Government 1295
Comparative Politics in Latin America
# EVALUATION OF TEACHING FELLOWS

## Van Dyck, Brandon Philip

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PLEASE COMMENT ON YOUR SECTION LEADER’S TEACHING.

Van Dyck, Brandon Philip

Evaluate the course overall.: 4 (very good)
Evaluate your Section Leader overall.: 5 (excellent)

Brandon was a fantastic TF. He was extremely organized; you could tell that a lot of preparation went into every section. He was also very accessible; if you needed to meet with him, he would make time to do so, as well as after every section, he would send out his section notes, which provided very helpful in explaining and contextualizing the arguments made that week. He also gave great feedback on both the papers; he wrote me a full single-spaced page of comments for my second paper. You could tell he really put time and effort into grading papers. He was also extremely enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the material. Overall, an excellent TF.

Evaluate the course overall.: 5 (excellent)
Evaluate your Section Leader overall.: 5 (excellent)

Brandon is the best TF I've ever had. I actually looked forward to going to section, as his sections were interesting and dynamic, and also helped us to understand the complicated and bountiful material. His help on paper outlines and feedback on papers was invaluable, and really facilitated my learning process. Thank you!

Evaluate the course overall.: 4 (very good)
Evaluate your Section Leader overall.: 5 (excellent)

He should tell more stories about his experience in Latin America.

Evaluate the course overall.: 5 (excellent)
Evaluate your Section Leader overall.: 5 (excellent)

If there was a category above "excellent" for feedback provided in particular, Brandon would get it. He is the best section leader I have had at Harvard, hands down. I loved section almost as much as I loved lecture, which says a lot. What a great course!

Evaluate the course overall.: 5 (excellent)
Evaluate your Section Leader overall.: 5 (excellent)

Brandon was the best TF I had all year.

Evaluate the course overall.: 5 (excellent)
Evaluate your Section Leader overall.: 5 (excellent)

Brandon was a great TF. He was an excellent discussion leader, letting people speak but still guiding the conversation. He was very helpful outside of class. He gave AMAZING feedback on the assignments - it must have taken him forever, and I really appreciated it. His presentations at the beginning of section were very helpful, as were the notes and outlines he sent out at the end of section. He was clearly very enthusiastic about the material. Brandon was one of the best TFs I've had in my time here.

Evaluate the course overall.: 5 (excellent)
Evaluate your Section Leader overall.: 5 (excellent)

Great TF who always provided us with summaries of week materials and allowed for good discussion of week's most important subjects.
Evaluate the course overall.: 5 (excellent)
Evaluate your Section Leader overall.: 5 (excellent)

Very thorough, and great feedback on papers.

Evaluate the course overall.: 5 (excellent)
Evaluate your Section Leader overall.: 5 (excellent)

Brandon was a great TF. His notes were very helpful. He made great comments on my essays. He knew the material very well. He was always willing to help.

Evaluate the course overall.: 5 (excellent)
Evaluate your Section Leader overall.: 5 (excellent)

the notes provided after section were instrumental in helping me put the topics of the week together and really get a sense of the big picture. in section, i thought the right questions were always asked and thoughtful answers evoked.

Evaluate the course overall.: 4 (very good)
Evaluate your Section Leader overall.: 5 (excellent)

Very knowledgeable and goes beyond the surface of issues and forces us to think a lot and answer counterarguments.great section leader!

Evaluate the course overall.: 5 (excellent)
Evaluate your Section Leader overall.: 5 (excellent)

I don't even know where to start. Brandon was the smartest, most accessible, and most communicative TF I've ever had. The way he responded so intelligently to comments both in class and in writing made you feel like he was really paying attention to what you were saying and respected what you were saying, even if you were wrong, because he would disagree politely and then offer another way of looking at things which was incredibly enlightening and encouraging.n This manner of communication forced people to not bullshit in section - which made section incredibly valuable - and encouraged people with their writing, rather than giving them a false sense of doom if their ideas ran astray. He was also very free with office hours and available to meet on very short notice.

