

Kirk S. Bowman: Personal Teaching Statement

When I began my academic career at the Georgia Institute of Technology in 1998, I committed myself to effectively and simultaneously negotiating the demands for quality research and the demands for quality teaching. The hallmark of my nine years of teaching has been to locate and leverage the synergistic elements of both research and instruction so that they are not competing dimensions of my career but rather reinforcing components.

I am a comparativist by training and disposition (my Ph.D. is in Comparative Politics), with specific expertise and interest in Latin America. I have a passion for this diverse and dynamic region of the world, and my academic research focuses on understanding the influences responsible for the wide range of successes and failures of the twenty countries that comprise Latin America. The foundation of my work at Georgia Tech is the use of systematic comparison as the point of convergence of my research and teaching. Systematic longitudinal (over time) and horizontal (across cases) comparison is absolutely intuitive for the students, and allows them to be both consumers and co-producers of high quality research. In this personal statement on teaching, I will briefly describe how I use the comparative method in curricular development on campus in two very different types of courses, how a focus on comparison enriches the learning environment of study abroad and the International House, and finally how I teach undergraduate and graduate students to use comparative methods to produce publishable research.

Most undergraduate college students in the United States must complete an introductory course in American Government. These courses almost always focus only on a single case study, the United States. When I came to Georgia Tech, I worked with other comparativists to develop an innovative and effective approach, "American Government in Comparative Perspective." The course syllabus introduces the goals of the class: "Welcome to American Government in Comparative Perspective! This course is based on the premise that one cannot understand the strengths and weaknesses of anything without fruitful comparisons. Hence, one gains little by studying American Government in a vacuum. Our understanding of politics is greatly enhanced when we compare presidents with prime ministers, federal with central systems, democracies with authoritarian regimes, etc. This course will treat the US as the principal case in a comparative study of contemporary politics."

This course has been immensely popular and satisfying, enrolling some 225 students per semester, often with many more unregistered students sitting in on the class. Teaching American Government with the comparative method is particularly productive and exciting for the large number of international students at Georgia Tech. The creative and effective comparative opportunities are limitless. For example, one of the assignments is to watch one feature film dealing with US politics and one film dealing with politics in a different country, and to produce an analytical essay, using what they have learned in the classroom and their reading to compare and contrast the films' themes and treatments of the two political systems.

In the Fall of 2007, I will be teaching an honors course on the Political Economy of Soccer. Soccer will be used as a pedagogical tool to teach the students to systematically compare politics, cultures, economics, and societies, and to produce research that might make its way into a future book project that I am writing with colleagues in Argentina and Uruguay.

The best way to make fruitful comparisons is to gain a holistic understanding of the cases. In my courses at Georgia Tech, my students reinforce and supplement their textbook fluency with Latin American novels, movies, music, dance, food, and newspapers. The most effective and meaningful way to teach about Latin America, however, is to conduct classes in the region. Toward that end, I have developed and direct four different interdisciplinary summer study abroad programs (up to 10 weeks):

Argentina Politics and Society: 1999, 2001, 2007 (72 total students)

Costa Rica Environmental Politics and Tropical Ecology: 2000, 2002, 2004 (67 total students)

Cuba at the Crossroads: 2002, 2004 (43 total students)

Argentina and Brazil Business and Politics; 2003, 2005, 2006 (73 total students)

These intense study abroad experiences with over 250 total students have been immensely satisfying, and have yielded remarkable research opportunities as well. I have received six total grants worth \$4 million directly as a result of these study abroad activities, and written two papers with undergraduate students (one published and one in preparation for submission). More importantly, these activities have changed the lives of most of the 250 participants. As an example, one former study abroad participant who is currently pursuing graduate studies as a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford credits his experiences in Argentina and Cuba as the fundamental events inspiring his academic career. These study abroad experiences also allow students to learn by participating in research projects, including conducting surveys in Cuba and Costa Rica, and creating group documentary films in Argentina. These film projects require considerable interaction with Argentine students and other actors, and are singular teaching/learning experiences. I have included two representative student films in a DVD in my submitted package.

In the Fall of 2005, I agreed to found and direct the International House at Georgia Tech. The I-House has grown rapidly to 48 students, half from the US and half from other countries. This living-learning community is based on my comprehensive commitment to comparison, and represents an essential component in my teaching profile and philosophy--passionate, interdisciplinary, and creative comparison.

Finally, as a teacher at a research-I university, I should inspire and facilitate meaningful research opportunities for both undergraduate and graduate students. I believe the highest form of learning accrues from systematic investigation of fundamental research questions. I have mentored and collaborated with many students at Georgia Tech, largely undergraduates in the President's Undergraduate Research Program (PURA) and independent study courses. I have co-authored two publishable research papers with undergraduates (one already published with Ashley Jennings and one in the final stages of preparation with Rachel Benkeser). I have also published one book chapter and one peer reviewed journal article with MS students. Including students as co-authors requires a lot of work and effort, but it is a powerful learning experience for them.

