

Teaching Statement

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When I was a senior in high school, I started taking classes at my nearby satellite campus of a larger state university. I was a first-generation student, and through this experience, I realized how powerful and important the college classroom was. After completing those courses, my professional aspirations became to teach at the collegiate level. However, upon starting my 4-year program the following year, I quickly learned the unique challenges first-generation students face while navigating higher education. This experience shaped my teaching and classroom organization today, leading me to build courses that will be accessible to students from a range of backgrounds while still maintaining the rigor associated with a college class.

After receiving my undergraduate degree, I began pursuing my PhD in sociology at Indiana University. One reason I chose Indiana University was because of its focus and dedication to pedagogical training, something that I have taken full advantage of in my time here. My experience in the classroom includes a variety of courses and class sizes, including serving as a teaching assistant (*Introduction to Sociology*, *Sociology of Gender*), a lab instructor (*Statistics for Sociology*), co-instructor of a graduate-level pedagogical training course (*Teaching Undergraduate Sociology*), and instructor of record for *Sociology of Families* for both in-person and online versions of the course ranging from 45-76 students. Additionally, in my time at Indiana University, I have received several teaching affiliated awards, including serving as the Preparing Future Faculty Fellow. This role is given to an experienced graduate student instructor and incorporates both training new graduate student instructors and planning a university-wide conference focused on graduate student career preparation. While my teaching experience has been at a large state university, my undergraduate education was completed at a liberal arts college, giving me a variety of classroom experiences to draw from in my own instruction.

Classroom Teaching Philosophy

My teaching philosophy is built around three core tenets: 1.) designing courses that are accessible to students from various backgrounds while maintaining rigor; 2.) building connections between the sociology classroom and everyday life, encouraging students to apply what is learned in class to their own lives, careers, and experiences; and 3.) centering data and research literacy in my courses, encouraging students to build these skills throughout the curriculum.

As discussed above, accessibility and approachability are key components of my teaching philosophy. I share my first-generation experience with students early on to help create an environment where they can feel comfortable coming to me for guidance in the course and navigating higher education more broadly. Additionally, I work to build flexibility and choice into courses without sacrificing the rigor associated with the assignments. In my course on families, students are assigned response papers that are due on a rolling deadline. This allows students to engage more deeply with topics that interest them while accommodating different schedules as well. Additionally, I give students the choice between responding to readings or audio-visual materials, providing options for a variety of learners.

The second goal in the course is for students to think about how families both influence and are influenced by society. In my course on the sociology of families, my students come in with a wide variety of majors, and for many, this may be the only class in which they examine

how families both shape and are shaped by broader social institutions and systems of inequality. To help students understand this, I have designed assignments that encourage students to connect course concepts to experiences outside of the classroom. This includes the response papers discussed above, as well as a more formal application paper in which they apply course concepts to either their own life or a TV show or movie. This assignment encourages students to apply sociological concepts beyond the classroom, and students have expressed how this assignment has led them to reflect on their own family life or the media they consume, such as this comment from one course evaluation: “it was a perfect mean to explore concepts of the course and connect it to my personal life.”

The third central goal in my courses is to encourage data and research literacy. In my undergraduate statistics lab, students would often ask how this was applicable outside of the course. While students may not regularly calculate statistical tests after the class, they will interact with statistical claims throughout their lives, including on the news, social media, and in the workplace. I emphasize these skills not only in my statistics course, but also in all classes. In *Sociology of Families*, students interpret charts and graphs and develop a stronger understanding of research design through discussions and activities. For example, I have integrated an activity that involves students analyzing qualitative data taken from a sociological study to better understand the motivation behind the choice to cohabitate. Overall, by incorporating activities such as this, I aim for students to leave with the ability to critically engage with data and statistical claims in a variety of contexts.

Commitment to Mentorship

Mentorship is a central component of my identity as an educator. As a first-generation student myself, I would not be where I am today without those who helped guide me through the process, and because of this, I strive to provide the same support to my students. In addition to my classroom teaching, I have had the privilege to work with several undergraduate research assistants during the spring of 2026. Through assisting with qualitative data cleaning, these students were able to gain firsthand experience in the data collection process and identifying emerging themes. Additionally, I gained insight into how I could continue to incorporate undergraduate students into research going forward.

I have also supported graduate students, both as a co-instructor for a graduate-level course, as well as a mentor. I was the co-instructor for *Teaching Undergraduate Sociology*, a course for first time graduate instructors, during my time as the Preparing Future Faculty Fellow. During this course, I provided support and feedback for graduate students teaching their own course for the first time. Furthermore, I have worked with the 2025-2026 first-year graduate student cohort in a formal advising capacity, giving feedback on the theory and methods chosen for their master’s theses. Finally, I served as a graduate student mentor, providing peer mentorship for first-year sociology students, for the IU Sociology Department from 2022-2025. Together, my experiences mentoring both undergraduate and graduate students illustrate my commitment to education accessibility and building academic confidence among all students.

