Peter F. Martelli  
Academic Teaching Statement  

Teaching Philosophy  

It is not enough for a professor to teach a particular method or the use of a specific tool without building capacity to reformulate problems and develop creative solutions. Consider the argument by way of two objections. A practical objection derives from the cybernetics literature: there can never be enough trained states to match the complex and unexpected nature of the environment. If we train a student simply to master process X, they will always lose out to newer process Y. An essential objection derives from the philosophy literature: our reason should not be instrumental in nature – that is, we should not simply use our capacities as means to an end, but rather we should try to understand the nature of the ends themselves and how we should transform the world accordingly. Or in other words, we should never allow students to lose the forest for the trees.

In applied terms, this value has several consequents. First, I think it is important to appreciate the perspective of the students, particularly those in introductory classes. What is this course about? Why am I taking it? How does it apply to my world? In the modern information context, courses taught as a laundry list of facts are of diminishing value. My goal as a teacher is for the student to complete the class with 1) a basic appreciation for the material, 2) the ability to identify and define problems using critical thinking skills, 3) a foundation for linking values to actions, and 4) a desire to understand the material in a broader interdisciplinary context. For the “requirement-taker,” it is important to show excitement in the material and to link individual units to key course principles. For the more advanced student, it is important to connect the material to core disciplinary knowledge, make analogies across disciplines, and introduce current research in the field. For all students, it is important to be approachable and encourage questions, to draw on current examples in the news and relevant personal experiences, and to assess them not merely on repetition of facts, but on their capacity to creatively apply the material throughout their careers.

Teaching Experience  

Because of the interdisciplinary nature of my field and my concentration in organizational behavior, my work is most closely aligned with the Management of Organizations group at the Haas School of Business at UC-Berkeley. For this reason, my formal teaching experience is derived from four management classes offered by faculty in this group. As a Graduate Student Instructor (GSI), my role was to support the faculty member in preparing syllabi, attending lectures, coordinating student groups, running discussion sections when applicable, writing and grading assignments and addressing student concerns. Discussion sections are the highlight of this work – a chance to teach and review material in a smaller, more interactive environment.
A full-semester course in Pedagogy prepared me in the basics of motivating students, using assessment and rubrics, teaching both quantitative and qualitative materials, teaching to verbal, graphical and kinesthetic learners, and identifying and supporting distressed students. An observation of my teaching followed by personalized feedback allowed me to improve time management, strengthen non-verbal cues and promote feedback and interactivity. Based on my work in Pedagogy, I learned to tailor my style to the nature of the material, the design of the discussion section and the preferences of the class. For instance, to address the structural problems posed by a discussion session taking place from 8:00-9:30am in a theater-style classroom of nearly 40 students, I solicited feedback from students and applied concepts from Pedagogy. The solutions included reducing long stretches of lecture review by posting slides in advance, incorporating brief discussions between students, and presenting short, often humorous videos to illustrate concepts and encourage responses.

At the undergraduate level, I taught UGBA 105: “Introduction to Organizational Behavior” twice, with two senior faculty members in the School of Business. In total, I was responsible for five discussion sessions and 218 students. Students in this class are principally lower-division business majors who take this class as a core requirement. However, in a poll of my first discussion section, I discovered that students came from a wide range of majors, that the course was also a core requirement for the Nutrition major, and that I had several returning and transfer students – further emphasizing the need to build a strong foundation and to teach to a variety of learning styles. Assignments included weekly readings and case studies posted online, take-home midterm and final essays, and a paper based on a semester-long “management consulting”-style project, in which groups of 4-5 students studied and evaluated actual local organizations using the concepts and tools learned in class. In addition to basic GSI functions, it was essential that I be available and approachable to discuss project issues ranging from unclear class material, to difficult intra-group dynamics, to the problems of interacting with real businesses.

At the graduate level, I was a GSI for two required Evening and Weekend MBA classes: Ethics & Responsibility in Business and Leadership. By chance, each of these classes was taught with a visiting faculty member from the Kellogg School of Business at Northwestern University. Students in these classes are early- to mid-career professionals, many of whom are in managerial roles at Silicon Valley biotech and computing companies. Assignments included weekly readings and case studies, short papers such as leadership development exercises and reading reflection papers, and a final exam, which was either administered as an individual take-home exam in the case of Ethics or as a structured group paper and presentation in the case of Leadership. In these classes, my role was to support the faculty member during classes, take note of level and depth of student participation, and grade coursework for a total of 248 students with very quick turnaround time.

