

University of Washington School of Social Work
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I have had a variety of teaching experiences at the university level, including as the instructor of record for 9 courses, and as co-instructor or student teacher for another 11. In addition, I have experience teaching short courses and workshops on focused topics, as well as “brown bag” lunchtime topics. On several occasions, I have been asked to attend course sessions as a guest lecturer. To date, my areas of instruction in social work include poverty, inequality, intergroup dialogue, research methods, policy, and theory. My teaching in statistics spans foundational statistical concepts and use of statistical software packages, to such topics as survey sampling methods and survival analysis.

Recently, I taught three successive offerings as sole instructor in a required course for first-year Master in Social Work students titled “Poverty and Inequality.” This curriculum combined my social welfare interests of research and policy on poverty and social inequity, with an introduction to quantitative evidence. On a scale from 0 to 5, the course evaluation medians for my three classes were 4.6, 4.4, and 4.8, successively, with approximately 80% response rates (considered “very high”). In comparison, the median score in the University of Washington’s School of Social Work courses tend to be in the high 3’s. The highest median score occurred in my last class. This may indicate my growing familiarity with the curriculum and improvement in my ability to navigate and support students in the most challenging segments of the course, comprised of examining highly charged social issues and weighing measurable evidence. One student wrote, “The [final] paper in particular was out of my comfort zone and the teacher kindly guided me through.” Another student remarked on my ability to make quantitative findings approachable: “I really liked this class even though I’m not a huge research/statistics person. Anita is a great and helpful professor, so I think everyone would benefit from having her as a guide, honestly.”

My classes are framed by a transparent social justice lens, both in content and conduct, acknowledging both historic and current events and their influence within our classroom. I use modes of instruction that stretch existing mental models and foster critical thinking, with short lectures, discussion, and writing. I employ audio-visual materials and invited guest speakers to build our capacity to hear broad perspectives. A social justice approach demands that I engage in critical self-reflection of my teaching assumptions and practices, acknowledging my authority and status as middle agent within an educational system. In the tradition of Freire, I ask myself at key course junctures, “Who is oppressed in this moment?” One student wrote on a course evaluation, “Anita is a skilled and culturally humble facilitator and instructor.”

In the future, I am eager and well qualified to teach social work policy and theory courses, as well as research courses. I anticipate my continued emphasis on critical race theory, and a broadening of that lens to look closely at systems of power and subjugation affecting women, LGBTQ constituencies, disability statuses, children, elders and others.