

## Evidence of Teaching Effectiveness

This document provides a summary of numerical evaluations and open-ended feedback that I have received on my teaching at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. I have served as the primary instructor for one undergraduate course. I have also been a teaching assistant for large lecture-style classes where I have led three weekly recitation sections (discussion sections) for about sixty students per semester.

### Primary Instructor

- POLI 281: Data in Politics: An Introduction—Spring 2024, Spring 2021 (online).

### Teaching Assistant

- POLI 130: Introduction to Comparative Politics—Fall 2022, Spring 2020 (partially online), Fall 2019, Spring 2019, Fall 2018.

## Summary of Numerical Evaluations

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill administers course evaluations with an online survey that prompts students to answer questions on their class experience at the end of each semester. There are both closed- and open-ended questions. Each closed-ended question is answered on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). A selection of questions are presented in the tables below. Presented teaching assistant evaluations have been averaged across the three recitation sections taught each semester.

<b>Primary Instructor</b>	Average	Data in Politics: An Introduction	
		SP 2024	SP 2021
Shows enthusiasm about teaching	4.65	4.71	4.59
Promotes a climate of mutual respect	4.68	4.71	4.65
Encourages student questions	4.68	4.64	4.71
Emphasizes critical thinking	4.65	4.64	4.65
Encourages student participation	4.73	4.57	4.88
Is available when needed	4.71	4.71	4.71
Is well-prepared for instruction	4.68	4.64	4.71
Learned a great deal from this course	4.55	4.50	4.59
Challenged to think deeply about subject matter	4.60	4.43	4.76
Overall, this instructor was excellent	4.55	4.50	4.59
Total Number of Students		42	19
Response Ratio		33.3%	89.5%

Teaching Assistant	Introduction to Comparative Politics					
	Average	FA 2022	SP 2020	FA 2019	SP 2019	FA 2018
Did a good job leading discussions	4.31	4.68	4.38	4.11	4.28	4.09
Was well-prepared for class	4.56	4.89	4.53	4.40	4.62	4.36
Displayed a mastery of material	4.49	4.89	4.62	4.33	4.47	4.12
Was available for help	4.52	4.70	4.67	4.55	4.35	4.33
Overall, this TA did an excellent job	4.33	4.68	4.44	4.14	4.37	4.02
Total Number of Students		60	56	56	56	56
N by Recitation Section		(20,20,20)	(20,18,18)	(18,19,19)	(17,19,20)	(20,19,17)
Response Ratio		77%	30%	82%	75%	62%

## Select Student Responses

### *Data in Politics: An Introduction (Primary Instructor, Spring 2024)*

- I think Nitsova did a great job balancing a productive course, while acknowledging that for most people this is their first time coding as it is part of the research methods credit for Political Science. They explained concepts very well and provided great resources on the Sakai site I found very helpful. I also felt like the TAs were a great addition as you had several opportunities to meet people about problem sets/assignments.
- Always available to help and extremely clear, very knowledgeable and passionate about the subject matter.
- Understanding and encourages true learning rather than memorization.
- I enjoyed how she gave us opportunities to do in-class exercises that allowed us to use what we have learned during class. Additionally, I really enjoyed how she had workshopping hours for us to get help with our assignments if we needed it.
- I liked the group aspect of the class, it really helped to not only practice using R, but getting help from others, and also learning through explaining concepts to other people. I do not think I could figure out R studio without the group aspect.
- \* I just wanted to thank you again for being such an insightful and supporting professor in the past semester. While I was enrolling in my second semester classes I fully expected to struggle in this class since I had no experience coding or even looking at code/large data sets. However, when I went to your first office hours, I knew I would love your teaching style and this class. I constantly felt supported and seen by you and the TAs and I want to thank you for making this class so much less daunting. This class ended up being one of my favorites if not my favorite class at UNC so far. I really appreciate everything you did for me and my classmates in the past semester and I hope you have a wonderful summer.
- \* Thank you for being such an amazing instructor this semester. I was so scared to take this class, but it ended up being my favorite of the entire semester! Thank you for being such a helpful, positive, and supportive instructor. I have learned so much, and learning how to use R and analyze data has been such a rewarding experience.

\* Excerpts from thank you emails received from female undergraduate students.

***Data in Politics: An Introduction (Primary Instructor, Spring 2021)***

- Absolutely amazing. I felt so comfortable asking a ton of questions. Office hours were amazing. I loved the 1-on-1 – it made it way easier to ask questions and get help. I utilized office hours as much as possible in this class which I definitely do not do for all my classes.
- She was super helpful during class time and really made an effort to make sure that we always understood what was going on. She was always available to answer our questions whether that was during class or in-office hours. Without this I do not think I would have been as successful in this class as I was.
- She was very available in and out of class for questions and discussions, and was very receptive to student's needs during the semester. In class materials were very informative and accessible. Though she was flexible with deadlines depending on individual circumstances, she was dedicated to making sure every student did the work and understood what they were doing.
- She's very passionate about helping students understand the material and does her best to help when students are having problems.
- She was extremely helpful during office hours and gave homework that aligned with the course material perfectly.
- It [The course] taught me something entirely new and out of my comfort zone in a very short amount of time, and allowed me to connect it to the greater field of Political Science.
- It [The course] teaches very useful skills, and encourages a deeper statistics-based way of analyzing public policy and political data, which is very interesting to me and helpful to be able to do.

