NEW APPROACHES IN POLITICAL EDUCATION: COURSE PORTFOLIO APPLIED ON POLITICAL CULTURE COURSE

SUMMARY

Paper deals with three main aspects of a new course implementation within new study of public communication and with impact of new lecturing methodology in university teaching. Educational aspect refers to the content of Political Culture course as a certain knowledge that enables understanding, recognizing and analyzing socio-cultural origins of political phenomena (particularly those related to democratization process) as well as a significant part of civic education. Methodological aspect refers to the practical implementation of Scholarship of teaching and learning through the Course Portfolio as an interactive and reflective form of teaching and learning performance. It represents the intellectual integrity of teaching and learning on a very distinctive way. By capturing and analyzing coherence among design, implementation and outcomes through research and reflective relationship through communication, it allows permanent improving of lecturing and learning process and reaching a professional excellence. Informational aspect refers to the knowledge sharing and information exchange (with students, peers in the discipline and public interested in a subject) through the interactive web site. Putting Course Portfolio on the web means a new way of communication. Through the web faculty can make their teaching/learning experience publicly accessible, share and exchange it and get a much wider feedback necessary for their work evaluation and improvement.

Key words: Political Culture, Course Portfolio, Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, Knowledge sharing, Communication.

1. Introduction

Establishing of the new study in a field of public communication that should educate capable and skilled prospective professionals, among the

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others, puts up a demanding task of civic education designing as one of fundamental parts of their professional education and prerequisite for their civic and political competences as citizens. So, design and implementation of the new course, as the main course with civic education mission, has to follow the newest trends and achievements in university schooling. In order to be successful, such endeavor has to be strongly oriented toward highest professional standards in a discipline and toward building of critical thinking as an essential skill.

As students becoming adult, they should begin to think of themselves as a citizens with opinions that matter, and they should understand both theirs rights and responsibilities as a citizens. Furthermore, as prospective graduates (in a field of social sciences) and professionals (in public communication area) they should be able to understand, recognize and critically analyze political, cultural and social subjects and processes in society, clearly and rationally.

Regarding transferable skills, we argue that critical thinking has to be considered as a very important skill for students. So, we are always trying to encourage them to challenge not only the conventional wisdom (in this course it is about politics and democracy), but also their own preconceived notions about the subject matter. They have to gain at least two critical perspectives: accept and understand other's viewpoints and beliefs, and, at the same time, build and strengthen their own viewpoints and beliefs.

If we consider high schooling objectives, this one probably is most important. If we could make our prospective graduates able to think critically, able to synthesize information and differing viewpoints, and can engage them in life-long learning, we will succeed on two ways: as a scholars who teach them to be a good professionals and as one who help to build their social awareness and active citizenship. So, we don't see ourselves as someone whose job it is just to delivery knowledge in the classroom.

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1 It is about "Media and Social Culture", new undergraduate study of mass media and public relations regularly ran at the University of Dubrovnik - Department of Communication Science, since 2004/2005 academic year.
Learning process is not a passive activity and one way communication; it is rather very complex interaction. We always trying to produce a setting in which student generated discussion and learning can take a place. It means that we are giving them opportunity to share theirs opinions and experiences by creating an interactive learning environment to which everyone can contribute, and in the same time getting new knowledge. Critical thinking and active classroom learning can best be facilitated by teaching styles that make the subject both interesting and relevant to the student. Therefore, teaching process always has to enable new and different perspectives on issues and ideas and opportunities to stimulate various views and critical thinking.

It is important to say that communication (at various levels) is essential matter of this topic as well; it is always in the heart of methodologies for reaching teaching excellence and highest learning outcomes. So, this paper deals both with implementation of new content and new lecturing methodology in university teaching at the level of a single course.

This paper considers three main aspects:

1. **Educational aspect:** deals with establishing of new course (content) within new study program. Political culture is significant part of civic education (education for democratic citizenship). Purpose of the course is achieving of certain knowledge that enables understanding, recognizing and analyzing contemporary political phenomena (especially democratization process and nature of the political, social and cultural changes in transitional societies) as well as an adoption of civic culture values and patterns as socio-cultural basis of democracy.

2. **Methodological aspect:** includes a practical implementation of Scholarship of teaching and learning concept through the Course
Portfolio as an interactive and reflective form of teaching and learning performance.

3. *Informational aspect:* assumes teaching/learning experience and information sharing (with students, peers in the discipline and public interested in a field) through the interactive web site. Thereby, this web site has two purposes: a) it is an information resource and aid to the student’s learning, and b) it is a place for information and experience sharing.

