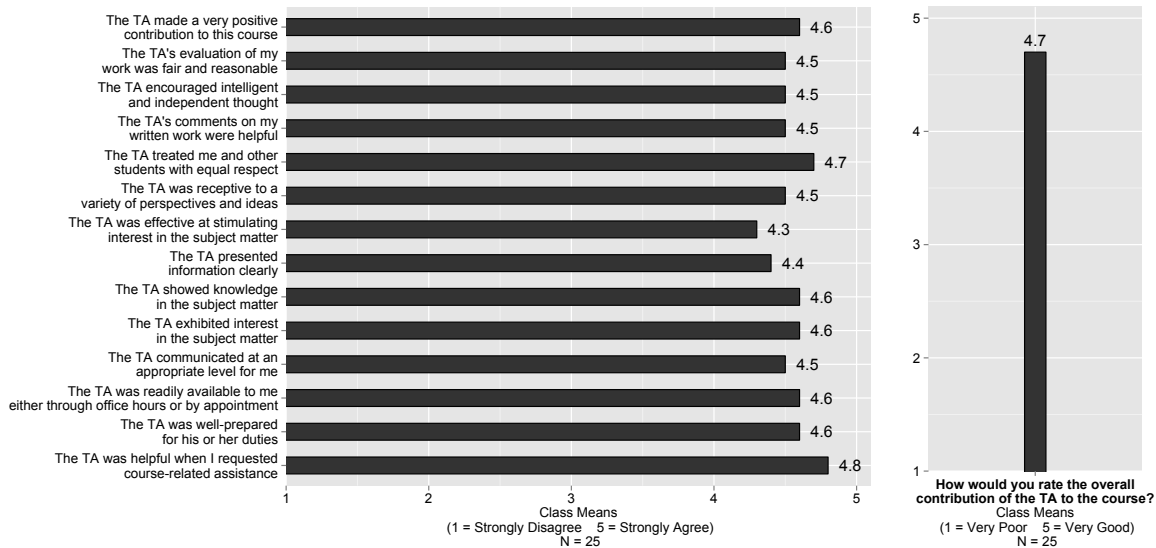
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- As a lower level class I feel that Charles may have been slightly restrained but still made it extremely clear at every stage of the course as to what the content meant.
- None. The course was presented in an optimal form.
- I am overall satisfied with the course.
- Concepts seem repetitive.
- The TA’s method of teaching engages us and is fine.
- Perhaps the lectures could have been a little more engaging and provided more information so that Charles had more to work off of in the tutorials. I felt information was constantly repeated in lectures but in tutorials I always felt like I was learning something new or at least looking at it from a perspective that was more engaging or eye opening.
- Charles was always supportive of our tutorial group, clearly explained assignments, and effectively facilitated our discussions and class activities. Every tutorial was well organized and engaging.

**Course:** POLI 101 - Government of Canada  
**Instructor:** Christopher Kam

**Term:** 2011-Winter

### MULTIPLE CHOICE QUESTIONS



### OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

*Please comment on any aspects, positive or negative, of your teaching assistant's (TA's) teaching, attitudes to students, class atmosphere, or any other matters affecting the quality of instruction that you consider worthy of note.*

- Clear and interested in the content of the course. He explained concepts well and varied the activities in the tutorial groups each week. Quality comments were encouraged while a light, relaxed, positive atmosphere was still maintained. His marking was fair, always backed by evidence.
- I loved how Charles incorporated recent events into his tutorials and integrated course materials and helped us apply them! Very helpful!
- He was one of the most effective TAs that I have encountered at UBC. He was enthusiastic and knowledgeable.
- Honestly, I can't think of a better way to put this than to simply say Charles was an awesome TA. He's understanding, helpful, and clear on explanations. He even goes the extra miles to provide outside-of-course materials to help our studying.
- Charles ran an excellent tutorial.
- Yes, I am saying this knowing that he will read this AFTER marking my paper, but jokes aside—Charles was my best TA this past year. His discussions were helpful— we got to ask questions, answer questions for review, and voice our opinions. He was approachable and friendly— I never felt intimidated to say what I thought for fear that he'll shoot it down. Plus, he replied to all my emails very promptly, ensuring that he was reachable. I also appreciated how he'd hold extra office hours when we really needed it e.g. to discuss our paper outlines, review for midterms. The times I have dropped by, he was immensely helpful, though I was pretty sure I

was becoming annoying. On the outline and midterms he have marked, the feedback was clear and I didn't really have to ask for clarification on what I can do better. Overall- great TA- he really helped enrich my knowledge in POLI101, and just his open and helpful nature, I'm sure, other students appreciated as well.

- Very helpful in clarifying course material (terms, ideas, etc). Respectful and approachable for students.
- Charles was very engaging in discussion and made them fun and interesting. He cared about the students and was always available for help.
- Charles was a great TA. Hopefully he continues with teaching. I feel his attitude and knowledge fostered a learning environment. Great TA.
- Very good T.A., one of the best I have had at UBC. Made poli sci tolerable.
- He was always available and understanding if I had a problem. He held his own when being challenged by students and did not back down.
- Very knowledgeable about the subject, helped clearly organize information learned in class, good at providing discussion material for group discussions during TA sections.
- He was an interesting and engaging TA. He provided good summary of course material. He was always knowledgeable, and in class discussions were always fruitful.
- Had a good attitude even when the mood of the room wasn't so great. Stimulated discussion when needed.
- One of the first TA's I've had in university who is actually competent, well-spoken and engaging. Did a very good job of running the tutorials. Very relaxed, but necessary material was still covered. Made many attempts to create more conversation

*Please comment on any aspects, positive or negative, of the format and content of the course as they may have affected the teaching assistant's performance.*

- A good mix of partner work, class discussion, and feedback on work.
- Would have been nice to have more structured tutorials on occasion, or a clear goal set at the beginning of the term on what the tutorials were meant to achieve.
- The format and content were appropriate for the TA's performance.
- Format was great, Charles was extremely helpful and effective as a TA and discussion leader.
- He attended the lectures, so the content in the discussion and lectures were pretty cohesive. I liked how we diverted from the course content to discuss the inevitability of elections, and how he'd go over certain areas that Prof. Kam might not have talked about as much.
- The discussions were more interesting than the course itself.
- He knew how to direct discussion. Knew how to explain the difficult articles that we had to read.
- Format and content of the course was good.
- The course material by itself would be uninteresting. However, the TA finds ways to link the material to current events, making the information automatically interesting. He was always open to emails and helped greatly during office hours.