

Teaching Statement

Albert C. Cano · Fellow in International Relations, London School of Economics and Political Science

My teaching philosophy is grounded in what I call *research-led storytelling*. This teaching methodology, honed over my many years teaching at secondary school and higher education, presents a narrative structure to both the course and the lecture/seminar through research, social, and political problematisations, simulations, and active participation. This approach is especially suited to teaching International Relations and conflict studies, where concepts such as peacebuilding, political violence, security, intervention, trauma, and justice are both phenomenal and ideological productions to be contested. My role as a teacher is therefore not simply to facilitate discussion, but to help students move from problem immersion to conceptual analysis and independent critical judgement. The narrative structure ensures this process while engaging the student's interest and attention.

My teaching experience spans undergraduate, postgraduate, and Summer School teaching at the London School of Economics, as well as eight years as a secondary school teacher of Philosophy and English in Barcelona before beginning my PhD. At LSE, I have taught IR494/349 Conflict and Peacebuilding (both UG and PG) and IR211 America as a Global Power: FDR to Trump, and have delivered guest lectures on mass atrocities, authoritarian peace, and statebuilding. My teaching evaluations have been consistently excellent, including mean satisfaction scores of 4.7/5 in IR494, 4.6/5, 4.9/5, and 4.8/5 across IR349, and 4.7/5 in IR211. I received the LSE Class Teacher Award in 2025, a Highly Commended Class Teacher Award in 2024, and a nomination for an LSE Students' Union Outstanding Teaching Award. My earlier work in secondary education remains central to my university teaching. It gave me a long apprenticeship in course design, planning, explanation, feedback, classroom presence, and student development, all of which continue to shape how I teach demanding theoretical and empirical material.

In practice, research-led storytelling means designing sessions in which students encounter international politics through cases, dilemmas, simulations, and carefully structured discussion. I do not treat participation as an end in itself. Open discussion can be generative, but it can also reproduce inequalities of confidence, prior knowledge, and educational background. I therefore combine different forms of engagement: short conceptual clarifications, guided close reading, small-group work, structured debate, simulations, and applied exercises. In conflict and peacebuilding teaching, for instance, I have used simulations and policy dilemmas to help students connect theoretical debates on statebuilding, transitional justice, and post-conflict governance to the practical and ethical difficulties faced by actors in the field. These activities are always anchored in the readings, so that interaction strengthens analytical rigour rather than replacing it.

My ambition as a teacher is to create classrooms that are inclusive, intellectually demanding, and socially engaged. Inclusivity, for me, does not mean lowering expectations, but diversifying the routes through which students can enter complex material. This is particularly important when teaching sensitive topics such as atrocity, suicide, trauma, racism, colonial violence, and war. I aim to

create a classroom environment in which students feel able to participate, disagree, and take intellectual risks. In a contemporary classroom shaped by artificial intelligence and rapidly changing public debate, I also see teaching as a way of cultivating judgement; e.g., the ability to assess evidence, interpret narratives, recognise the limits of one's assumptions, and formulate responsible arguments.

As a Fellow in International Relations at LSE (2026-2028), I teach IR100 Introduction to International Relations: Theories, Concepts, and Debates and IR4A1 International Relations: Core Theories and Debates, and lead MSc dissertation seminars (IR499), where my experience with qualitative, interpretive, and fieldwork-based research design is directly relevant. I am also an academic mentor for the MSc International Relations (Research), and I have supported MSc students through dissertation surgeries, helping them refine research questions, develop feasible projects, and move from broad interests to rigorous analytical designs. I am well placed to teach introductory and advanced courses in International Relations, conflict and peacebuilding, and political theory, to contribute to methods teaching and dissertation supervision, and to help students connect academic debates to the political worlds they seek to understand.