Hereinafter we will try to explain importance of new course content as well as theoretical foundations of these methodological innovations through certain teaching/learning methodology as plausible and useful practice in order to achieve both the course goals and the teaching excellence. Regarding informational point of view (interactive web site), it is possible to talk about certain knowledge that becomes a public property. In a way, it also could be considered as a certain contribution to process of building society of knowledge.

2. Political culture overview

2.1. On the Political Culture

Political culture implies the orientations among the citizens toward their political system. Or, in other words, Political culture is a distinctive and patterned form of political thought that consists of beliefs on how governmental, political, and economic life should be carried out. These orientations define cognitions, feelings, opinions and behavior of people in political and social life. It is always mediated by the basic values, norms and beliefs of certain society.

Political culture is the product both of political socialization and political experience. Political cultures create a framework for political change
and they are unique to various societies and to different social structures. It is important to make a difference between a political culture and political ideology. Political ideology is an integrated set of political beliefs. Political culture refers to beliefs that are very widely held, but not with any great awareness of it. They are accumulated from the socialization process. Political culture differs from political ideology in that people can disagree on an ideology (or what government should do) but still shares a common political culture (see: Almond, Verba, 2000, Dalton, 2006, Inglehart, 1995, Pye, 1965, 2003, Verba, 1965).

2.2. Importance of political culture in the democratization process

Institutional and normative constitution of democracy is not sufficient for the effective democracy. Yet it is very important, but democracy does not mean only democratic institutions and formal democratic procedure. Furthermore, democracy means acceptance of the democratic values on the individual level. If there is no subjective conviction that democracy is good for each individual and that it is the better than other regimes (especially non democratic), effective democracy is not possible (see: Almond and Verba, 2000, Diamond, 1999, Eckstein, 1992, Fuchs, Roller, 1998, Edvardsen, 1997, Huntington, 1991, 1996, Jacobs, Müller, Pickel, 2003). This is very important and actual in nowadays transitional societies. The lack of the socio-cultural prerequisites of democracy and impact of non democratic political inheritance in these societies are so obvious. These circumstances are probably the greatest obstacles in democratization process, much more than economic and modernization issues.

Developed democracies show us that only the civic culture supports democratic regime and obtains effective democracy. Knowing and understanding democracy is the first requisite for accepting democracy and behaving according to democratic values (to be an active citizen). Democracy is an empty form without engaged citizens, and we argue that a civic and
liberal education can give raise to the student - citizen who asks, who is aware, and who knows how democracy works (see: Inglehart and Welzel, 2005, Putnam, 1993). So, civic education as an education for democracy has the key role in civic culture developing. Political Culture course should be significant part of that process on the high schooling level. Therefore, this course has to be taught on new and modern way concerning both its content and methodology.

2.3. Content of the course within the discipline

Political Culture is an integral part of Political Science; actually it is a basic discipline within the Comparative Politics. Political culture is one of the central research themes in contemporary Political Science. By definition, Political Culture is the pattern of individual attitudes and orientations toward politics among the members of a political system. It is the subjective realm that underlies and gives meaning to political actions. So, political culture is the key cause which determining and shaping political systems and political changes in societies, especially in transitional societies on their way toward democracy.

This course examines the concept of political culture and seeks to assess its value in explaining political outcomes. Course also examines the development of the political culture and particularly its relationship to democratic development.

Knowing features and recognizing elements and functions of political culture enables to students understanding social, political and cultural environment. In public communication studies it is essential because prospective public communication professionals have to understand nature and mechanisms of the socio-cultural and political processes which takes a place in the overall society. Only if they could properly understand it, they could mediate public opinion on the appropriate way. Moreover, they could
much better determine the ways in which their professional engagement should to be directed.

**2.4. Place of the course within the curriculum**

Political Culture course is one of the fundamental general courses. Understanding of cultural and subjective side of politics is essential for the prospective media and public relations professionals. Political Culture will provide students with a deep and comprehensive understanding of the subjective side of politics and its huge and essential impact on the political behavior, political processes and political structure. Also, concept of Political Culture is crucial in understanding how cultural conditions, values and attitudes directing entire societies and political systems into certain ways. Special attention is on the civic culture as a socio-cultural base of democracy. This way, course has a very important role in the civic education (education for democracy).

