As an instructor, the greatest effect I can have on diversity, equity, and inclusion is the control I have over helping students of all backgrounds learn in the classroom. Once students reach me, I care about creating a safe and inclusive learning environment for my students. One part of this process is to make my students feel comfortable in approaching me for help. Being able to ask for help both inside and outside the classroom are key in making sure that achievement gaps between marginalized and struggling students and their peers do not widen. I attempt to do this by creating a good rapport with students during the first few weeks of class. I build this rapport through the use of constant positive reinforcement and encouragement, to help instill confidence in the students so they feel more comfortable coming to me for help or sharing thoughts in front of the entire class. Additionally, I continue to seek out ways I can specifically improve my approachability and improve overall as an instructor. One way I aim to do this is by attending teaching workshops hosted by the Center for the Enhancement of Learning and Teaching (CELT) at the University of Kentucky, including an upcoming workshop focused on providing teachers small changes they can make in the classroom to help narrow the achievement gap for underrepresented students.

My approachability is reflected in anonymous comments from my teacher evaluations, with this quote coming from my Spring 2019 Introduction to International Relations course, when students were asked what they liked best about the course: *"His enthusiasm for the subject and his approachability. This allowed me to gain a better understanding of class concepts and the field of international relations. This instructor has also taken an interest in my goals and academic development which has inspired and motivated me in preparation for graduate school and research opportunities. His advice and mentorship has been incredibly helpful."* Comments like this, and others, reflect my approachability and the good relationships I build with students over the course of a semester.

Another part of my process of creating a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students is fostering student participation across the classroom. I aim to maximize student participation in the classroom by using a variety of different teaching methods including group work, simulations, and student-led discussions. This variety of teaching methods has two main benefits: first, it allows students who may not feel comfortable participating in front of the entire class to participate in a smaller group and second, it appeals to a diverse set of learners who may struggle to learn from lecture-heavy teaching styles. Once again, this approach is reflected in anonymous student comments, like this one from my Spring 2022 Peace Studies seminar. When asked what the student liked best about the class, this student replied: *"The instructor really allowed our class to engage with each other I enjoyed that we had class discussions on the material rather than simply sitting and taking notes the whole time."* My enthusiasm, approachability, and ability to maximize student participation through the use of a variety of teaching methods all play an important role in helping a diverse set of students thrive in the classroom.

In addition to creating a safe and inclusive learning environment, the topics I teach in the classroom add to the goal of increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion. When I teach classes, in addition to focusing on major power politics, I also make sure to discuss and teach students about developing countries and how they impact and are impacted by international politics. For example,

in my Model United Nations class, I chose for my students to represent Egypt and Mexico at the larger Model UN conference instead of a major power like the United States or United Kingdom. This meant that the entire semester revolved around researching and discussing Egypt and Mexico, two developing states in the Global South. Additionally, one of the class assignments included writing a position paper in which students had to research and advocate for a specific action to be taken by an UN-based organization in order to improve citizens' lives in the country they represented. Many of the students chose to focus on marginalized communities within Mexico and Egypt, including indigenous peoples in Mexico and women in Egypt, increasing their understanding of the challenges facing marginalized groups.

Finally, I also aim to diversify the research I expose students to by including female scholars on my syllabi. This is important because historically, female scholars have been underrepresented in research areas like international security, and so many class syllabi have reflected this underrepresentation to the detriment of many talented, female scholars. This is also important for female students, as it demonstrates to them that they can thrive and make important contributions in a male-heavy field such as international security. For example, in my Peace Studies capstone seminar I have students read research from female scholars on a wide variety of topics including: climate change and conflict, nuclear technology, gender and cabinet positions, peacekeeping, and post-conflict peace. This demonstrates to students the various topics in which women contribute and add to our understanding of different political phenomena, while also exposing those scholars' work to a wider, more general audience. Overall, I strongly believe all learning environments should be open, secure, and welcoming to all students and their experiences, and believe it is part of an instructor's role to create this type of environment for their students. Additionally, instructors should aim to expose their students to a diverse set of topics, countries, and scholars. I look forward to continuing to work and learn about how to best accomplish this goal at my next institution.