*Introduction to Comparative Politics (Teaching Assistant, Fall 2022)*

- Silviya facilitated a classroom environment that allowed my peers and I to feel comfortable asking questions and expressing our personal viewpoints. The wide range of class activities made learning the material much easier and kept us engaged, rather than just presenting a slideshow for every recitation meeting.
- Silviya Nitsova encouraged participation in all ways and enjoyed discussions among the whole class. She also made it clear for ALL students to be comfortable to share their own thoughts and opinions which aided my learning because I was able to hear from all sides of arguments. She was also extremely helpful during office hours which I appreciated and was able to clear up any confusion! Not only did she help out during office hours but was kind enough to send me an email to help me brainstorm on how I should dive into a topic on a paper. Her active participation encouraged my learning!
- She provided us with simpler ways of understanding the material provided to us during lecture. Silviya helped me apply the concepts in the real world and build arguments. We would have in-class debates and discussions or activities that modeled certain concepts. I found it quite simple to take in and understand the class material, but harder to apply it and form arguments around it.
- I remember voicing my concerns about taking this course at the beginning of the semester to Silviya as I had never taken a Political Science course before, and was worried that with the limited background knowledge I had on American politics as an international student that it would be difficult for me to follow along with the material. Silviya was very accommodating and extremely patient with me. She was helpful in offering feedback when I needed it and made time outside of the classroom to speak to me when I had questions, needed clarification, or just wanted general studying advice. It was encouraging to have her as my TA because I felt that she was consistently on my side and genuinely wanted me to learn.
- Nitsova was really good at explaining what terms/themes meant and was always open to questions and re-explanations whenever necessary. I also really liked the games we would play that helped better understand the material (e.g. the autocrat v democratic resource division game).
- You were an outstanding example of what all TAs should strive to be, thank you for being so cool :)

*Introduction to Comparative Politics (Teaching Assistant, Spring 2020)*

- Silviya did an outstanding job helping us learn this Spring. She constantly fostered engagement and discussion in class and she did a great job explaining topics and picking relevant examples for powerpoints/lecture discussion, etc. I really enjoyed the games we played that illustrated important course concepts. During the remote learning, she made sure to check in on us regularly without overwhelming us with requirements and mandatory meetings. I enjoyed checking in with her and am glad I was able to talk with her and discuss the things we did. She also made sure to pull her own experiences and knowledge in to help us learn and relate better with the topics.

- Silviya was an amazing instructor, and I always looked forward to her section because she always had different activities planned. Instead of just lecturing at us, she had games, activities, debates, and discussions planned to keep us engaged and learning.
- She did a great job of providing additional examples and explanations on topics during recitation. This allowed me to better understand the topics that we covered. She also had a good mix of lecture, discussion, and group work in recitation.
- I really enjoyed being in Silviya's section! It was clear she knew what she was talking about and she did an excellent job of conveying the information in a way that we could understand it. I would recommend her section to any student!
- Overall I enjoyed your recitation more than the actual lectures.

### *Introduction to Comparative Politics (Teaching Assistant, Fall 2019)*

- My TA was really good at helping me during office hours when I was totally lost with my paper. I think she is much better than other TAs I have had.
- I enjoyed the discussions that we had in the class, and her slides were helpful for studying for the exams.
- Silviya was really helpful in making recitation a good review of the lecture and making the information easily digestible. Her powerpoints were very helpful and it was great to have a study resource with more specific information. The only thing I would suggest for future sections is to put grades on Sakai. It is helpful to have a reference point on Sakai especially when the grades are somewhat slow to come back which I recognize is not Silviya's fault because they're graded by everyone.
- You were an excellent TA and I very much appreciate all of the help you gave me!

### *Introduction to Comparative Politics (Teaching Assistant, Spring 2019)*

- I really liked the recitations because they were very organized. Silviya was very knowledgeable on pretty much anything we had to discuss. I thank her for all of her work grading and providing useful feedback for me to improve my writing in the future.
- I LOVE SILVIYA!! This woman is going places in life. She is incredibly smart and answered every question thoroughly. She always responded to emails quickly (even when I would send her multiple emails the night before papers were due lol). She encouraged classroom discussion and strived to help us consider varying viewpoints. Finally, her feedback on papers was always constructive and helpful. I can't say enough good things about her. Hell yeah for women in politics! <3
- The PowerPoint slides during recitation were very helpful in recapping the week's material from lecture. I benefitted from the charts comparing different systems because it presented all the information side by side and made it easy to compare.
- She was always eager to help students in office hours, and tremendously helped with my understanding of course material. She also graded my papers thoughtfully.

*Introduction to Comparative Politics (Teaching Assistant, Fall 2018)*

- Silviya was always able to get students to talk and made discussion fun. She always had a positive energy and encouraged everyone to participate.
- Silviya was helpful in understanding my nervousness about speaking in class and made me feel encouraged to do so.
- She did a great job! She was very available for appointments outside of her office hours, which was very helpful because I couldn't make it to her scheduled office hours.
- Ms. Nitsova was a wonderful TA. She was approachable and put a lot of effort toward making sure we knew the material.