The notion of political culture bridges disciplines. It is usually addressed in Political Science, but it is also supposed drawing its inspiration from and intellectual resources from outside of its field (from sociology, history, anthropology, cultural studies, modernization and economic theories and media studies). So, this course is very closely connected with several other courses, general and professional as well. This course will provide students with specific knowledge that makes them much easier to understand content of some other courses and makes them able to think interdisciplinary. Course completing assumes an appropriate previous knowledge.²

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² This course is relatively complex and demanded, but quite appropriate for this stage (3rd year of undergraduate study). Successfully accomplishing aims of the course is based on the knowledge achieved from previous academic years, especially on courses within Political Science field (Introduction to Political Science, History of Political Ideas, Contemporary Political Ideas and Croatian Political System).
2.5. Course Goals

The goal of this course is to provide students with relevant notions, elements and features of political culture, discuss theoretical approaches to various types and forms of political culture and to develop a more complete understanding of the complex nature of contemporary social and political processes, theirs causes, sources, flows and directions. Another goal of the course is to introduce students to the key role of political culture during the transition towards democracy, especially its essential influence to the process of the democratization and consolidation of democracy. Democracy is very significant concern of this course, both necessary cultural conditions to its establishing and the values for its promotion. Also, the goal of this course is to make students basically skilled to autonomous research in a field. In order to achieve that, students will examine some basic research methods.

2.6. Course Outcomes

Expected outcomes of this course are enhancement and improvement of students' knowledge and significantly increased ability in the recognizing, understanding and critical analyzing of political reality. Beside overall benefit this knowledge also targeting one very special purpose. Namely, this knowledge is necessary for the understanding of some contemporary political phenomena, especially democratization process and nature of the political, social and cultural changes in transitional societies. It means knowing and understanding what are the cultural prerequisites of democracy, what aspects of political culture facilitate democratic politics and governmental performance, and what forms and reforms a political culture. It is expected that acquired knowledge in the political culture will improve understanding of civic culture, enhance acceptance of democratic values and increase awareness and sensitivity for democratic issues.
3. Theoretical Framework: Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

Teachers may care deeply about their courses, their students, and their department’s curriculum but they do not usually see their own teaching and learning as matter for scholarly inquiry and communication (Huber, 2002: 25). Nevertheless, they could be very successful, but such achievements are usually achieved rather intuitively and with routine or based on previous experience than by reflected feedback and data based on research. Also, teachers so often have to carry out their work in isolation from their colleagues. The result is that those who engage in innovative acts of teaching don’t have many opportunities to build on the work of others. The Scholarship of Teaching seeks to render teaching public, subject to critical evaluation, and usable to others in the field. So, viewing teaching as scholarly work is essential (see: Boyer, 1990).

The Scholarship of Teaching is the scholarly inquiry into the teaching and learning process. By engaging in the Scholarship of Teaching, teacher merges his/her knowledge of teaching and pedagogy with his/her skills as researcher. Teacher as a scholar looks critically at his/her own teaching, often conducting research in own classroom, share findings with others, and engages in scholarly conversations to promote the advancement of teaching.

The quality of teaching and learning at universities has received much attention over the past fifteen years and there has been much debate about what sort of teaching encourages effective learning. The Scholarship of Teaching and Learning is becoming an established form of academic research, mostly in the American higher education. On its way to becoming an international academic movement it aimed at putting the scholar in the classroom as well as the classroom in the scholar’s focus. Scholarship of teaching and learning today is an international trend which rests on a
broadening of the understanding of research developed first by Boyer (1990),
and subsequently by a number of scholars in America and beyond.³

The concept is based on the idea of the intellectual and academic
value of all interconnected forms of academic work: discovery, integration,
application and teaching. Boyer’s main thesis does not focus on teaching in
isolation but on teaching as a part of the larger complex of academic work.
He argues that we should let go off the tired old research versus teaching
argument and focus on the idea that scholarship exists in all aspects of our
academic work.⁴ He suggested there are four separate, but overlapping areas
of scholarship:

- the scholarship of discovery – which is close to the old idea of
  research;
- the scholarship of integration - which involves making connections
  across the disciplines and placing the specialties in larger context;
- the scholarship of application - which goes beyond the application of
  research and develops a vital interaction and so informs the other;
- the scholarship of teaching - which both educates and attracts future
  scholars by communicating the beauty and enlightenment at the heart
  of significant knowledge (Boyer, 1990: 16-25).

