

Rachel Porter

Ph.D. Candidate

Email: rachsur@live.unc.edu

Phone: 678-982-9701

URL: rachelporter.org

Summary of Teaching Evaluations

I have served as the instructor-of-record for two different undergraduate courses. Additionally, I was a teaching assistant for large lecture-style classes where I led three weekly discussions sections (“recitations”) for about sixty students per semester.

Instructor-of-Record

- Data in Politics I (POLI 281) — Fall 2019, Spring 2020, Fall 2020
- Introduction to American Politics (POLI 100) — Spring 2019

Teaching Assistant

- Introduction to Comparative Politics (POLI 100) — Fall 2018
- Introduction to American Politics (POLI 100) — Fall 2017, Spring 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. Each question is answered on a 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) scale. Presented teaching assistant evaluations have been averaged across the three discussion (“recitation”) sections taught each semester. A selection of questions are presented in the tables below.

<i>Instructor-of-Record</i>	Average Score	Data in Politics I Spring 2020	Data in Politics I Fall 2019	Intro to American Spring 2019
Shows an enthusiasm for teaching	4.62	4.70	4.63	4.54
Promotes a climate of mutual respect	4.66	4.70	4.75	4.54
Encourages student questions	4.72	4.80	4.75	4.62
Encourages critical thinking	4.63	4.80	4.63	4.46
Promotes active student involvement	4.40	4.60	4.13	4.46
Is available when needed	4.70	4.90	4.50	4.69
Is well-prepared for instruction	4.64	4.67	4.63	4.62
Learned a great deal from this course	4.51	4.60	4.38	4.54
Overall, this instructor was excellent	4.51	4.70	4.38	4.46
Total Number of Students		30	31	30
% Reporting		33%	27%	42%

<i>Teaching Assistant</i>	Average Score	Intro to Comparative Fall 2018	Intro to American Spring 2018	Intro to American Fall 2017
Did a good job leading discussions	4.72	4.80	4.82	4.55
Was well-prepared for class	4.78	4.83	4.80	4.71
Displayed a mastery of material	4.74	4.76	4.89	4.58
Valued diversity & other perspectives	4.46	4.56	4.53	4.30
Learned a great deal from this course	4.51	4.52	4.40	4.46
Overall, this TA did an effective job	4.64	4.80	4.64	4.47
Overall, this TA was excellent	4.66	4.70	4.68	4.60
Total Number of Students		54	48	53
N by Recitation Section		(18, 18, 18)	(20, 8, 20)	(18, 17, 18)
% Reporting		35%	39%	42%

Summary of Open Responses

An open-ended response section asks students to offer feedback, suggestions for change, and any other comments on my performance as an instructor. A selection of responses are presented below:

Data in Politics I (POLI 281) — Instructor

Spring 2020

- I cannot speak more highly of Rachel. She is passionate, intelligent, and understanding. Her lectures are interesting and informative. She is available to answer any and all questions and she does so in a manner that is always helpful and never condescending. I felt very comfortable asking her for guidance throughout online learning and believe she is one of the best instructors I have had at UNC. She provided us with feedback, graded in a timely manner, and always made sure the course load was manageable for all students.
- Rachel was flexible, kind, and accessible as an instructor. Her goal was that she truly wanted the students to understand the material. She cared about how students were doing during the transition, not only with the class material, but the entire transition in general. She handled the transition to online learning incredibly well, and I felt like I didn't miss a second of class.
- Rachel is full of energy in class. This energized me as a student, she was a joy to learn from. She gives so much time to students in office hours and genuinely cares about our understanding of the material. I felt like I got a lot of individualized help when I needed it which incredibly increased the benefit I got from this course. I did not expect to like this course as much as I did, but Rachel made it great.
- Rachel was an excellent teacher. She taught the class by giving ample examples that made the material easy to digest and understand. She would step through confusing topics and ask for collaboration from the class to make sure we were learning the topics correctly. She held extensive office hours and would spend a lot of effort to make sure I understood the topics she was showing me. She never let an assignment go by without being explained, in full, after the due date. This made me feel comfortable that I was not missing topics.

- Rachel was by far the most effective professor I had during this semester. She upheld our schedule with classes and office hours but created a slightly more manageable course load for us. She taught us during live sessions but recorded them so we could view them later. She also was very available to zoom us individually with questions.
- Rachel was extremely helpful in the transition to online instruction. She remained very accessible for office hours both before and after the transition to online classes. She gave constant updates on the class, office hours, and assignments. There was never a moment where I did not understand the expectations for the course, and I always felt like I could reach out and get assistance from Rachel.

