



Adjunct Faculty Mentoring Project: Classroom Observation

Instructor: Patrick Hunnicutt, Teaching Associate

Course: PS 177 (Comparative Environmental Politics) – M21

Date: Summer Session B Observation, Week #2

[Note: All POLS courses were offered remotely during the summer 2021. Per Chair Bruhn's directive, and to accommodate the increase in my duties, all Teaching Associates and/or Adjuncts participating in the department's Adjunct Mentoring Program received feedback on two observations, one during the second week of the session, and one during the fifth week. Under normal operating conditions, I would observe two lectures, with the academic mentor assigned to the instructor observing an additional lecture. Upon prearrangement this term, the instructor's academic mentor performed one observation, and I performed the other observation.]

As required under our Adjunct Mentoring Program, I viewed approximately 40 minutes of a recorded video module that presented material on the "resource curse" theory in environmental and comparative politics. Patrick's class was offered remotely and synchronously, but due to other obligations, I viewed a recording of the lecture a number of weeks after its original presentation. This is the second time Patrick has taught a class for us, but the first time teaching this particular course. He is did this under extraordinary circumstances during the (continued) Covid-19 related campus closure. We are grateful for his willingness to do this, and for developing this course for remote instruction. I applaud Patrick for taking on the challenging assignment of remote instruction at this early stage of his career. We hope that this summer's effort will prove helpful in informing that practice, and in providing him with valuable career experience.

I found Patrick's lecture clear, well-organized, and accessible, while still sufficiently rigorous for an upper division course in our major. He used well-designed slides that supported the material in his lecture and displayed his image alongside his slides, which I appreciated. Given that some students were likely to view the lecture after its initial offering, I was glad to see this, since recorded lectures can provide a static and passive experience. Having that small personal piece helped to enliven the experience. The lecture was well paced, with Patrick taking care to define terms and explain concepts thoroughly and yet succinctly. His delivery style was clear and unrushed, and he seemed very comfortable in his role as lecturer.



Hunnicutt – POLS 177 Observation Notes – M21

POLS 177 is one of a handful of our cross-listed classes, in this case shared between the Environmental Studies major and Political Science. The can result in about half of the class coming to the work with little background in Political Science, which presents additional challenges for a new instructor. Patrick handled this well by making sure that any discipline-specific terms or concepts – for either major – were carefully and completely explained before moving on to any further analysis of the theory under discussion. I appreciated this, since one of the recurring student complaints we get with cross-listed courses can be that instructors assume foundational knowledge in Political Science, which even with our current prerequisite requirements, can be lacking. Moreover, since learning depends on context, this knowledge gap can both frustrate students as well as reduce learning outcomes. I am grateful to Patrick for his mindfulness about this reality, and his thoughtfulness in dealing with the (potential) problem.

Overall Patrick is doing a very fine job with this class from my perspective. He is a gifted lecturer, and much beyond what we could reasonably expect from a Teaching Associated at this point in their career. We are lucky to have his services as part of our Adjunct instructional team, and I am confident that he is capable to take on just about anything we might throw at him in the future.

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Alison G. Keleher, PhD
Undergraduate Program Coordinator

9/29/21

Cc: Personnel file; Vice Chair Norris; Faculty Mentor Professors Mildenberger; and Graduate Advisor Ahuja.



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