In the middle of scholarship of teaching and learning process is an
issue related to teaching in practice, leading to an enquiry aimed at
improving student learning. "It takes a deliberate act to look at teaching from

³ For many in higher education, the movement history begins with Scholarship Reconsidered, the 1990 report by
Ernest Boyer, writing as president of The Carnegie Foundation. Beside The Carnegie Foundation Academy (who
is main Scholarship of Teaching and Learning supporter and promoter) lot of institutions in USA provides
programs for encouraging and supporting faculty members to become scholarly teachers and contribute to the
scholarship of teaching (Stanford University, Miami University, University of Georgia and University of
Wisconsin were among the first and started almost 20 years ago). Today, all the most distinguished US
universities apply and develop scholarship of teaching as the AAHE (American Association of Higher
Education) high standard of teaching excellence.

⁴ Boyer pleaded for moving beyond the tired old “teaching versus research” debate and to give the familiar and
honorable term "scholarship" a broader, more capacious meaning, one that includes discovery, integration,
application, and teaching as four distinct but interrelated dimensions (see: Boyer, 1990).
the perspective of student learning" (Bass, 1999: 6). But, academic aspect of teaching does not automatically become scholarly. Scholarship of teaching, in order to be a scholarship, needs to exhibit some general characteristics. "For an activity to be designated as scholarship, it should manifest at least three characteristics: it should be public, susceptible to critical review and evaluation, and accessible for exchange and use by other members of one’s scholarly community” (Shulman, 1999: 5). Richlin (2001) also argues, “The scholarship part of the process involves composing selected portions of the investigation and findings (or integration or reflection) into a manuscript to be submitted to an appropriate journal or conference venue." There are two essential elements to the scholarly process: a) systematic observation of the teaching/learning connection, and b) putting the results of a teaching intervention into context. Scholarly teaching includes only former, the scholarship of teaching requires both. Another important and critical step is to document a baseline of activity (especially student’s behavior and learning outcomes). Then, the next step is to study what the others have done as an essential part of scholarly inquiry in order to avoid duplicating ineffective practice and building on what is already known (Richlin, 2001: 2-3). Martin, Benjamin, Prosser, and Trigwell (1999) argues that the scholarship of teaching is three related activities: engagement with the existing knowledge on teaching and learning, self-reflection on teaching and learning in ones discipline, and public sharing of ideas about teaching and learning within the discipline.

The last part of the concept is very important because it assumes not only scientific reviewing (like usually papers published in journals), but also sharing and exchanging of knowledge in much wider public. Today, when Internet exists with all its abilities, it seems that there are no obstacles for unlimited knowledge and experience sharing. Moreover, Shulman describes teaching as a community property and sees communication as a key element. He describes the contrast between the experience of pedagogical solitude and the life of scholars, who "are members of active communities:
communities of conversation, communities of evaluation, communities in which we gather with others in our invisible colleges to exchange our findings, our methods, and our excuses" (Shulman, 1993: 6-7). His another key element is that scholarship producing some form of community property that has to be shared, discussed, critiqued, exchanged and built on. By communicating we gains resources for the further development of scholarly teaching. We communicate what we are doing locally so other colleagues within the discipline and students as well can be helped to learn and more can be known about how the learning is achieved and how thinking and knowledge is structured in the areas. It is about reflective practice and it is about active dissemination of that practice for the benefit of learning and teaching.

Scholarly peer review, as a collaboration to improve student learning in a specific course or discipline is another important part of this concept. Peer review provides a strategy to enable colleague(s) from the same academic discipline to examine, inquire and reflect on our teaching and our students' learning in a systematic and purposeful manner. These activities could be in a form of reciprocal classroom visits, interviewing each other's students, examining student work, curriculum materials, etc. The activities and the discussion are designed to provide insight into new and improved pedagogical ideas. A peer review fosters peer collaboration and mutual influence among teachers, thereby produces a general improvement in lecturing process. Today it's usually that lecturers work on their courses mostly in solitude and such way of collaboration is relatively rare, but it could be very useful.

Scholarship of teaching, teaching expertise and teaching excellence has to be considered as distinguished contents (see: Kreber, 2002). Excellence is what happens when teaching is of high quality. Teaching expertise is when literature and reflection is used in order to improve
teaching. Scholarship of teaching is when the teacher goes public and peer review is used in order to find ways for further improvement.