**Future Goals for Teaching**

I enjoy teaching and look forward to mentoring students in my professorial career. Showing concern for students and inspiring them to explore their world can have a profound effect on their academic and personal development. As an undergraduate, the care and passion of a few professors – and the relative thoughtlessness of others – led me to explore new subjects and
ultimately to change my major, my adviser and my life trajectory for the better. These great mentors serve as models for how I try to interact with my students. Furthermore, thoughtful mentoring can also be of lasting benefit not only to the student, but also to the faculty. Students often bring fresh perspectives to the material and engage the fundamental questions that may be overlooked in day-to-day research. Especially in the interdisciplinary context, new perspectives and fundamental questions are crucial to the creative combination of ideas across academic levels and disciplinary boundaries. For both reasons, I plan for mentoring relationships to be a critical part of my future academic life.

I am ready immediately to teach introductory survey courses on organizational behavior and management, with units on the social psychology, sociology and political science of organizational life. These courses can easily incorporate units on management, leadership, strategy and evaluation in healthcare organizations and environments. Given my research interests, I also look forward to developing graduate-level seminar courses on evidence-based management and translating research into practice, and on approaches to risk and reliability in organizations, with a possible focus on safety and quality in the healthcare setting.

Teacher Ratings

Ratings are only available for the undergraduate courses. The table below summarizes student responses to “Considering the nature of this course, how would you describe/rate the graduate student instructor?” The scale for the first two questions is 1(not at all descriptive) to 5 (very descriptive); the scale for the third question is 1(not at all effective) to 7 (extremely effective).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UGBA 105: Introduction to Organizational Behavior</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>Total Survey Response</th>
<th>GSI Mean</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Well-prepared and organized</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>95 / 144</td>
<td>4.83 / 5</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Self-confident, thorough knowledge</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>95 / 144</td>
<td>4.73 / 5</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Overall effectiveness</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>94 / 144</td>
<td>6.05 / 7</td>
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<tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>4.71 / 5</td>
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<td>Self-confident, thorough knowledge</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>30 / 74</td>
<td>4.37 / 5</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>31 / 74</td>
<td>5.55 / 7</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Sample comments (see also following pages):

- “Helped bring theory-intensive topics to practicality”
- “GSI knew his material and [was] genuinely passionate about it”
- “Great teacher, will be a great prof someday”
- “He seems really approachable, so I’m never afraid to ask questions. He listens to student concerns too.”
- “Peter was one of the best GSI’s that I’ve had at Cal [UC-Berkeley]. He was always well-prepared and very helpful outside of class. He also seemed to enjoy what he was teaching, which made it more enjoyable to learn.”
COMMENTS: discussion section
graduate student instructor's teaching

Helped bring the theory-intensive topics to practicality

GSI knew his material and genuinely passionate about it

great teacher, will be a great prof someday

Enthusiastic style and down-to-earth
Very bright but humble
Confident with material and himself

Peter was one of the best GSIs that I've had at Cal. He was always well-prepared and very helpful outside of class. He also seemed to enjoy what he was teaching, which made it more enjoyable to learn.

He seems really approachable, so I'm never afraid to ask questions. He listens to student concerns too.

I think stories from personal experience and research are the most enlightening and interesting.

Thanks Peter!

Martelli, PF: Teaching File
Peter -

You're awesome! I like that you listen to our concerns and actually take the time to ask. Also, you're really chill and not uptight, which is cool 😊

Peter, I genuinely think you're doing a great job.

I love this section. Your review is really helpful to understand the lecture.

Peter,

I really like this class. Up to know I was not familiar with this kind of discussion sessions and I love them. Back home in Mexico City, GSI's are not nice at all and you are a very approachable guy.

Thanks for all,

Easy to approach! 😊
Makes it comfortable to ask questions, comment, etc.

Very interesting discussions, which included many personal stories/experiences to illustrate the week's topic. Very personal and engaging atmosphere.