In summary, I am passionate about my area of expertise, and about the power of comparison to teach students to think analytically and not descriptively about the world we live in, to think critically about the important issues of the day, and to be excited about international affairs. I continually use my enthusiasm and the comparative method in large and small classes at Georgia Tech, in study abroad programs that I organize and lead, in the International House that I direct, and in collaborative research programs that I pursue with undergraduate and graduate students. I am a comparativist, a Latin Americanist, and an educator, and research and teaching need not be mutually exclusive and zero sum, but mutually reinforcing.

Some Evidence of Kirk Bowman's Teaching Success

1. Georgia Tech students have access to an online course/instructor opinion survey at the end of each semester. This system is used to provide feedback and ratings from the students to the faculty and administration. There are a series of questions on this survey instrument, culminating with an overall rating question. Kirk's ratings on this overall question are given on his vita. Over the course of the last two years (Fall 2005 through Fall 2006 inclusive), the weighted average (by number of students) of these scores is 4.8 out of 5.0 which is very high for this institution (it is in the top quintile for the Ivan Allen College where Kirk teaches).
2. Kirk has been honored for his teaching. He received the CETL/BP Junior Faculty Teaching Excellence Award in 2000, and was the Georgia Tech campus nominee for the Robert Foster Cherry Award for Great Teachers in Fall 2006 (this award is given every other year and bestows an award of \$200,000).
3. One of the courses that Kirk teaches is Georgia Tech's Freshmen Seminar: GT1000. The office that oversees this campus-wide course (the Office of Student Success Programs) uses Kirk's syllabus as a model for new instructors for this course.
4. All of Kirk's courses are heavily subscribed to, usually reaching the stated capacity of the class. This "voting with their seats" is one way that students show the value of his classes.
5. Georgia Tech has a new honors program (it began in Fall 2006). One of the elements of this program is that there is an open call across campus for faculty to teach an honors seminar on a topic that links their passion and something that would be accessible and of interest to the first year students. Kirk has had his proposal accepted and will teach "The Political Economy of Soccer" in the Fall 2007 semester. Heavy consideration is given to the teaching success history of the faculty members when these assignments are awarded.
6. The Admissions Office includes a piece about Kirk's work in international study opportunities in their current view book. The page with this info is included in this packet.
7. Georgia Tech regularly surveys the alumni to learn what these graduates are doing after receiving their baccalaureate degree. The response from students who graduated with a degree from the School of International Affairs reveal that those who participated in Latin American study abroad program went on to the following: Rhodes Scholar; Goldwater Scholar; Marshall Scholar; law school (UGA, UVA, George Washington, U. Oregon); PhD program in Latin American politics at UNC-Chapel Hill; Graduate school (Georgia Tech, London School of Economics, Columbia, etc.); business in Panama, Argentina; consultant firms; US State Department; US Department of Defense; World Bank; various NGOs (Clean Air Campaign, National Rifle Association); and politics.

8. Often it is actual student work that is the best evidence of teaching success. However, Kirk regularly has his students use multimedia and creative expression in order to really understand the comparisons that they are studying, Therefore, enclosed with this packet is a DVD of two representative student films that were completed as part of projects for Kirk's study abroad course in Argentina.

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I. Educational Background:

Ph.D.	1998	University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill	Political Science
MA	1994	University of Arizona	Political Science
BA	1991	University of Nevada, Las Vegas	Political Science

Extensive fieldwork in Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Costa Rica, Cuba, Fiji, Honduras, and Uruguay.

Fluent in Spanish; conversational in Portuguese.

Assistant Professor, Nunn School of International Affairs, Georgia Tech	1998-2004
Associate Professor	2004-present
Director, International House, Georgia Tech	2005-present

II. Teaching, 2005-2007

Fall 2005

GT1000	7 students	5.0 effective teaching
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Introduction to Georgia Tech: 1 credit hour course introduces students to college life.

INTA 1200	199 students	4.8 effective teaching
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American Government in Comparative Perspective: 3 credit hour course explores the institutions, culture, and history of the United States through both longitudinal comparison over time and horizontal comparison with other countries.

Summer 2006

INTA 3241/8803	48 students	5.0 effective teaching
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Latin American Politics: 3 credit hour course introduces the students to the diversity, wonders, and mysteries of Latin America through textbooks, novels, and film.

INTA 3303	22 students	5.0 effective teaching
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Political Economy of Development: Soccer and Popular Culture: This 3 credit hour course was taught in Argentina and Brazil, and focused on the economic, political, and socio-cultural dimensions of soccer, music, dance, and art.

INTA 4241	22 students	4.5 effective teaching
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Third World Democratization: Southern Cone: This 3 credit -hour course was taught in Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay and focused on democratization and the democratization process in these important cases.

INTA 4340	22 students	5.0 effective teaching
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Regional Integration and Doing Business in Brazil: This 3 credit hour course was taught in Brazil and focused on globalization, regional institutions, and the art of doing business in Brazil.

INTA 4803	12 students	no teaching
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evaluation

The Historical Novel of Argentina and Brazil: This 3 credit hour course was taught in Argentina and Brazil and used six historical novels to examine issues of citizenship, culture, and power in these two countries.