Evaluate the course overall.: 5 (excellent)
Evaluate your Section Leader overall.: 5 (excellent)

Brandon Van Dyck is one of the best teaching fellows that I have had in a Government course. While I've heard that it is often difficult for PhD students to balance their research with their teaching obligations, I admire Brandon's dedication to his teaching and his ability to balance both obligations. He is incredibly prepared for sections, responsive to emails, accommodating for students, and knowledgeable on the subject matter. Brandon was incredibly understanding about other students' work outside the course--most noticeably his understanding of students who had to complete senior theses. He was incredibly well organized. Brandon's section notes were well thought out and thorough. These section notes were incredibly useful for writing papers and studying for exams because they summarized the week's readings and proposed questions for further reflection. His comments during sections were insightful and thought-provoking. Brandon's style of teaching was a perfect complement to Professor Levitsky's. He was able to supplement the lectures with discussions about the readings in a way that was not repetitive and boring. Instead, I felt that sections were crucial to understanding the subject matter of the course. It was very clear that Brandon took his role as head TF of the course seriously and spent hours preparing for the class outside of leading sections.
Evaluate the course overall: 5 (excellent)
Evaluate your Section Leader overall: 5 (excellent)

Brandon, You were really an amazing TF. I appreciate all your effort, and I think it was noticed by all!

Brandon was a real expert in the subject and well versed in the readings we reviewed for the week. He very much encouraged section participation and tried to facilitate student led discussions. Excellent TF.

Brandon always made himself accessible and was happy to go over the material in a substantial way and discuss how it could be improved. He was always very positive and really made an effort to be helpful at every opportunity possible.

Brandon was an awesome TF, and knew how to make discussions both interesting and engaging. There were very few awkward silences, which is incredible in any group of nerdy Harvard students. So mad props for that. We also very much appreciated his suggestions for what were the most important readings in a given week.

Brandon is the best TF I've had so far. His feedback is great and his knowledge is impressively extensive on the subject matter.

Brandon was the best TF I have had so far at Harvard. Not only did he return our papers with an unbelievable amount of comments, but it was obvious in so many ways that he truly cared about the class and what we were learning. Brandon was always available to meet outside of class and was really helpful whenever I had questions. I liked how section was and the amount of discussion we had, but how he would still present information to us. Also, I really liked how Brandon sent out section notes after it, as that was really useful in studying for the final. Brandon is a nice guy who is also very smart and really wants his students to succeed - great combination for a TF.

This was the best section I have had at Harvard. The discussions were accessible and meaningful and Brandon did a great job of balancing his teaching and asking us questions about the material.

encourages us to formulate our own opinions about political theories and strategies, and facilitates discussion in a lively way, always giving great feedback about our questions and spinning them back on us to make us seem smarter than we are. he can always find the intelligence in a question, even when there isn't any. great tf overall, yum.
Evaluate the course overall.: 5 (excellent)
Evaluate your Section Leader overall.: 5 (excellent)

Brandon is one of the best TFs I have had here and his sections/teaching material (especially the section notes) have helped me so much throughout this course. Thanks Brandon!

Evaluate the course overall.: 4 (very good)
Evaluate your Section Leader overall.: 5 (excellent)

Brandon Van Dyck is a dream TF! Seriously, I didn't know Harvard could snag someone this brilliant and talented to be a TF! He is fluent in Latin American politics and history, which is no easy feat, and is one of the nicest, least pretentious, helpful, and smartest TFs I've had. Also, I mentioned this before, but the section notes he e-mailed out each week were pure gold. I wish I could've made better use of his office hours, but even though I didn't make it to them, I learned a ton from Brandon. My only criticism would be that I'm afraid he is setting me up for disappointment with future TFs here, because I doubt many of them are as good as he is. I hope he publishes his dissertation on black/indigenous populations and movements in Latin America so that I can read it before it is added to future Gov. 1295 coursepacks. Thanks for everything, Brandon! I really appreciate it. You should be extremely proud of yourself.

Evaluate the course overall.: 5 (excellent)
Evaluate your Section Leader overall.: 5 (excellent)

He was unreal; best TF I have had thus far at Harvard.

Evaluate the course overall.: 5 (excellent)
Evaluate your Section Leader overall.: 5 (excellent)

Brandon is able to effectively guide sections and keep them purposeful. Also, he is great in that he constantly encourages participation, especially by always fairly considering everyone's comments, even if they're not correct. Finally, the feedback he provides on his essays is just phenomenal. Really gets you thinking about everything else you could've written about. It is clear that he put a lot of thought into grading them and providing constructive criticism that will benefit us in the future.

