My approach to teaching combines best practices from my own educational experiences at Florida A&M University and Syracuse in three ways. First, I create a learning environment that is theoretically grounded and connected to the political science of our everyday lives. Second, I work to develop each student's ability to think critically while encouraging development of their voice as writers and citizens. Third, I actively promote a sense of civic duty. The idea that all people, especially political science students, should be active in the political process is a consistent theme in my classes. My assignments incentivize direct political participation like writing to elected officials, registering to vote, and talking to loved ones about politics. I know that the effects of my appeals will vary across students. However, I hope that each student leaves the class more excited and thoughtful about politics than they were before we met.

Students' comments are generally positive concerning my teaching style, fairness of evaluation, and accessibility. Many of my teaching evaluations from Howard University are unavailable. However, I have consistently earned ratings that exceed the overall average of the College of Arts & Science in the ones that are available. My teaching has garnered two teaching award nominations and one award. In the spring of 2018, the Howard University College of Arts & Sciences awarded me the distinction of Outstanding Assistant Professor in Social Sciences Division. I am currently nominated for 2019 Female HBCU Professor of the Year by HBCU Digest.

In my time as an assistant professor, I have contributed to the curricular needs of the Howard University department of political science and broader community through the following classes:

POLS011: Undergraduate-Level State & Local Government is among the largest classes taught by a tenure-track or tenured professor in the department of political science at Howard University. I recently finished my tenth iteration of this course, which is listed as part of the general education curriculum for students in the College of Arts & Sciences and the School of Communications. The course attracts students from across the campus, including Political Science majors and many non-majors. I have been careful to keep the course material and learning experience fresh over the past five years my making edits to my syllabus that account for current events and feedback from students. I currently convey course content through a combination of recorded online lectures, in-class discussions, and written assignments that cover the foundations of state and local government and the application of key concepts. The course has been well received by students. In evaluations of the course, students have given an average score of 4.6 out of 5 to the prompt, "Overall, this course was excellent."

Toward the goal of making politics attainable for all students, I frequently use current events to explain theory to my students. Following 2018's Tropical Storm Gordon, I taught federalism in the context of federal, state, and local government responses to natural disasters. Students were required to find the emergency management plan for their hometowns and comment on whether they believed the plan was feasible. To demonstrate the differences between primary election types, my State & Local Government class includes in a mock election where students decide which hip-hop artist is best suited for political office. During that activity, students come to understand the consequences of open versus closed primaries by witnessing the different outcomes of the elections.

I bring the outside world into my classroom by using various forms of media in my syllabus and inviting speakers to class. For example, in the fall of 2017, I began a state & local government speaker's series. The speaker's series is unfunded. However, Howard University's location in Washington, DC and reputation as home to some of the greatest young Black minds in the nation make it possible to recruit speakers who are willing to freely give of their time for our students. The inaugural series featured a diversity of speakers from Maryland, Florida, Texas, Michigan, and Washington, DC. The 2018 series focused on the political work of Black women and was named for the late Michigan State senator, Cora Mae Brown. The Cora Mae Brown Lecture Series was highlighted by the Howard University Newsroom as well as APSA's Political Science Now. The fall 2019 series is titled "Young, Gifted & Black" and will focus on individuals who began careers in politics as young people. Students have enjoyed the speaker series component of the class. In one course evaluation, a student wrote "She also had a speaker series which was really enjoyable. I learned a lot in her class and it has even made me consider going into politics."

To address my goals for critical thinking, I spend time during each semester teaching strategies for critical reading and discussing knowledge production. At least once each semester, I work with undergraduate students to read a journal article and have them think through the ways to reshape or extend its findings. In my discussion of political participation, I have the students read, assess, and revise King's *Letter from a Birmingham Jail* for use in our current political environment. I also work to make sure students are informed and critical consumers of real-life political information. For example, students compared the 2018 Gubernatorial campaign promises of Florida and Maryland to the state constitutions to determine whether the candidates would be able to deliver on their campaign promises.

Each fall section of POLS011 has capacity for 100 students, while the spring course serves 40 students. Because I do not have a teaching assistant, I engage multiple strategies for managing the large lectures. For example, I rely on BlackBoard to administer course examinations. I communicate with students via traditional methods of email and office hours, but I also engage Twitter (#HUPOLS011 and #POLS011) and GroupMe to ensure that students can reach me with questions. I use Tegrity software to make the course lectures available online and via iTunes so that students can study at their own pace. PollEverywhere software allows me to check students' learning and conduct real-time surveys about students' opinion on political issues. To manage student participation in our speakers' series, I require students to write three questions for each of speaker and to submit those questions in person when a speaker attends class.

