

**Teaching Philosophy**  
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Students, undergraduate as well as graduate, come to university with ambitions and idealism to instigate change in the world. In the classroom, they seek both a source of existing information and the creation of new knowledge. As professors and researchers, we engage in a process of critical thinking, challenge our students and ourselves to examine our own and others' assumptions, and assist students in realizing their aspirations. This process of blending research and policy lies at the core of teaching global environmental change and governance.

I have developed and taught undergraduate and graduate classes in international environmental policy and governance at the College of William and Mary, the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, Yale College, the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies. I have taught professional courses in environmental governance and convened policy dialogues with various stakeholders around the world. Throughout these classes to various audiences, I have sought to validate students' skills and abilities and engage in a process of critical thinking. I see students not just as recipients of information but also as actors in an intellectual arena where thoughts and ideas have both potential and consequences.

My teaching philosophy derives from a Chinese proverb – *I hear, and I forget. I see, and I remember. I do, and I understand.* A highly interactive learning environment fosters the development of skills critical to professionals in international affairs – leadership capacity, cross-cultural sensitivity, unconventional thinking, and strong interpersonal skills. To this end, I have (1) grounded my classes on firm theoretical foundations using International Relations theories and public policy; (2) focused the attention on real-world challenges (from policy issues such as negotiations about local fisheries and about climate change to the performance of international organizations such as the UN Environment Programme, UN Development Programme, World Health Organization, etc.); and (3) adopted an interactive teaching style engaging students with each other in often unconventional and unexpected ways (from asking them to draw a cat and a dog on the board as a group to illustrate collective action dynamics to requiring that they present the working hypothesis of one of their colleagues to test for the existence of common language and understanding in the classroom).

I use International Relations theories to set a broad framework for the exploration of global environmental change and governance. Learning about realism, neoliberal institutionalism, constructivism, Marxism, and feminism does not immediately appeal to students who want to tackle real-world environmental problems. Students are often challenged by the tension between the desire to express their passion and the need to articulate analytical arguments. I employ International Relations theories as analytical lenses through which to examine a set of policy problems and unveil the assumptions determining the policy prescriptions. Such an approach has proven valuable in maintaining passion while engaging in disciplined discourse.

Developing analytical excellence with a clear purpose for contributing to the policy process is critical to students of international affairs. I use the classroom as a testing laboratory for innovative reasoning and argumentation, for imagining a different world. The core questions we explore seek answers to real-world problems – what is wrong, why, and what should be done about it. Students are expected to think big, yet pragmatically and to be able to communicate their ideas both verbally as well as in the form of short policy memos or significant research papers.

Contemporary global challenges require professionals with an education that cuts across disciplines and social sectors, bridges theory and practice, and translates academic insight into political and policy action. I am firmly committed to educating the professionals of the 21<sup>st</sup> century – global citizens planning to be of service to the global community.