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Primary Teaching Subjects: Property, Land Use, State and Local Government Law, Intellectual Property, Legal History

Secondary Teaching Subjects: Real Estate Transactions, IP Transactions, Environmental Law, Water Rights, Contracts, Torts, Private Law Theory, Trusts and Estates

Teaching Statement

While research and writing are passions of mine, the reason I am becoming a professor is to teach. I did not begin law school thinking I would eventually become a professor, but the signs were there: I tutored in college and acted as a peer advising fellow for the History department as an undergrad, and by the third year of my J.D. program, I began considering life as an academic. That year, I became a legal writing teaching fellow for Yale's first-year Contracts course—unlike most law schools, Yale teaches legal writing through “small group” instruction in one of the four required doctrinal classes taught in the first-year fall. The students go through multiple drafts of memos and briefs, and I derived a rush from seeing their writing and arguments improve in response to questions and class sessions. I am committed to being an excellent teacher and pursuing the personal and professional fulfillment that goes with that. Toward that end, this year, I will finish my teaching certificate through Yale's Center for Teaching and Learning, a program of study which requires a series of classes and observations designed to turn graduate students into effective classroom instructors.

My beliefs about teaching have been deeply influenced by this program and the initiatives of Yale students to improve teaching at the law school. Through the program, I have learned about the different ways that students learn, and I have endeavored to communicate to all types through my teaching—those who learn by seeing, reading, hearing, or doing. In my *Advanced Topics in Property* seminar course, I used slides about the cases depicting the people and settings, as well as a mix of lecture and discussion, to get across key themes relating to complex topics. I also led a field trip in which students looked up historic property deeds and tax records to understand complex chain of title and land use problems. Through various initiatives led by Yale students, I have also learned the ways that women, minorities, and low-income students may be disadvantaged in classrooms where participation is purely voluntary or overly formal; there are easy fixes to these problems, like announcing textbooks early so that students can buy used ones, or using a version of cold-calling during some portions of class to encourage equal participation by students of all genders and backgrounds. In a future course, I hope to deploy these methods. For example, one approach I particularly like requires students to submit a sentence or two about one of the readings in advance. Those responses can then be used to call on students for particular points or to begin a discussion between students who have different perspectives on a case or an issue. This simple tweak helps to engage students who might otherwise be nervous about or discouraged from participating.

Some of my teaching philosophies also relate directly to the classes I would like to teach. I believe strongly in incorporating local material into all of my classes, especially because we are

surrounded by the manifestations of property, land use, and local government law in our built environment. Law students spend three years as members of a community, and teaching them about how law has shaped their physical surroundings is important to me. In my course *Advanced Topics in Property*, there was an entire class session devoted to peculiarities of New Haven's property history (including its links to urban renewal), and most class sessions invoked at least one example from New Haven or Connecticut's past. Students have particularly enjoyed these classes, and many have eventually written papers inspired by the local environment. (One student started out by asking why a particular intersection was so terrible; as it turns out, there was a complex and controversial land deal between the city and Yale that explained the mess.) I enjoy meeting all my students in office hours and trying out teaching techniques to improve the classroom and the law school experience. It is my goal to train new lawyers in the basics of the foundational subjects that I teach, but also to make students interested and engaged in the growth and development of the communities in which they reside, both during law school and thereafter.