Scholarship of teaching and learning is already proven as a concept which fosters significant, long-lasting learning for all students; enhances the practice and profession of teaching and brings to faculty’s work as teachers the recognition and reward afforded to other forms of scholarly work. Scholarship of teaching also represents a form of teacher’s research or reflective investigation into student learning in one’s own classroom and discipline which is to contribute to the debate on teaching and learning. For the purpose of this paper it is important to say that scholarship of teaching and learning provides a complete theoretical foundation for Course Portfolio designing and implementing as a practical realization of this concept.5

4. Course Portfolio

4.1. What is Course Portfolio?

Portfolio as itself is already known method in fashion business, photography, architecture, art and some other branches. It is usually used and recognized as to document and display theirs best work. In some educational contexts, such as the teaching of writing, student portfolios have long been a part of the teaching and assessment. But Course Portfolio is the sort of "full-bodied" way of representing teacher’s pedagogical work (Hutchings, 1998 a: 13). Yet, Course Portfolio is more than that, it is a reflective way which enables teachers to discus scholarly and the pedagogical aspects of their teaching and student’s learning.

Course portfolio is a new and modern approach in university teaching on the level of a single course. It supports innovative teaching and promotes

5 Author is participant of Course Portfolio Project held at Curriculum Resource Center of Central European University in Budapest, Hungary. Full implementation of this project is ongoing at the Media and Social Culture undergraduate study at the University of Dubrovnik through Political Culture Course in academic year 2006/07.
advanced methods in lecturing process. In the same time, it fosters students for deeper and more efficient learning. Course Portfolio is a collection of various documents and attachments concerning the matter of the course on various ways and from various viewpoints. But Course Portfolio is not only a collection of materials related to the course. In contrast to the typical teaching portfolio, in which the faculty documents practice in a range of instructional context over time, Course Portfolio focuses on the unfolding of a single course, from conception to results. So, it is rather a qualitative study of the course, a sort of self reflected study of relationships between what we do as teachers and what students do as learners. Hence, it concerns important aspects of course delivering to the students, both teaching and learning experiences and critical evaluation as well in order to find out and establish the best teaching practice possible.\(^6\)

Course Portfolio means an interaction between teaching and learning. The lens of the teaching portfolio focuses on the teacher. By contrast, a course portfolio is a wide angle lens that includes learner performance as well as teacher performance, and the relation between them is at the center of the picture. In this wide angle view of optimal teaching, learners acquire deeper understanding as a result of teaching, and teaching practices evolve as a function of their success in generating understanding. The distinctive focus of the Course portfolio is in revealing how teacher practice and student performance are connected with each other (Bernstein, 1998: 77). So, Course Portfolio, more than anything else, is reflective practice. One measure of teaching effectiveness is student learning, but it is not sufficient. Course Portfolio is an instrument for embodying the idea that excellent teaching is teaching from which the teacher also learns. That is teaching in which faculty do not simply undertake the tasks of teaching but undertake them as reflective practitioners enquiring their own practice and going public

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with their questions, findings and new ideas. Again, an analogy to other scholarly (scientific) work is appropriate (Hutchings, 1998 b: 51).

Designing and preparing a Course Portfolio is an intellectually demanding and time consuming activity. Lecturer should seriously consider the commitment necessary to complete the portfolio. On the other hand, portfolio provides an excellent means of communicating publicly the work behind good teaching. That way, Course Portfolio allows for possible external review of the scholarship of teaching, similar to a journal article making possible the review of traditional research.\(^7\)

4.2. Course Portfolio as research

Course Portfolio establishes a special relation between teaching performance and learning outcomes, so it puts up that relationship as the matter of scientific investigation. Therefore, it should to be considered as a research. Implementation of innovations in lecturing process and measuring their effects and impact on student's knowledge and skills progress is directly in function of further improving both teaching methods and learning results.

Cerbin describes how he came to see teaching as a sort of laboratory or experiment, subject to scholarly investigation: "I was familiar with teaching portfolios... But thinking about teaching as scholarly inquiry began to lead me in the direction of something I had not seen anyone else doing: a portfolio that focused on the course rather than on one's teaching. Being a social scientist, I began to think of each course... as a kind of laboratory — not as a controlled experiment, but as a setting in which you start out with

\(^7\) Portfolio considered as a research method, as an investigation, would follow a model of research paper, raising questions, testing outcomes against expectation, measuring achievement and critically analyzing the course as one would any other experimental or clinical intervention. This model of the Course Portfolio bears the closest resemblance to work in the scholarship discovery. It allows us to ask what we now know that we didn’t know before about the teaching of this area, and how we might redesign our teaching practice in the future (Shulman, 1998: 10; also see: Huber, 2002: 31-32 and Rowland, 2000: 14-16, 21-25).
goals for student learning, then you adopt teaching practices that you think will accomplish these. So the course portfolio was a natural way for me to go, one that followed from my ideas about teaching and learning. I'm not sure I saw this immediately, but one thing I now see is that the course portfolio is really like a scholarly manuscript — not a finished publication, but a manuscript, a draft, of ongoing inquiry” (Cerbin, 1996: 52-53).

