

Statement of Teaching Philosophy

I view teaching as a bonus to academia. Not only do we get to explore topics that interest us and share them with our community of scholars, but we also are given the opportunity to share this information with fresh, inquiring minds. Through teaching, we are able to inform and challenge students' understanding of their social world. Further, as we teach, we engage in an exchange of information that not only flows from the teacher to the pupil, but from the pupil to the teacher as well. I approach every teaching opportunity with this perspective. Following three important principles, I aim to give my students a quality education experience they can take with them outside of the classroom and apply to their lives.

- *Agents of Learning*

Traditional views of education encompass the idea that the teacher is the source of information and the student, void of knowledge, comes to draw from that source. However, I believe that while a student may be unknowledgeable in certain areas, they are certainly not void of experiences. These experiences lend themselves to construct a knowledge base from which students can draw and add insight to established work. I believe that students have something worthwhile to contribute to pre-existing knowledge, and it is my job to draw that out of them. While I recognize my responsibility as an instructor, I view the student as an agent of meaning. Very little learning will take place where there is very little involvement. Therefore, I encourage involvement and ownership of ones' education experience.

- *Critical thinking*

Perhaps the primary principle of my teaching philosophy is promoting critical thinking through cultivating a collaborative learning environment. Traditional approaches to teaching suggest that students ought to ingest information and never question what is being taught. However, I firmly believe that understanding is best attained when questions are asked. After all, this is what characterizes academia—asking questions. Through asking challenging questions and engaging in open discussion, I aim to encourage my students to become seekers of understanding. As it pertains to media studies and its role in shaping culture, I promote media literacy and challenge my students to not merely ingest, but to reflect on the role of media in their lives and in the world. It is important to me that my teaching is not confined to just disseminating knowledge, but that I produce a class who is able to think for themselves.

- *Relevance*

Another principle that is significant to my philosophy is being relevant. From a speech communication perspective, one must always understand their audience when speaking. This generation of students is bombarded daily with interactive media. It seems fitting to not only be interactive, but to apply what is discussed in class to what they experience outside of class. Further, by creating an open environment to share individual experiences, I hope to give students agency in understanding their own experiences as it relates to course topics. Moreover, this generation of students is a bit more technologically advanced. Therefore, it would make the classroom experience more engaging to implement various technological capabilities (i.e. Youtube, online discussion forums). As my students keep me updated, I use their experiences to keep the learning material fresh, entertaining, and personal.

The job of a teacher may, perhaps, be one of the most thankless positions, but for those who love it, it is one of the most rewarding career experiences. Not only do you get to impart knowledge, but you get to transfer an excitement and passion for learning. As a professor, you are granted an opportunity to help cultivate future leaders, journalists, or entertainers. I'm aware that the experience is not always the same; neither is it always good. However, the few students that come to me after class to continue a discussion or those who seek my counsel for their future plans make the teaching experience all worthwhile.

Combining my research interests with my teaching interests, the optimal courses for me to teach would be those related to media theory, media literacy, and areas pertaining to identity. This may include interpersonal and intercultural communication, as well as general rhetoric courses. I have taken a myriad of courses on cultural communication including African-American rhetoric so I am able to teach in these areas. My interests in teaching are not limited to mass communication only. Considering my background in psychology, I am open to teaching courses in this field, as well. Further, given my background and teaching experience in English, I also welcome courses related to writing including writing for print media.