The spring section of POLS011 is a hybrid lecture, and I allow the students to divide themselves into two sections. Section A is a flipped lecture course. Similar to the fall section of the course, students listen to the course lectures online and come into class for activities that further their understanding of the material. Section B of the course is a research section, which allows students to work with me to produce a research proposal on a topic in state & local government. In the spring of 2019, the research topic was Black migration and politics. Students went through the process of developing a narrow research question, finding relevant literature, thinking through a method for answering their question, and writing about their expectations for their research. Two of the students decided to transition their paper for the semester into their honors thesis.

I taught **POLS010: Undergraduate-Level National Government of the United States** in the fall of 2014 and the spring of 2015, with an average class size of 45 students. Howard University was unable to provide course evaluations for this POLS010.

This course included a mix of practical and theory-based learning. At the beginning of both semesters, I assigned students a member of the Congressional Black Caucus whose work they had to follow for the duration of the semester. At the end of the semester, they were responsible to submit a "practical assignment" in the form of a 3-page report about the viability of re-election for their House member. They were responsible to provide a recommendation to the DCCC about the appropriate level of campaign funding for their member based on the member's ability to navigate "the two Congresses," the member's electoral chances, and other factors. For their theory-based learning assignment, students were required to read a scholarly article and provide critical feedback to the author in the form of a concept paper. Toward the goal of helping them develop their own voice, I also asked students to provide a competing argument or extend the author's argument by writing one of their own.

I taught **POLS001: Undergraduate-Level Introduction to Political Science** for the first time in the spring of 2019, with a class of 37 students. The School of Business re-wrote their curriculum to make the class among its highly suggested electives. Therefore, 35 of my 37 students were business majors. The class was highly rated by the students. Responding to two prompts, "Overall, this course was excellent" and "Overall, this professor was excellent" students gave a rating of 4.7 out of five for each. One of the students wrote that the element of the course that most contributed to their learning was, "having actual discussions instead of being taught at."

I brought my standing commitment to the balance of practice and theory to my POLS001-Introduction to Political Science course. However, because the course included just one political science major, I had to be very careful and thoughtful about how I taught big ideas in political science. Therefore, I departed from my usual online lectures to conduct in-person lectures on political science theory and methods. When our semester began, the federal government was in the midst of a partial shutdown. As I was answering questions about the shutdown, it occurred to me that many of the students did not have basic political knowledge. In response, I changed the course structure to include a "politics in real life" component. Students were able to ask foundational questions about the inner-workings of American government at the national, state, and local level. To the extent possible, I included "real-world" examples in my lectures on the major theories that guide the discipline. I also allowed furloughed federal employees to visit the class and talk about their work for the government. [We hosted two employees of the Department of State, who talked about their work as diplomats](#).

I taught nine students in **POLS151: Undergraduate-Level Internship II** during the spring of 2015. I re-worked the previous department syllabi to add readings including topics like work etiquette, establishing an online presence, negotiating a first salary, and workplace ethics. Although students were supposed to secure their own internships, our department did not have an internship coordinator. I helped some students secure internships by leveraging my relationships with political organizations in the Washington area. Those assignments included placements in the following organizations: People For the American Way Foundation, The U.S. House

Committee on Homeland Security, and The Congressional Black Caucus Foundation. Finally, I changed the nature of assessment for the internship class to include a portfolio that students could use later to engaged with potential employers about their work history and experience.

<u>Graduate courses</u>
My goal in my graduate courses is to ensure that my students are familiar with the literature and debates in American politics and public administration. Further, I try to ensure that they are prepared to excel in their chosen professions after graduation. Most students in our department's graduate program are part-time students at Howard and full-time employees at a government agencies or other political organizations. I work to organize my classes so that our MA students leave with the ability to apply theory to their work. For the PhD students in our program, my goal is to prepare them for careers as scholars by pushing them to use what they have learned to make new and interesting arguments that will become new and interesting contributions to the literature and practice. My course assessments include a combination of critical writing assignments, paper proposals, and mock comprehensive exam questions.

In my time at Howard, I have been responsible for three graduate-level courses: **POLS203-State & Local Government and Politics**; **POLS229- Graduate Urban Government and Politics; POLS220- Graduate Intergovernmental Relations; and POLS294- Graduate Select Topics in American Gov't: Realignment.** My approach to teaching and assessment in these courses varies based on the composition of the course and on the literature. For example, most of the students in the spring 2018 section of POLS203-State & Local Government and Politics were masters-level students. Therefore, I adapted my assessment plans for the course so that students produced a mock-comprehensive exam. The fall 2016 section of Intergovernmental Relations was mostly PhD students. Therefore, I required that they complete a research proposal for a question they had based on one set of readings in the syllabus.

I love to teach. As a result, I bring many things into each classroom I enter. I bring enthusiasm and passion for the subject matter. I bring respect for the students as individuals with valuable insights and backgrounds. I bring high expectations and confidence that all students will learn and grow through their participation in my class. I bring diligence and willingness to keep pushing until each student understands the work and gets what they came for.