

## Teaching Statement

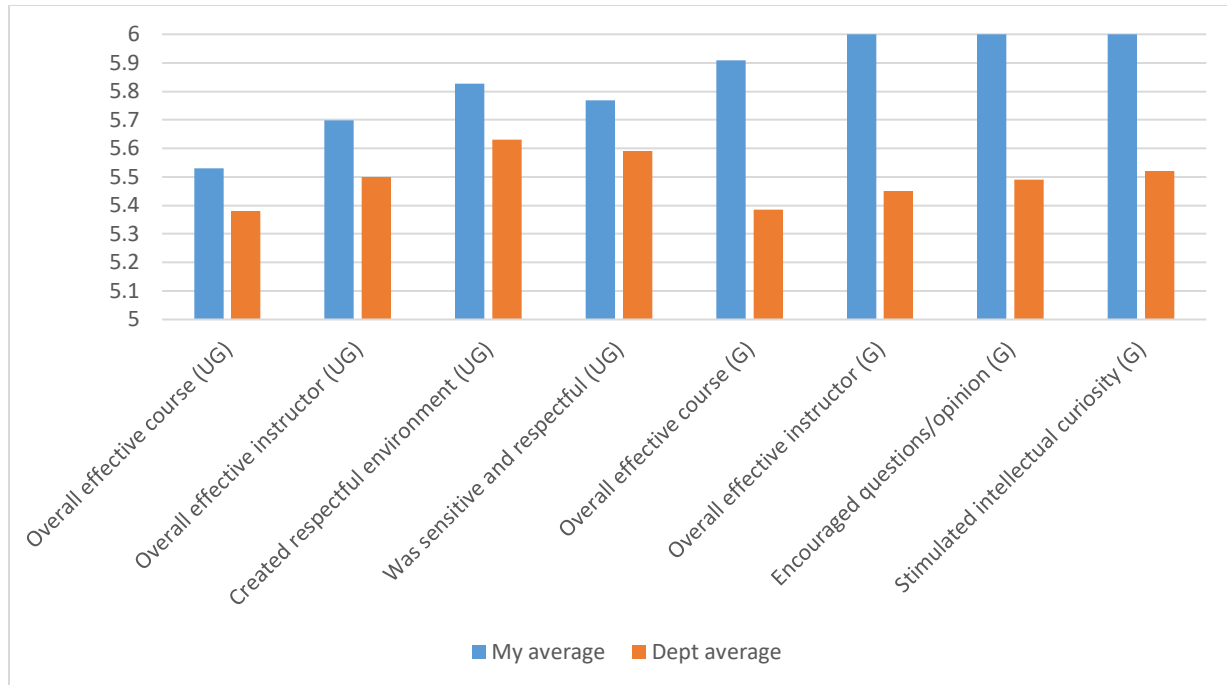
**Undergraduate Course Instruction.** Humans are inherently social beings, and to be human is to have natural curiosity about people. As a teacher, my goal is to capitalize on this curiosity by demonstrating to students that psychology provides a scientific way to satiate their desire to understand why people behave in the ways that they do. I promote a holistic approach to fostering students' intellectual growth and personal development. My courses are designed to encourage students to apply learned concepts to better understand themselves, the world around them, and controversial social issues. Moreover, I have designed my courses to teach students how to speak about polarizing social issues in an informed, intellectually humble, and respectful way. To date, I have taught five offerings of Cross-Cultural Psychology (PSY 3450) and an undergraduate honors seminar in Social Cognition (PSY 4963). Based on the success of PSY 4963, I developed a new course, Social Cognition (PSY 3415), which has now become a core course for the undergraduate psychology major.

In all of my undergraduate courses, I engage students across all levels of preparation by providing scaffolded assignments that vary in difficulty. First, students participate in weekly Canvas Discussion Boards that prompt them to connect the course material to their personal lives or current events. Second, on Discussion Boards, I require that students respond to prompts *and* reply to posts by classmates. By doing so, I leverage the diversity within the classroom and increase students' exposure to different and diverging perspectives. Third, I provide extensive supplementary material on Canvas for advanced students seeking to dive deeper into the course material. These resources include news articles about relevant current events, academic podcasts and blog entries, and peer-reviewed scientific articles. I have consistently earned high ratings for teaching effectiveness in undergraduate courses (see Fig. 1).

My most extensive teaching experience is Cross-Cultural Psychology. I have taught this course both in-person and online (asynchronous). One method that I use to facilitate students' learning and application of course material is through highly interactive activities. For example, in Fall 2018, I collaborated with Prof. Kim Bowen (University of Utah Asia Campus) to combine our PSY 3450 courses in one Canvas Discussion Board where we prompted students to exchange questions and answers, facilitating a genuine cross-cultural exchange that capitalizes on the University's global infrastructure. Another assignment asked students to interview one of their parents or guardians about the cultural values and principles that guided their upbringing and to reflect on the answers in light of course concepts (e.g., individualism vs. collectivism). These assignments facilitate students' ability to reflect on the course concepts deeply and to discover how these concepts apply in their own and others' lives.