Course portfolio is principally classroom research. It requires active engagement of students and teachers. Actually, students become partners in the research and share the analysis and interpretation of the results. Research is also enriched by discussion and collaboration with colleagues. Purpose of this research is deeper understanding about how students learn, it benefits from full discussion and participation by all who have something to contribute. This research is demanding and responsible. It builds upon the knowledge base of research on teaching and learning and it requires the identification of a researchable question, the careful planning of an appropriate research design and consideration of the implications of the research for practice. This research is continual in the sense that changes suggested by the research are treated as experiments requiring continual evaluation and modification. So, classroom research is more a process than a product (Cross and Steadman, 1996: 3-4).

Course Portfolio put the focus on students’ learning and consider how students understand (or don’t) our explanations and queries; what sorts of misconceptions or questions about our fields they bring or construct; how we monitor and help direct their learning through appropriate assignments, exams, projects, and what new understanding they leave by the end of a class or the course.9

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8 Classroom research focuses attention of teacher and students on observing and improving learning, rather than on observing and improving teaching. Through systematic and careful study of learning, teachers are gaining insight and understanding how their teaching could be more effective as well as students gaining lifelong skills of assessing and improving their learning (Cross and Steadman, 1996: 2).

9 Portfolio serves as an aid to memory (What worked, what didn’t?) and it helps in investigating student learning (Are they learning what I am teaching? Are they getting it? What happens to their understanding of the field
4.3. Course Portfolio goals and outcomes

Political Culture is a new course and important component within above mentioned undergraduate study program. It is new by its content, way of lecturing, and methods of assessment and evaluating. Its main intention and aim is to provide students with significant knowledge and critical skills regarding certain political phenomena. In order to accomplish this goal, this course needs to be designed and performed on more advanced and detailed way. From this point of view, Course Portfolio is selected as the most appropriate way to do it, so it has important role in course design and its realization.

So, Course Portfolio is used as a method for achieving both the course goals and teaching/learning objectives. In other words, through the various items of its content, portfolio project will be a kind of a learning guide for the students as well as teaching and methodological plan for the teacher. It will collect at one place all necessary parts and aspects of this new course and modern teaching approach. Also, it will offer reflections on the content, teaching methods and success of course’s mission.

Finally, we would like to put this Course Portfolio on the web as a public resource with relevant data of course design as well as teaching and learning experiences. So, it will be accessible to other professionals and public interested in a subject in order to share knowledge and improve their own courses and examine better teaching methods, or at least create their pedagogical curiosity.
4.4. Course Portfolio content

Course Portfolio encompasses a collection of various documents. It contains extended course syllabus, interactive website, course reader (textbook with chosen texts as an addition to mandatory readings), journal of course design and journal of course implementation, reflective essay(s) on findings regarding teaching experiences, relationship between implementing teaching methods and student reflections and overall learning outcomes, peer and student’s course evaluation results and self assessment on the whole course.

4.5. Lecturing methods and teaching innovations

Lecturing methods are adapted in accordance with the course goals and learning outcomes as well. It means that methods are subjected to problem centered learning and understanding as the most important goals, then to theoretical issues, and finally on memorizing. It is very important to keep student’s attention all the time during the lecture (it is a minimum requirement for successfully teaching). Furthermore, it is very important to involve most of the students to participate because it is best way to make a positive and creative atmosphere to learning. In order to achieve this, it is necessary to move far from classical teaching methods and make improvements, namely involve some significant innovations (see details in Appendix).

4.6. Course Portfolio realization

Course Portfolio is to be accomplished gradually, through several stages. They are as follows:

1. The first stage of the portfolio is focused on the extended course syllabus design;
2. The second stage, focus is on the carefully choosing texts for the course reader;
3. The third stage is planned for a website design provided with all content and functions;
4. The fourth stage embracing a period of course delivering and implementing teaching methods. It also includes documenting and analyzing student’s progress, locating and solving problems in lecturing process and student’s comments. Special attention within this stage has to be paid on the student assessment and course evaluation;
5. Finally, the fifth stage is dedicated to the summarizing of analysis and findings in order to assess accomplishment of objectives and effectiveness of applied teaching methods.