Evaluate the course overall.: 5 (excellent)
Evaluate your Section Leader overall.: 5 (excellent)

One of my TF's strengths was how organized he was in section, in terms of knowing what material he wanted to discuss, but also how much he encouraged discussion and helped students find an answer to his probing questions. He made clear that often there was no real right/wrong answer, which made it more encouraging to participate, and he also provided the information necessary for other students to build on what students had said and find a better answer. The emphasis was on participation rather than covering material, so that what we discussed we were able to talk about in depth. He also emailed us his notes after section which was a great compromise or way of making sure we had all the important information AND had a chance to have a real discussion. I was also greatly appreciative of this feedback on our papers. The detail with which he commented was great in helping students improve on their next paper, and helping them understand exactly why they got the grade they received. It was very encouraging and the reason I was able to improve so much on my second paper.
# EVALUATION OF TEACHING FELLOWS

## Van Dyck, Brandon Philip

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Van Dyck, Brandon Philip

Evaluate the course overall.: 3 (good)
Evaluate your Section Leader overall.: 5 (excellent)
Brandon is an absolutely fantastic TF. He is incredibly helpful and ever available to help with gov or general life advice. Made a great experience out of a dreaded concentration requirement.

Evaluate the course overall.: 4 (very good)
Evaluate your Section Leader overall.: 5 (excellent)
Brandon was willing to meet at all times of day to speak about our papers. That really showed dedication to the students. He was highly accessible through email and very approachable during class. I was very lucky to have the Head TF, who is as engaged with the students. In terms of room for improvement, I wished we covered more of the things that was mentioned in his section notes because a lot of the times, I thought we necessarily got to touch on all of them. I didn't really look at the section notes unless I was searching for a starting point for a paper. Even then, I would skip majority of the sections and just zone in on the readings that I was interested in.

Evaluate the course overall.: 5 (excellent)
Evaluate your Section Leader overall.: 5 (excellent)
Brandon was an amazing TF. He obviously cared about his students and always had great points, section notes, and comments on papers. If it wasn't for him, I don't think I would have understood the material nearly as well or challenged myself to the level I did.

Evaluate the course overall.: 3 (good)
Evaluate your Section Leader overall.: 5 (excellent)
Brandon was a great TF. He was great at consolidating the ideas from lectures and readings, as well as facilitating discussion by asking guiding questions. His feedback on assignments was also incredibly comprehensive.

Evaluate the course overall.: 5 (excellent)
Evaluate your Section Leader overall.: 5 (excellent)
Brandon is great! He is very enthusiastic, approachable and patient. I think that he is a great role model for us gov concentrators and I feel very lucky to have him as my TF this semester!

Evaluate the course overall.: 3 (good)
Evaluate your Section Leader overall.: 5 (excellent)
Very easygoing and comfortable to speak with; facilitates comfortable environment in section. Does a good job of breaking down the readings we've read. Very helpful with papers.

Evaluate the course overall.: 4 (very good)
Evaluate your Section Leader overall.: 5 (excellent)
Brandon is the best TF I have had. He made this course amazing for me, and I feel honored to have had him. He is truly dedicated to the course, and I appreciate all the time and effort he put in.
Evaluate the course overall.: **4 (very good)**
Evaluate your Section Leader overall.: **5 (excellent)**

Brandon is the best TF that I have had in three years at Harvard. In section, he is great at structuring debate and discussions of the readings. He captures the larger themes of the week and allows students to break down the larger ideas of the week to make sure everyone understands them. Additionally, he does a great job of relating the smaller ideas from each week and tying them back to the themes of the course. He is extremely accessible outside of class, willing to meet at all hours and even multiple times to discuss assignments. In these meetings, he is extremely helpful in clarifying both what assignments are looking for and any confusing points in the material. His feedback on papers is incredibly detailed, breaking down his whole understanding of your paper, highlighting where he thinks you did best, and pointing out where a stronger paper might have made a different argument - which really helps one become a better writer. His section and teaching were the most informative and most enjoyable part of the whole class.
Government 1291
The Politics of Social Policy in Brazil
# EVALUATION OF TEACHING FELLOWS

**Van Dyck, Brandon Philip**

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Van Dyck, Brandon Philip

Evaluate the course overall.: 5 (excellent)
Evaluate your Section Leader overall.: 5 (excellent)
Brandon clearly worked very hard for this course. He was always available for help and he really facilitated our understanding of the material.

Evaluate the course overall.: 5 (excellent)
Evaluate your Section Leader overall.: 5 (excellent)
I think Brandon did a great job of balancing discussion with direct coverage of the course readings/lecture material.