Pedagogical Training and Honors

My commitment to teaching has led me to pursue several opportunities for pedagogical development. I have been deeply involved with the Preparing Future Faculty (PFF) program in the Indiana University Department of Sociology. As part of this program, I have completed a three-course pedagogical sequence resulting in a Preparing Future Faculty Certificate and a

working manuscript contributing to the science of teaching and learning. After completing this sequence, I received the Preparing Future Faculty Fellowship (2024–2025), a university-wide honor granted to only one graduate student per year. Along with co-teaching *Teaching Undergraduate Sociology*, I also organized the 30th Indiana University Preparing Future Faculty Conference during my fellowship year. This conference is a day long, university-wide conference focused on providing graduate students resources to prepare them for future careers in academia. It is attended by roughly 150 graduate students a year and covers topics such as different types of academic positions and institutions, pedagogical training, and job market advice. While I was committee chair from 2024-2025, I have also served on the planning committee more broadly since 2022. These opportunities to not only participate in this program, but to also become a leader in it, have helped me develop as a teacher and a scholar more broadly. Beyond the PFF program, I completed the Associate-Level certificate of the Graduate Teaching Apprenticeship Program through the Indiana University Center of Innovative Teaching and Learning at Indiana University. My dedication to instructional excellence is recognized by multiple teaching honors. At the departmental level, I was awarded the Sutherland Teaching Award and Stewart Family Scholarship/Kruse Fellowship, highest honors given annually to one graduate student based on teaching excellence. At the national level, I received the Keith Roberts Teaching Innovation Award from SAGE Publishing.

To complement my university training, I have actively pursued external opportunities for professional development. I completed the Preparing Future Faculty Certificate through the North Central Sociological Association. Additionally, I have been actively involved in the American Sociological Association's section on Teaching and Learning, participating in the ASA Teaching and Learning Preconference over the past four years, and serving on its planning committee since 2023. Beyond formal training, I have also sought opportunities to contribute pedagogical resources to the discipline. This includes my research collaborators and I translating our research into a classroom activity for submission to the American Sociological Association Teaching Resources and Innovations Library for Sociology (TRAILS).

Teaching Interests

While my teaching experience so far has focused on families, statistics, and pedagogy, my extensive training in substantive topics, research methods, and theory has prepared me to contribute to several courses in the undergraduate sociology curriculum. These include potential courses such as *Introduction to Sociology*, *Research Methods*, *Sociological Theory*, *Sociology of Gender*, and *Sociology of Work and Occupations*, in addition to courses I have experience in previously (*Sociology of Families* and *Statistics in Sociology*). I am also interested in developing interdisciplinary courses, including courses that draw on my undergraduate background in theatre to explore sociological themes through performance and media. At the graduate level, I would be comfortable teaching pedagogy, as well as courses in my substantive areas of family, gender, and work.

Regardless of the topic or level of the course I teach, I am confident that I can balance accessibility and rigor, creating classrooms where students feel supported as they engage with new topics. Given my own experience as a first-generation student, I am especially attentive to the challenges students may face navigating the academic system. In my courses, I work to create an environment where all students can build both sociological knowledge and develop skills that extend beyond the classroom.

Summary of Teaching Evaluations (% Positive)

SOC 316: Sociology of Families				
	Fall 2022 (N=45)	Spring 2023 (N=42)	Fall 2023 (N=39)	Spring 2024 (N=37)
Course¹				
Overall Course Evaluation	89%	98%	100%	100%
Instructor's Teaching Effectiveness	96%	100%	100%	100%
Lecture Material	91%	100%	100%	97%
Organization of the Course	95%	100%	100%	100%
Instructor²				
Instructor is knowledgeable	98%	98%	100%	100%
Instructor is enthusiastic	95%	100%	100%	100%
Instructor explains Subject Clearly	96%	98%	100%	100%
	SOC 316 (Online)	SOC 371 Stat Lab	SOC 316 (Online)	
	Summer 2025 (N=43)	Fall 2025 (N=17)	Summer 2026 (N=21)	
Course¹				
Overall Course Evaluation	100%	88%	100%	
Instructor's Teaching Effectiveness	97%	88%	100%	
Lecture Material	98%	88%	100%	
Organization of the Course	98%	88%	100%	
Instructor²				
Instructor is knowledgeable	100%	94%	100%	
Instructor is enthusiastic	100%	100%	100%	
Instructor explains Subject Clearly	100%	94%	100%	

Notes: (1) Percent of students reported "excellent" or "good" (categories are excellent, good, satisfactory, fair, and poor); (2) Percent of students reported "great deal" or "quite a bit" (categories are great deal, quite a bit, moderate amount, little, and almost nothing).