Student’s assessment has an important role in course realization, both assessing and motivate. Also, it is necessary to say that course evaluation process is particularly important part of Course Portfolio realization as a certain method of monitoring and estimating overall teaching and learning process. Deliberated and certain approach in these two processes is essential in achieving success of overall course mission (see details in Appendix).

5. Go public

Peer review in portfolio implementation is regarded as necessary and positive. It is how the quality of our scholarly work is validated and it also serves as a valuable forum for exchanging criticism respectfully. Yet to what

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10 Instead of the results, at this moment it is appropriate just to mention some preliminary indicators because project realization is still ongoing. Evaluated elements are: classes (communication, learning), teaching materials (delivery, complexity and interest), importance of course subject (personally and for prospective profession), lecturer (capability, performance) and course web pages contribution to course quality (function, content, usefulness, and help in learning). Partial results of first probe so far indicate student’s positive evaluating almost all of the innovations as useful in learning process as well as peer evaluator’s opinion. However, conclusions on realization success could be done after final evaluation at the end of semester when all results will be known, collected and analyzed.
degree do we avail ourselves of peer review in teaching? Discussion among peers can transform teaching from one-dimensional interaction between teacher and student into a much wider network. The challenge of teaching can be shared. A teacher who embraces the professional community as well as public interested in subject means to achieve shared goals in education.

Peer review is the first step into "go public" orientation, but it is not sufficient. Intention of Course Portfolio publishing on the Web is to make reflections about teaching publicly available. Why Course Portfolio putting on the web is important? Discussions in the real world are often lost and the results obtained rarely used by anyone else. Before the Internet came along, scholar information was exchanged in journals and conferences. The Internet has since enabled us to exchange information on the web and offered us to post information in different ways and forms (web sites, web logs, discussion boards, etc.). Putting Course Portfolio on the web is a way through which faculty can document their teaching/learning experience and "go public" for purpose of making it publicly accessible and to getting wider feedback necessary for the improvement or evaluation. There are several benefits of it:

- It is a resource of various texts, documents, links to other contents on the Internet and information which serves an aid to student’s learning and easier and better accomplishing of course materials;
- It is a source of certain knowledge, methodology and experiences of teaching and learning process, a sort of systematic and comprehensive study of implementation of scholarship of teaching and learning. It is intended to be available mainly to the other professionals in order to be discussed, exchanged and used to improve their own teaching/learning methodologies;
- It is a mode of knowledge sharing, a way to making knowledge as a public property in order to be available to everyone who is interested in the subject;
• It makes a new way of communication: bringing a new content into public arena allows a widest possible feedback from various parts of public.

6. Conclusion

We emphasized an importance of political culture and its role in university schooling, both in professional education (particularly in social sciences) and in civic education. Political Culture course is a significant part of that process. Therefore, this course has to be taught on new and modern way concerning both its content and methodology. Main goal is to have our prospective graduates as educated professionals and competent citizens, capable for understanding, recognizing and critically analyzing subject matter.

Developing a new course like that faces the highest prerequisites. It should meet the highest educational standards and reach highly positioned outcomes in a sense of achieving prospective graduate’s competences. Content as it is political culture requires by itself approach different than usually academic practice. Therefore, this assignment is multitasking. We tried to respond to it through the accomplishing of three main aspects (purposes): educational (new content), methodological (Course Portfolio as an innovative and appropriate method based on Scholarship of teaching and learning) and informational (knowledge sharing through the interactive web site).

Teaching is often seen as technique, as presentational method, rather than kind of serious intellectual invention we associate with scholarly work. But for this assignment, we tried to think about the course realization as profound act of scholarship. Scholarship of teaching and learning is about improving students learning by investigating the learning of ones own students and ones own teaching. In other words, scholarship in teaching is
about learning how are students learning and what makes learning possible. It is an investigation of the teaching/learning dynamic and the institutional context, reflection on this, and then changing and adapting practice. Scholarship of teaching and learning crossing discipline boundaries and it is acceptable and convenient for all courses. Yet, long ago, Aristotle said that teaching is the highest form of understanding. So professor Shulman of Stanford is right when argue that the scholarship of teaching is the highest form of scholarship because, unlike any of the other forms, it necessarily includes all of the others.

