My students were negotiating $37 million in development assistance between USAID and a fictional country. But there was a twist: The host government had only fragile political support. One student representative memorably requested that he “needed more bribes [from the U.S.] to handle my country’s corruption.” The USAID team promptly boosted funds for government accountability programs.

My students connected human interactions to political outcomes, and I have developed a dozen additional simulations in my *Negotiation and Statecraft* course. My classes draw upon:

1. *Eight years of professional experience in foreign policy analysis and international strategy*. My students get real-world examples of how theory and practice meet.
2. *Dedicated pedagogical training*. My training in teaching was formal, systematic, and integrative. As a Princeton McGraw Fellow, I learned and applied the teaching process from the ground up: linking course objectives to assessments, grading rubrics to reading design, and the psychology of student attention to in-class engagement strategies.

After one of my courses, my students see politics as exciting and relevant for their lives; can use theory and history in evaluating current political challenges; and develop the analytical and professional skills needed in their future careers.

My student evaluation scores were equal to or better than instructors in my departments and academic institutions. I received an average normalized score of 90 out of 100 across all my evaluations.

[[1]](#footnote-1)

Rather than a simple transmission of information, my learners should emerge from the educational process as independent, analytically fluid, and self-directed thinkers. I therefore emphasize three teaching principles:

1. *Team-Based, Interactive Learning*

My courses build the unique skills that collaborative, professional environments require. My students face changing negotiation dynamics in each week-long simulation in *Negotiations and Statecraft*. By randomizing their groups, they learn how to work with and manage diverse personality types. One student commented that: “I have learned so much being in this class and I feel my negotiation style & leadership has increased & improved.”

I use active learning techniques to break up individual classes and periodically reinvigorate students. Small group work, for example, clarifies and reinforces concepts, while I have learners review archival documents to practice historiography and understand decision-making incentives. Even in lectures, I include music, propaganda, videos, and other media to illustrate how leaders and societies viewed policies and to re-engage students. Reflecting on my teaching style, one student said:

Professor Kuo is one of the most personable instructors I've ever had at the collegiate level. He creates and engaging, dynamic environment in the truest of senses and grounds the often abstract material with accessible (and often funny) comparisons/explanations. Use of popular culture references serves as a way to grab the attention of students who might not inherently be interested in the subject material.

Moreover, I incorporate peer evaluation, when possible, into my assignments/grades. Giving constructive feedback is an essential professional skill, and students better understand evaluation expectations by “switching roles” as part of a deliberate assessment framework. At Fordham, I prepared two writing-intensive courses where students provided peer evaluations of concept validity, argumentation, and writing style across multiple drafts. In *Negotiations and Statecraft*, the class votes on their most and least liked negotiators, highlighting the importance of bargaining reputations.

1. *Professional Relevance*

My course assignments enhance professional skills. I adapt and teach decision-making and analytical rubrics from my foreign policy career. My students then have assignment opportunities to apply these techniques for themselves. As one student stated:

Raymond was an extremely well-informed, engaged, and dedicated preceptor. He always went above and beyond to ensure that we understood the material and assessed relevant issues from all angles. In addition conducting precepts in a typical format, he also employed SWOT analysis and other “policy-planning” discussion methods for precepts on current topics--I found this highly beneficial.

Similarly, for most written assignments in my courses, students can choose an op-ed, policy memo, or academic/research format. The first two formats in particular exercise writing styles better suited to government, NGO, and business expectations. Many students turn these into professional writing samples, and I use separate grading rubrics more strongly emphasizing brevity and clarity.

1. *Student Support*

I make a particular effort to reach out to students having some difficulty with the material. My website hosts several guides helping novice learners to read theoretical and empirical political science, as well as a document highlighting the importance of citation and originality. In addition, I have an open door policy with my students, and privately contact any individuals who may need further assistance. One of my learners stated:

Professor Kuo helped me when I was struggling to keep up in class due to my learning disability. He seemed to really care about my doing well in the class and gave extremely helpful tips. I remember I was really struggling and I told my friend that professors like Kuo make me want to try harder and do well because of how much they care.

Once a semester, I host a career panel, inviting friends and former colleagues from government, the military, law, business, and NGOs to share their experience in launching their internationally oriented careers.

Beyond my formal courseload, I mentored one graduate student at the University at Albany, SUNY, as well as seven undergraduate thesis students at Fordham University. I continue to mentor several former students in their careers and education, with one recently receiving the Fulbright Fellowship to London. As a McGraw Fellow, I also trained all social science graduate students as teaching assistants for three years at Princeton.

One comment I received best encapsulates my desired end-state for students. After an extensive debate on U.S. and European policy towards the Iranian nuclear program, one student stated that he no longer knew what solution was the most appropriate, but he was very excited to find out more about the situation. I strive to inculcate that sense of complexity and animation – that politics is both incredibly challenging yet eminently worthy of deep thought and vigorous discussion – in all my courses.

1. Princeton courses are in orange, Albany in purple, and Fordham in red, in line with school colors. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)