Fall 2006

GT1000	18 students	5.0 effective teaching
INTA 1200	202 students	4.6 effective teaching
American Government in Comparative Perspective		
INTA 3241	40 students	4.6 effective teaching
Latin American Politics		

Member Public Policy Ph.D. dissertation committees, Isabel Bortagaray, Carolyn Fonseca.

III. Research Proposals and Grants (selected)

A. As principal investigator

1. International Predissertation Fellowship, Social Science Research Council and American Council of Learned Societies with Ford Foundation Funding, 1995-96 (Costa Rica) (\$35,000).
2. J. William Fulbright Scholar, 1997-98 (Costa Rica) (\$20,000).
3. Francis Wood Wilson Foundation, Documentary Films on Latin American Politics. 2000 (\$4,000).
4. Dept. of Education for Language-Across-the-Curriculum (\$4,500).
5. Georgia Tech Technology Fees Award, 2002 (\$6,937).

B. As Associate Group Leader

1. NIH. "Drug Discovery and Local Development in Fiji." Group Leader Mark Hay, School of Biology: co-Associate Group Leaders, Julia Kubanek and Terry Snell, School of Biology. National Institutes of Health International Cooperative Biodiversity Groups grant awarded October 2003 (\$422,168).
2. NIH. "Drug Discovery and Local Development in Fiji." Group Leader Mark Hay, School of Biology: co-Associate Group Leaders, Julia Kubanek and Terry Snell, School of Biology; Bill Aalbersberg, USP Fiji; Bill Fenical, Scripps. National Institutes of Health International Cooperative Biodiversity Groups grant awarded October 2005 (\$3.5 million).

IV. Consulting

Consulted the Carter Center for renovating the Inter American Democratic Charter, Fall 2004.

Consulted the Carter Center for measuring and assessing contemporary democracy levels in the Americas, Spring 2003.

Consulted Republic of Fiji Ministry of Tourism on issues of national branding leakage, expanding seasonality, adventure- tourism, and Green Hotel program, 2003-2006.

Consulted Hotel Association of Argentina on Branding August 2001.

VI. Scholarly Accomplishments (selected)

A. Published Books and Parts of Books

A1. Book

1. Bowman, K.S., *Militarization, Democracy, and Development: The Perils of Praetorianism in Latin America*, Pennsylvania State University Press (December 2002, paperback edition Spring 2004).

Current Book Projects: *Peddling Paradise: The Political Economy of Tourism Promotion; Tropical Models: Lessons for the US from Latin America.*

A.2 Book Chapter (Chapter co-authored with GA Tech student)

1. Bowman, K.S. and Eudaily, S.P., "The Democratic Peace Proposal through a Political Theory-Shaped Comparativist Lens," in *New Approaches to Comparative Politics: Insights from Political Theory*, pages 111-124 (J. Holmes, Ed), Lexington Press (2003) (50% of contribution).

B. Refereed Publications (written with GA Tech students)

1. Bowman, K.S., and A. Jennings. "Pura Vida: Using Study Abroad to Engage Undergraduate Students in Comparative Politics Research," *PS: Politics and Society*, pp. 77-81, January 2005.
2. Bowman, K.S. and S. Baker, "Noisy Regimes, Causal Processes, and Democratic Consolidation: The Case of Costa Rica," vol. 50, n. 2, Spring 2007, *The Latin Americanist*.
3. Bowman, K.S. and R. Benkeser, "Using Fuzzy Set Logic in Green Certification Programs," submitted to the *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*.

B. On-Campus Activities

1. Study Abroad. When I arrived at Georgia Tech, there were no International Affairs study abroad programs in Latin America. I established three separate interdisciplinary summer study abroad programs. I am fully responsible for every aspect of Latin American study abroad programs including; conceptualizing, set-up in country, recruitment and promotion, administration and paperwork for approval at Georgia Tech, budget, visas and arrangements with Treasury Department for Cuba, teaching, etc.
 - The Business and Politics in Argentina and Brazil Study Abroad Program spans International Affairs and Management. Courses focus on Democracy and International Business. Students spend 4 weeks in Argentina and 4 weeks in Brazil (1999, 2001, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2007).
 - The Costa Rica Study Abroad Program merges International Affairs and Biology. Courses focus on Tropical Ecology and International Environmental Politics. Students spend 6 weeks in Costa Rica (2000, 2002, 2004)
 - Cuba at the Crossroads is an interdisciplinary program that is cooperative with Kennesaw State University. Students spend 13 days in Cuba. (Program director in 2002, 2003, 2004. Accompanied program in 2002, 2004).
2. Faculty partner for Freshman Experience, 1998-99, 1999-00, 2000-01.
3. Faculty Advisor: Squash Club, Amnesty International 2000-present.
4. Faculty Advisor, Model United Nations of the Americas, Brasilia, Brazil, July 2003; July 2005. Includes preparatory course and three credit hours.
5. Founded (2005) and direct the Georgia Tech International House, a living-learning community of 48 students.
6. Great Minds Lecture Series, Emory University, December 2006.