Course Portfolio arises from Scholarship of teaching and learning as a practical implementation of its principles. Doing a portfolio we put ourselves in position of being a witness and critical reviewer to own classroom practice, so it enables a self-reflection of entire lecturing process. It allow faculty to investigate their teaching and document innovative approaches in order to promote good practice and allow for a debate on teaching and learning, and establish relationship between teaching and research, the content and the method.

Through the interactive web site it brings a new, very specific content into public. That way, Course Portfolio allows clear and descriptive review, available for entire public interested in the subject. Also, it allows a widest possible feedback from various parts of public. Its accessibility is useful both to the students (web site as a resource which serves aid to student's learning and guidance to accomplishing course requirements) and to professionals (peer review and teaching/learning experience exchanging). In the same time it becomes a model of knowledge sharing. It builds a new way of communication (important in respect of a public communication as study program orientation) and it makes knowledge as a public property (important regard the efforts in developing of society of knowledge).
Appendix

**Implemented lecturing methods and teaching innovations**

Some of innovative components will be included in a regular lecturing process:

- Realization of the course is always combination of lecturing and discussion. Power Point presentations are minimum standard of lecturing technique (often supported with multimedia like video clips, DVDs, Internet) and performed in technically well equipped classrooms;
- Using a course’s web site as an integral part of lecturing process and learning guide for students;
- Classes assumes students’ preliminary preparation for specific topic;
- Discussions are in various forms: round table discussion (brain storming on one problem solving), debate (two group discussion with pro et contra argumentation) and free discussion (during the class);
- Case studies relevant for certain lecture subject;
- Work in small groups (occasionally).

**Student's assessment process**

Student's assessment process contains a several parts as elements for students' assessing. These elements are as follows:

- *Classroom Attendance and Participation*: Classroom participation is required. Students are strongly recommended to come well prepared to discussion. Student’s participation grade will be awarded based on lecturer’s perception of their attendance and thoughtful participation in class.
- *Seminar work*: Seminar works are part of regularly seminars and implies short presentation based on certain seminar topic and approach, performed by student. Participating in seminar with presentation is specially evaluated in assessment process.
- *Exams*: Two exams are provided, midterm and final exam. The midterm exam is held after seventh week of the semester. It will cover all the material dealt with in class and in the readings up to the day of the exam. The final exam will be held during final exam week at the time specified by the university scheduler. Examinations are conducted openly and objectively. Students are assessed on the basis of their knowledge and the skills of using different methods in answering and explaining given issues. Focus is on understanding, knowing the issue, recognizing the problem and making comparisons.
- *Final assessment*: Final assessment is summary of student's success achieved in seminar work, midterm and final exams, as well as an
expressed interest and engagement on classes during all the academic year.

According to these elements Course Grading Structure is composed as follows:

- Classroom attendance and participation: 20% of overall grade;
- Short presentation within seminar: 30% of overall grade;
- Midterm exam: 30% of overall grade;
- Final exam: 50% of overall grade;
- Note: Seminar presentation is equally graded as midterm exam. Students who successfully accomplish seminar presentation are not obliged to complete midterm exam.

Course evaluation process

In order to assure the quality best possible in the lecturing process, certain evaluation procedures are provided. These various procedures, which are measuring quality and success of lecturing process, gives an opportunity to the students and some of colleagues (usually a peer evaluator) to express their opinions concerning various aspects of lecturing and teaching process. In the same time, lecturer could use these opinions in order to correct and improve teaching and organizational work with students. Regarding course quality evaluation it is necessary to adduce following elements:

- **Student’s evaluation:** It is realized trough several questionnaires for students grading and analyzing as follows:
  - Complexity of the course content;
  - Interest for the course content;
  - Importance of the course for student;
  - Importance of the course for future profession;
  - Knowledge acquirement;
  - Lecturer’s teaching capabilities;
  - Lecturer’s style (presentation quality and intelligibility of lectures);
  - Course web pages (contribution to course quality and help in learning).

- **Peer evaluation:** Evaluation by colleague (senior professor from same scientific field), his suggestions and advices regarding both course content and quality of course delivering to the students.

- **Self evaluation:** Evaluation by myself after the end of academic year and after collecting all experiences and impressions. Putting down on a paper all cognitions and findings and try to implement it in next year
course realization in order to avoid all weaknesses, mistakes and make further improvements.

Beside journal of designing and implementing Course Portfolio (in a form of evidence base), a reflective essay(s) will be written after course finishing and collecting experiences of implementing all activities and methods described in this Course Portfolio.
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