Furthermore, I do not shy away from controversial or polarizing topics in the classroom; instead I embrace them as opportunities to teach students how to approach these topics deliberately and scientifically. At the same time, I emphasize the importance of respectful behavior in all aspects of educational activities and classroom conduct. I have devised specific teaching strategies to create a learning environment of intellectual empathy and respect. As one example, in the *Racism in the U.S.* unit, I discuss the psychological origins of intergroup biases. I explain the underlying reasons that humans have a natural tendency for ingroup favoritism (because coalition-building psychology serves positive functions) and that modern biases co-opt these

psychological tendencies in ways that can be relatively harmless (e.g., sports fans) or very harmful (e.g., terrorist organizations). I underscore that no one is immune to these tendencies, whether in the domain of race, politics, or other social identities. Building on these ideas, in the *Morality and Religion* unit, I assign a “Moral Humility” exercise in which I challenge students to write about a moral issue (e.g., abortion, gun control) and to use concepts learned in class to explain why someone on the *opposite side of the issue* could believe that their point of view is the “right” one. Using these strategies and activities, I have consistently earned high student ratings for creating a respectful learning environment (Fig. 1).



**Figure 1.** My average student evaluations across undergraduate (UG;  $n = 116$ ) and graduate (G;  $n = 13$ ) courses taught at Utah, compared to Psychology Department averages. Ratings can range from 1 to 6.

**Graduate Course Instruction.** I have taught two graduate seminars in Intergroup Relations (PSY 7963 & 7964). I seek to provide students with a broad survey of the field, with an emphasis on contemporary research topics and cutting-edge methods that I put in context of historical perspectives and theories. In addition to carefully curating the reading list and using discussion-based instruction, I assign students a secondary data analysis project, the Implicit Bias Project. By completing this assignment, students are able to apply and sharpen their data analysis skills while investigating a question related to their own research interests.

The Implicit Bias Project requires students to formulate a research question that is testable using one of the many [publicly available datasets](#) on implicit bias posted by Project Implicit. Since 1998, Project Implicit has collected millions of data points on people’s implicit biases, and they make their anonymized datasets available online. For the Implicit Bias Project, students must select a specific implicit bias (IAT version), formulate a research question, and conduct analyses on the data to answer it. One student in my Fall 2016 seminar, Michelle Chambers, completed an assignment that

began a full-fledged research project. This project was ultimately published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* (Ofosu, Chambers, Chen, & Hehman, 2019) and received the 2020 Gordon Allport Intergroup Relations Prize from the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues, an award that is given to “*the best paper or article of the year on intergroup relations.*”

**Mentoring of Student Researchers.** As a research supervisor, my goal is to discover the unique talents and motivations of each student and to support their professional growth. With my graduate students, my ultimate goal is to provide professional socialization and cultivate their research independence. I schedule weekly meetings with my early career students in order to provide consistent guidance and feedback. As students advance, I provide numerous opportunities for professional growth through undergraduate mentoring and leadership roles in research. I am currently primary advisor to four doctoral students, all of whom are on track in their progress to degree. My most senior student is expected to graduate in Summer 2021, having received a tenure-track job offer. To date, I have published 10 peer-reviewed articles with graduate students across our department and the Department of Management.

I am particularly motivated to support underrepresented minority students throughout the pipeline in order to increase diversity in academia. I have carefully created an inclusive lab community for undergraduate and graduate trainees. I organize a biweekly lab meeting in which we discuss ongoing projects and provide feedback in a constructive and friendly climate. The meeting is attended by my graduate students, graduate students with shared research interests from other labs and departments, and my undergraduate honors students and research assistants. Prior to COVID-19, I sponsored a lab lunch every semester to celebrate students' achievements.

I am proud that my commitment to diversity and inclusion has attracted many students from underrepresented backgrounds to my lab. To date, I have supervised nine undergraduate research projects at Utah (16 in total), including three honors thesis projects (eight in total). Of these, four students' projects resulted in poster presentations at national academic conventions. Furthermore, 62% of these students were underrepresented racial/ethnic minorities and 37.5% were sexual orientation or gender identity minorities.<sup>1</sup> In total, I have supervised over 38 undergraduate research assistants at Utah (55 overall).

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<sup>1</sup> For comparison, the University undergraduate population is composed of approximately 35% students of color and less than 1% students who are gender non-binary. (Sexual orientation demographics were unavailable.)