

## Teaching Statement

Samantha Moore-Berg, Ph.D.

My teaching philosophy focuses on three themes: (1) I structure each course in a way that allows students to grasp the course's real-world relevance in addition to its fundamental concepts; (2) I empower students by making the learning environment accessible for all students; and (3) I provide continued mentorship to my students. Accordingly, I strive to create an intellectually stimulating learning environment to captivate students while in the classroom and to provide students with the skills necessary to achieve productive lives.

Students more eagerly engage with course materials when they realize that the lectures, discussions, readings, and assignments are directly relevant to their academic and personal goals. Therefore, **I structure each course in a way that allows students to grasp the course's real-world relevance in addition to its fundamental concepts.** I take extra care when designing my coursework to ensure that I incorporate real world examples to elucidate fundamental concepts. For example, as I develop the honors seminar on *The Psychology of Peace and Conflict* for Spring 2025, I am supplementing scientific readings with non-academic articles, such as articles from the *New York Times*, to highlight material relevance. As I design my lectures, I am integrating real-life examples when discussing complicated concepts to help elucidate key points. Further, I also incorporate many examples and exercises in my lecture that make dense material more manageable and relevant. For example, when teaching *Social Psychology* in Fall 2023, I actively worked to provide additional resources when teaching the complex material. I uploaded practice questions online so that students could review newly learned concepts, and I showed videos that provided real world supporting content through an interesting medium.

**I promote accessible learning environments and strive empower all students in my course.** At the beginning of every semester, I explain to the students that the classroom is a place of respect. On the first day of class, I provide students with the opportunity to introduce themselves and their preferred pronouns. As class discussions unfold, I provide thought-provoking questions that encourage conversation. I also make a concerted effort to make safe spaces for students. If conversation gets heated, I work to ensure that each student's voice is heard in a respectful manner. There have been several instances throughout my teaching career when I had the opportunity to moderate passionate class discussions. For example, while teaching my newly developed graduate seminar on *Political Psychology*, different opinions emerged regarding the roots of political polarization. It is my role as educator to educate students on the theoretical foundations of polarization while still maintaining a safe space for all students to participate.

In addition to teaching, **I provide continued mentorship to students.** At the University of Utah, I have sought the opportunity to mentor 6 graduate students, including two as primary advisor and two as secondary advisor, and I plan to open my lab to undergraduate students this fall. My approach to mentoring researchers is like my approach to teaching. I actively work to highlight the strengths of students and to help students overcome barriers to success by taking a hands-on mentoring approach. I work closely with my students to ensure that they learn the fundamental components of research and then help them discover how research is relevant to their immediate and long-term goals. My objective is to teach them the skills necessary for independent research—such as how to form research questions and hypotheses, how to conduct statistical analyses, and how to write a research paper—and then guide them through hands-on research practice. For more advanced researchers, I foster a collaborative environment in which I provide mentorship when necessary but also take a step back when they are able to master tasks on their own. Importantly, my role as a mentor and educator does not end when the course is over or when my students leave the lab. It is one of my top priorities to continue to provide mentorship to my students no matter how long ago I worked with them. It brings me great joy to stay in touch with my students to continue to help them succeed.