

# Teaching Political Science to (LSE) Undergraduates: Lessons for GTAs

Thomas J. Leeper

Department of Government  
London School of Economics and Political Science

19 September 2017

**What is teaching?**

# What is teaching?

Teaching  $\neq$  lecturing!

# Alignment

# Alignment

- All courses have ILOs
  - “Intended Learning Outcomes”

# Alignment

- All courses have ILOs
  - “Intended Learning Outcomes”
- All course activities should align with those goals

# Alignment

- All courses have ILOs
  - “Intended Learning Outcomes”
- All course activities should align with those goals
- Know the ILOs for your course and design lessons that help students to achieve those outcomes

# Aligned Class Teaching



# Aligned Class Teaching

- Write a lesson plan for yourself based on the ILOs

# Aligned Class Teaching

- Write a lesson plan for yourself based on the ILOs
- Think about whether students are learning *about* something or learning *how to do* something

# Aligned Class Teaching

- Write a lesson plan for yourself based on the ILOs
- Think about whether students are learning *about* something or learning *how to do* something
- Explicitly connect activities to ILOs
  - Telling students about that connection
  - Self-reflective activities

# **Instrumental Motivations**

# Instrumental Motivations

- Teaching is a lot of work!!

# Instrumental Motivations

- Teaching is a lot of work!!
- Personal pay-offs to be a GTA
  - Improving your own teaching skills
  - Exposure to readings
  - Chance to observe all aspects of teaching and learning
  - Preparation for your own eventual teaching

# The First Class

- 1 Administration
- 2 Excitement/Engagement
- 3 Tone-setting

# The First Class

- 1 Administration
  - What is the purpose of class?
  - Provide a class syllabus
- 2 Excitement/Engagement
- 3 Tone-setting



# The First Class

- 1 Administration
  - What is the purpose of class?
  - Provide a class syllabus
- 2 Excitement/Engagement
  - Showcase what class will be like through an activity
- 3 Tone-setting

# The First Class

## 1 Administration

- What is the purpose of class?
- Provide a class syllabus

## 2 Excitement/Engagement

- Showcase what class will be like through an activity

## 3 Tone-setting

- Give a good first impression
- What kind of GTA are you going to be this term?

# The Remaining 19 Classes

What should you do with the remainder of the year?

# The Remaining 19 Classes

What should you do with the remainder of the year?

- Ask your lecturer/convenor!

# The Remaining 19 Classes

What should you do with the remainder of the year?

- Ask your lecturer/convenor!
- Collaborate with other GTAs

# The Remaining 19 Classes

What should you do with the remainder of the year?

- Ask your lecturer/convenor!
- Collaborate with other GTAs
- Reflect on your own practice

# The Remaining 19 Classes

What should you do with the remainder of the year?

- Ask your lecturer/convenor!
- Collaborate with other GTAs
- Reflect on your own practice
- Steal. Steal. Steal.

# Some Things to Think About

- Lack of perceived authority



# Some Things to Think About

- Lack of perceived authority
- Attendance

# Some Things to Think About

- Lack of perceived authority
- Attendance
- Laptops/distractions

# Some Things to Think About

- Lack of perceived authority
- Attendance
- Laptops/distractions
- Excessive requests for help/meetings

# Some Things to Think About

- Lack of perceived authority
- Attendance
- Laptops/distractions
- Excessive requests for help/meetings
- “is this on the exam”-ism

# Some Things to Think About

- Lack of perceived authority
- Attendance
- Laptops/distractions
- Excessive requests for help/meetings
- “is this on the exam”-ism
- Silence

# Some Things to Think About

- Lack of perceived authority
- Attendance
- Laptops/distractions
- Excessive requests for help/meetings
- “is this on the exam”-ism
- Silence
- Teaching evaluations

