

Teaching Statement

Lauren Benditt

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Teaching philosophy: As a teacher, I help students understand how the inferential techniques of our field can illuminate the labyrinthine real-world puzzles that drew me and so many others to sociology. In undergraduate courses, I emphasize the ways in which sociological theory can make sense of the world that students encounter in the newspaper and in their everyday lives. I also provide examples of how sociology's analytical tools will help students in their future professional environments; from public policy to business to medicine, for example, clear reasoning and basic quantitative skills go a long way. My interdisciplinary background empowers me to confidently teach both core courses such as theory, methods, inequality, political sociology and social movements to those that are further afield, including urban studies, academic writing and policy analysis. In every course I teach, my goal is to get students to think about the impact people have on each other and on their environment by applying theoretical concepts to their own life experiences. Drawing from my own liberal arts background as an undergraduate at Carleton College, I guide my students to embrace critical and independent thought by engaging with the world around them.

Teaching Experience: At Stanford, I have served as a teaching assistant for undergraduate core courses on research design and academic writing in both the sociology department and urban studies program. In those roles, I mentored undergraduates through the entire research process from developing a research question and designing their study to analyzing their data and writing their senior papers and theses. As a teaching assistant for the Introduction to Urban Studies course, I worked with the instructor redesign the syllabus (available upon request) to incorporate a discussion section targeted at increasing student engagement in what had previously been a lecture course. Additionally, I developed and taught my own courses on inequality and social movements in Stanford's summer session for three consecutive summers. With students ranging from high school juniors to advanced doctoral students enrolled in my courses, I enjoyed the challenge of designing class sessions and assignments that were simultaneously rigorous and inclined to build—rather than sap—student motivation regardless of their level of academic experience (authentic tasks, in the language of pedagogical scholars).

Courses Taught

| Course | Quarter | Faculty |
|---|-------------|---------------|
| Recognizing Inequality (SOC 117D) -- HS, Undergrad, Grad -- Instructor | Summer 2015 | N/A |
| Introduction to Urban Studies (US 110) -- Undergrad -- TA | Fall 2014 | Fred Stout |
| 21st Century Social Movements (102D) -- HS, Undergrad, Grad -- Instructor | Summer 2014 | N/A |
| Introduction to Urban Studies: Utopia and Reality (US 110) -- Undergrad -- TA | Spring 2014 | Fred Stout |
| Senior Seminar (US 203) -- Undergrad -- TA | Fall 2013 | Michael Kahan |
| Recognizing Inequality (SOC 117D) -- HS, Undergrad, Grad -- Instructor | Summer 2013 | N/A |
| Introduction to Urban Studies (US 110) -- Undergrad -- TA | Spring 2013 | Fred Stout |
| Preparation for Senior Research (US/SOC 202) -- Undergrad -- TA | Winter 2013 | Doug McAdam |
| Preparation for Senior Research (US/SOC 202) -- Undergrad -- TA | Winter 2012 | Doug McAdam |
| Junior/Senior Research (SOC 200) -- Undergrad -- TA | Fall 2011 | Tomás Jiménez |

Teaching Interests

| Topical | Theory and Methodology |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| Intro. to Sociology (U) | Sociological Theory (U/G) |
| Social Movements (U/G) | Research Design (U/G) |
| Social Stratification and Inequality (U/G) | Intro. to Quantitative Methods (U/G) |
| Intro. to Education and Social Policy (U/G) | Intro. to Qualitative Methods (U/G) |
| The Changing Nature of Work in the US (U/G) | The Practice of Policy Analysis (U/G) |

Teaching Evaluations: Overall my teaching evaluations have been positive. I have copied here the scores from two courses; complete reports available upon request.

| | TA | | Instructor | |
|---------------------------|--|-----------|--|-----------|
| | Urban Studies Senior Seminar (Undergrad 2013) | | Recognizing Inequality (HS, Undergrad, Grad 2013) | |
| | Lauren Benditt | Area Mean | Lauren Benditt | Area Mean |
| Organization/Clarity | -- | -- | 4.79 | 4.23 |
| Preparation | 4.75 | 4.46 | -- | -- |
| Clarity | 4.75 | 4.27 | -- | -- |
| Ability to Engage | -- | -- | 5.00 | 4.35 |
| Dev. Thinking | 4.75 | 4.22 | -- | -- |
| Feedback | 5.00 | 4.12 | -- | -- |
| Interaction with Students | -- | -- | 4.86 | 4.30 |
| Explanations | 5.00 | 4.30 | -- | -- |
| Leadership | 5.00 | 4.16 | -- | -- |
| Content/Evaluation | -- | -- | 4.68 | 4.25 |
| Questions | 5.00 | 4.20 | -- | -- |
| Availability | 5.00 | 4.43 | -- | -- |
| Overall Effectiveness | 5.00 | 4.23 | 4.62 | 4.30 |

Selected comments from teaching evaluations:

- Lauren was very helpful and constructive. I felt as though I could approach her for help any time I needed it. (Senior Seminar 2013)
- The class is effective and intriguing. Ms. Benditt respected all different opinions and responded with insightful and enlightening feedback with respect. (Recognizing Inequality 2013)
- Lauren was AMAZING. I so appreciated the enormous effort she put into this section, regularly emailing me detailed comments on a new draft of my proposal within 24 hours and always answering my emails immediately and very helpfully. I seriously don't know how I would have completed this class and my research proposal without Lauren's guidance and support. (Preparation for Senior Research 2012)
- Lauren was a dedicated and helpful TA. She made herself completely available to students both inside and outside of class. She provided great feedback and really took an interest in each student's success. (Junior/Senior Seminar 2011)
- Always made herself available for office hours and via email. Clearly put a lot of time into reading, commenting on, and grading our papers, with the goal of providing constructive feedback. Seemed interested in our projects and improvement over the course of the class. (Junior/Senior Seminar 2011)