Fall 2019

- The content in the problem sets and projects were very hands on and the application from lecture was very clear and interesting.
- Always brings great energy to class, extremely available outside of the classroom, is understanding.
- Rachel was always available to meet with, helpful in reinforcing material outside of class during office hours, and knew how to teach the material so that everyone could understand.
- Rachel is really great at being approachable and giving reasonable and helpful feedback. She reminds us often to not get discouraged, which is super important in a difficult and challenging class like this one. I think she does a great job at knowing what pace to teach at, when a student is confused and doesn't want to show it, and is really great at being patient with those who need more explanation.
- This course was informative on the processes involved in data analytics within the political sphere. There were ample opportunities for success within the classroom while also learning about how to become involved outside the class.
- Rachel is a clear communicator, knowledgeable on the subject, and includes everyone in the class discussions.
- Rachel is clearly very knowledgeable about the subject of Data in Politics and she used helpful examples in class to help explain difficult topics.
- This course was well-designed to facilitate my learning R, through in-class assignments, working as a class, individual assignments, and PowerPoints. The idea of learning R was daunting to me, but Rachel made it attainable and accessible.
- Rachel created a very low stress environment for students and genuinely wanted us all to understand the material. She provided ample opportunities to visit her in office hours and get her feedback throughout the course

Introduction to American Politics (POLI 100; Spring 2019) — Instructor

- She did a phenomenal job of teaching a highly polarized political atmosphere from a neutral standpoint with a neutral agenda of topics to cover.
- Very engaging, highly interesting and motivated teacher. Made coming to class in the evening worth it because it was always interesting.
- Rachel is what made the course so much fun and actually worth coming to a late class.

- She is very enthusiastic about the topics she teaches in class. She also makes learning the material easy and enjoyable.
- Great professor who is engaging, enthusiastic, and accepting of her students and questions.
- She asks lots of questions and allows for lots of students bouncing ideas off the room.
- Always was there to help when I didn't understand concepts, good grader, good constructive feedback, very helpful. Somehow remained very politically neutral and sensitive despite it being a class about politics so kudos. Even when my questions were stupid as hell she never berated them.

Intro. to Comparative Politics (POLI 130; Fall 2018) — Teaching Assistant

- Rachel was AMAZING! Best TA I have had at Carolina. She presented all of the material very clearly and really engaged the class with thoughtful questions. This class was great in terms of the lecture but was made complete through the recitations led by Rachel.
- I think Rachel is wonderful. She is helpful, bright, and she relates well to the students and goes over concepts in ways which are helpful to me. She really does want each student to succeed. No negative comments at all!
- Rachel was one of the best instructors I have had at UNC, better than many professors. She made a topic I honestly have a hard time getting into very interesting and presented all information very clearly. She wanted us to understand the concepts and offered tons of knowledge on the topics.
- My TA, Rachel, was amazing. She was personable and knowledgeable of the course. She gave great examples in recitation to relate to the material.
- She is an excellent teacher, very knowledgeable, approachable, and great at conveying the information
- Love her teaching style! Perfect combination of class discussion/engagement and lecture and always helpful during office hours
- I loved having Rachel as a TA, she was very nice and super helpful and always lead great discussions in class and was always willing to help you if needed.

Introduction to American Politics (POLI 100) — Teaching Assistant

Spring 2018

- Honestly Rachel is one of my favorite TAs at UNC. Not only is she funny and engaging but she is more than willing to help. She relates very well to students and I really appreciate that. I always looked forward to attending recitation because I always learned something new.
- Enthusiasm for material and clarity were present. Very prepared and guided discussion very well. Honestly one of the best TAs I have had at Carolina even though I didn't enjoy the lecture. Keep doing you Rachel!
- Recitation was always interesting and I liked the paper topics because they weren't just boring research papers!
- Rachel was extremely passionate and knowledgeable about American government and it showed. Her excitement for the subject made the students more engaged in learning and more willing to contribute to the discussion. I thought that she presented the material in a way that

captured students' interests and made them curious about the subject. I feel like I genuinely learned a great deal from this class. The paper topics were unique and easy to write about, and more interesting than a regular academic essay.

- Keep doing what you are doing, I learned a lot and it was amazing.
- She is a very charismatic and happy person. Her positive attitude would definitely gear me up to participate in class.
- Rachel was a great TA! She was really relatable, led fruitful class discussions, gave positive feedback, and encouraged us all to think deeply about the subject matter. I felt like her grading standards were reasonable and her plan for the course played out very well.

Fall 2017

- Very nice, accessible, knowledgeable, discussions were interesting
- I love Rachel! I have so greatly been inspired by her expertise in the field of political science and the help she has offered me in office hours, both inside and out. I will miss her greatly and wish her the best of luck in her future.
- I thought that Rachel did a great job as the TA for this course, handling class discussions skillfully, even when the students did not want to participate. She was engaging, knowledgeable, helpful, and approachable. One of the best TA's I've had at Carolina, I would say.
- Great teaching associate. She was very engaged.
- Very good!! Learned a lot in my recitation and loved it!!
- I loved having Rachel as my TA, she made the recitation interesting and her lectures were always well prepared.
- You did an amazing job! You were always well prepared and extremely knowledgeable about the course material.