Evaluate the course overall.: 5 (excellent)
Evaluate your Section Leader overall.: 5 (excellent)
Brandon is the most dedicated TF I have ever had. His section notes made it possible to engage fully in the questions he posed without worrying about writing down details. His essay feedback was REALLY detailed and very helpful. I was really able to understand what I needed to change from the first to the second paper. Section was a treat, and really complimented and fleshed out the material presented in lecture. Thanks Brandon!

Evaluate the course overall.: 5 (excellent)
Evaluate your Section Leader overall.: 5 (excellent)
Brandon is probably the best TF I have had at Harvard. He is extremely dedicated and passionate about his work. Different thing to highlight: - Very detailed and constructive feedback on our assignments. - Well structured sections, with an excellent balance between descriptive and analytical. - Provided section notes for everyone to refer back to in case we weren’t able to cover all the material in class or even just to focus our attention on discussion rather than on taking notes. - Was extremely available outside of class. I chose to write a research prospectus to substitute my second paper, and Brandon was definitely willing to help me out both at the planning stage and when I was already writing the paper.

Evaluate the course overall.: 5 (excellent)
Evaluate your Section Leader overall.: 5 (excellent)
Brandon is the best TF I have had since coming to Harvard. His sections were interesting, helpful, and engaging. He was always available to meet outside of classes and provided really great guidance on papers and constructive feedback on assignments. He should win a teaching award.

Evaluate the course overall.: 3 (good)
Evaluate your Section Leader overall.: 3 (good)
Brandon is an excellent TF. You can tell he has a passion for the subject matter and did what he was asked to do as best he could. I think his performance as TF will get better when the course changes a bit overall. If the course doesn’t change, I think Brandon would do well to feed off of his students a bit more and not immediately answer the questions he asks. His notes were excellent, but I would’ve loved an opportunity to contribute a little bit more in section.
| Evaluate the course overall.: 4 (very good) |
| Evaluate your Section Leader overall.: 5 (excellent) |
| brandon was down-to-earth, funny, and always prepared. epic tf for an epic course. |

| Evaluate the course overall.: 5 (excellent) |
| Evaluate your Section Leader overall.: 5 (excellent) |
| Perfect. Better than a lot of professors. |

| Evaluate the course overall.: 5 (excellent) |
| Evaluate your Section Leader overall.: 5 (excellent) |
| Brandon is the best TF I have had at Harvard. He is thorough, funny, laidback, and he really encourages and generates discussion. His feedback on my papers was so in-depth and critical, which I really appreciated and I think he might have spent more time on his comments than I did on the paper! He was always exceptionally prepared for section and his lecture notes were so detailed that they could've been used as a cursory guide to the whole course. He was super helpful outside of class and very approachable. It was great to work with him and I enjoyed section. |

| Evaluate the course overall.: 5 (excellent) |
| Evaluate your Section Leader overall.: 5 (excellent) |
| Brandon was without hesitation the best TF I have had at Harvard. In addition to sections which were a great forum for us to discuss course concepts, he was extremely helpful and accessible outside of class. The section notes were extraordinary, and he really tried to make sure we understood the material well. Finally, the exam was really well made, and I have never received so much good feedback on papers before!!! |

| Evaluate the course overall.: 4 (very good) |
| Evaluate your Section Leader overall.: 4 (very good) |
| Sometimes discussion questions and essay prompts were phrased in a confusing way, but other than that a great TF. Very enthusiastic about material and helpful. |

| Evaluate the course overall.: 5 (excellent) |
| Evaluate your Section Leader overall.: 5 (excellent) |
| Brandon is one of the best TFs I've ever had, hands down. Prepared, great discussion leader, enthusiastic, extremely thorough and helpful feedback...I can't say enough great things. |

| Evaluate the course overall.: 2 (fair) |
| Evaluate your Section Leader overall.: 5 (excellent) |
| Brandon is the best TF I have had at Harvard. He is organized, thoughtful, and really on top of every aspect of the course. It was great to be in his class. |

| Evaluate the course overall.: 3 (good) |
| Evaluate your Section Leader overall.: 5 (excellent) |
| Brandon went above and beyond in section and outside of section. I really appreciated all the work he did. |
Evaluate the course overall:. 4 (very good)  
Evaluate your Section Leader overall:. 5 (excellent)  

One of the best if not the best TF I have had at Harvard. Generates great discussion, teaches people how to think analytically, and explains the materials very well. I learned a ton with Brandon, and I was never stressed about going to section. A great person and great teacher.