

A Teaching Manifesto

(A personal view on undergraduate university education)

1. *Let students decide what is best for them*

- (a) Give students maximum freedom in determining how they learn the course material. → 1b 1c
- (b) Do not put constraints on the way they study by giving homework. Instead, suggest or provide useful problems or study material and provide solutions. → 1a 4c
- (c) Do not force or blackmail them into coming to class through devices such as sign-up registers, pop-quizzes, unavailability of class material in print, etc. Design the course such that students who prefer so can follow the course without attending any lectures. → 1a 2e 5c 5e

2. *Acknowledge your subjectivity*

- (a) Do not let subjective criteria, especially personal opinion, influence students' grades. Avoid as much as possible forms of evaluation where the degree of subjectivity is high. → 2b 2f
- (b) To eliminate bias, grade examinations without reference to the name or person of the students. (For instance, let them identify themselves by their student numbers rather than their names.) → 2a 2f 3b
- (c) Allow objections to grading of examinations (in writing, again without reference to the name and person of the student). Give them due consideration, but maintain consistency with how other students' answers have been graded. → 3b
- (d) To the extent that this is possible, recommendation letters must be based on objective criteria. Even if the student has personal characteristics which make it difficult to work with her or him, do not mention them so long as they are independent from her or his technical competence and sense of responsibility.
- (e) Acknowledge the possibility that you are a poor lecturer and that students do not benefit from coming to class. Do not do anything to force them to. → 1c 2f 3b
- (f) To make it possible for students to criticize you openly without fear of harassment, completely separate the grading process from the name and person of the student. → 2a 2b 2e 3b
- (g) Be democratic in giving decisions regarding the course, such as setting the time of lectures, examinations, subject to the condition that the teaching and evaluative objectives of the course are fulfilled and chaos is avoided. → 5a

3. *Treat students as you treat other people*

- (a) Treat the students as you would treat the same persons if you met them outside the university. → 3b
- (b) To enable them to also treat you so, eliminate potential sources of pressure. Completely separate the grading process from the name and person of the students. → 2b 2c 2e 2f 3a

4. *Encourage sense of community*

- (a) Encourage communal studying. → 4b 4c 4d
- (b) Do not make the students feel as if they are competing with each other. Rather, design the grading scheme such that they measure against a predefined standard (which may be slowly adjusted over the years). → 4a 4c
- (c) Do not give take-home examinations or employ other grading methods when it is the case that independent work cannot be enforced and students are torn between honesty towards the instructor and loyalty towards their friends etc. → 1b 4a 4b 4d 4e
- (d) Do not ignore the social and cultural setting in which education takes place. → 4a 4c
- (e) Avoid unreasonable precautions to avoid cheating. → 4c

5. *Be precise, predictable, and reliable*

- (a) State the content, requirements, and procedures of the course on the first day, and do not change them unless an overwhelming majority of students agree so. → 2g 5d
- (b) State material included in exams clearly. If a book or set of notes is used, clearly indicate which sections are included or excluded from the course. → 5c
- (c) All material that students are responsible for in the examinations must be provided in fixed form (on paper or other suitable media). → 1c 5b
- (d) Do not change the time or date of examinations or other appointments with short notice. → 5a 5e
- (e) Do not administer any form of examination (e.g. quizzes, orals) with short (or no) notice. → 1c 5d
- (f) Predefine the grading scheme of examinations with rigor and care. → 5g
- (g) Grade the question as stated on the question sheet, not as you intended it. → 5f
- (h) Keep the distribution of grades consistent with that of other courses offered in the same department or school.