

Teaching Statement

My teaching philosophy echoes the values of liberal arts education. I place a high premium on developing the habits of learning as a way of life, critical thinking, and intellectual curiosity in students. To be able to succeed in encouraging these important intellectual skills, I continuously expand my personal knowledge on the subjects I teach and reflect on the ways in which they can be connected to students' experiences. I adjust my teaching methods to various learning styles and backgrounds, and show respect to the students and commitment to their success. What motivates me to teach is the concern for the intellectual and personal growth of every student.

During my tenure at the University of Kansas, I have taught courses on international relations, human rights, foreign policy analysis, international organization and law, Eurasian security, and Russian foreign policy. In the courses I teach, I employ a variety of instructional formats and techniques: active learning, collaborative learning, participatory engagement, reflective and critical writing, and teaching with technology. The application of diverse teaching strategies assists in simultaneously developing intellectual, practical, and moral sides of human personality responsible for learning. Among the instructional materials that I have developed throughout my teaching career are: *activist project*, an active learning technique that requires students to take an active part in a search of causes and solutions to a social problem; interactive curriculum based on *mini-simulations* and *role games*; *educational panels and debates*. In the graduate level courses, I have developed exercises that foster the skills and emulate the tasks performed by academics throughout their career. Graduate students work on the grant applications, practice oral examination, write a stand-alone literature review, and work on research designs for large empirical projects

I believe that methods of assessment must correspond to course objectives and teaching strategies. Since I target higher order thinking skills, I rely on those methods of assessment, which enhance student learning, cultivate interest in the subject, provide students with regular feedback, and are also fair to students with different learning styles. I have always used a backward instructional designed for the large class projects and developed evaluation rubrics, which serve to provide students with summative and formative feedback and also assist them in improving their performance on educational tasks. I have conducted experiments on rubrics as scoring tools and published results of those studies in peer-reviewed journals.

I have systematically received sufficiently high and positive students' evaluations. In their comments, students have lauded innovative assignments that I developed for my courses, expressed satisfaction with the learning process, and complemented me as a teacher. The end-of-semester evaluations are not the only feedback I collect in my classes. I seek students' comments on teaching and learning throughout the semester (in writing or in person). Thanks to this continuous feedback, I was able, for example, to intervene in group projects, identify obstacles to teams' work, and ensure success of students' collaboration. I have also been able to assist those students who experienced apprehension of public speaking or had other issues with assignments.

I have always tried to educate myself in the field of pedagogy and strengthen my teaching skills. I regularly attend workshops on teaching and learning, and peruse instructional materials and theory developed by others. I am engaged in a continuous self-

Mariya Y. Omelicheva
omeliche@ku.edu

assessment and self-reflection on my teaching practices. Before coming to KU, I completed coursework required by Purdue University for a teaching certificate and took a number of courses in psychology to learn cognitive theory for designing assignments that improve student learning. I have examined the effectiveness of my instructional techniques using experimental methodology and shared my knowledge of the best teaching strategies in my teaching publications.

I believe that my role as an educator should extend beyond the classroom. I have mentored undergraduate students through a variety of university-wide programs to facilitate their involvement in academic research. I have identified and shared the various professional opportunities for interested undergraduate students. I organized professionalization workshops and courses, and delivered talks on various aspects of teaching at the KU teaching summits. Through the participation in the Political Science department's "brown bag" colloquiums I helped the first- and second-year graduate students to learn about good research practices. I have also been a part of the series of talks and hands-on exercises designed to help graduate students to enhance, document, and present their teaching.