Teaching Philosophy

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I am committed to creating equitable class environments and rigorous educational experiences that honor students' experiences, knowledge and goals while challenging them to critically engage complex situations and texts. In pursuit of that end, the following principles guide my choices at all stages of course design and delivery.

I prioritize inclusivity and equity in both the class environment and its content.

I recognize that all classroom environments are heterogeneous, with students bringing a wide variety of experiences to their interactions with me, their peers and the course content. To honor that diversity, I select course materials that foreground a range of identities and viewpoints, and introduce students to critical race, disability and feminist theories to emphasize the ethical dimensions of the topics we study. For example, in my class on hacking, I devote a unit to hacking initiatives targeting underrepresented minorities in STEM. The first year I taught this course coincided with the first Trans*H4CK, a hackathon for transgender empowerment, and students interacted with the event's founder on Twitter during a class meeting. I prioritize accessibility in all course documents, and offer ways for students to participate rigorously in classes that accommodate a variety of different needs. In seminars, I often begin class with collaborative writing in a Google doc, which allows equal space for more and less talkative students to shape class discussion. These practices signal that all viewpoints are welcome in the classroom, helping students gain confidence and develop their communication skills, even if they have previously been fearful about writing for academic audiences.

I teach with and about technology to develop practical and critical digital literacies.

Digital literacy is a critical part of every 21st century education, but this is too often interpreted to mean simply the development of technical skills. I teach students how to use different kinds of technology to research, write, and argue – but I also defamiliarize these technologies by teaching students about their history, affordances and limits, to help them analyze technological artifacts and their roles in our lives. When I teach photo editing, for example, students learn how to manipulate images, but also learn that cameras do not simply 'capture' what is in front of them, but are the product of design decisions that limit what they *can* capture. I am keenly aware of issues of equity around technology, and the ways that technologies can both create and foreclose modes of access, so I teach with professional-level software as well as free and open source applications. For example, I developed and published an assignment in which students collaboratively analyze a text using the web annotation platform hypothes.is, which allows students to comment on any online text. I included supporting materials and tutorials for a variety of teaching environments, including computer classrooms, bring-your-own-device classrooms, and library computers. This gives both instructors and students access to multimodal composition and digital humanities practices that are often limited to computer classrooms.

I focus on experiential and transferrable knowledge to honor student agency and highlight the social nature of knowledge production.

My teaching practice employs feminist and critical pedagogy, which emphasizes disrupting the traditional student-teacher power differential to support student agency and expertise. In pursuit of that disruption and to honor the wide variety of experiences, knowledges and goals students bring to the classroom, I focus on experiential and transferrable knowledge, encouraging my students to weave their personal and professional experiences into their work. For example, in my course on hacking, I worked with students to 'hack' the syllabus, collaboratively creating a group assignment modeled on the civil hackathons we had studied in class. Students pitched digital projects then formed teams to implement them, in which each student took on a role consistent with their expertise and goals, and made a unique contribution to the project's success. One group set out to collect on a single website the information students want when registering for classes but can only access by navigating multiple sites, institutional and not: class time and location, of course, but also course evaluations, campus navigability, and their friends' classes, among other factors. Students familiar with web programming built a backend, while a studio artist designed a visual interface and an advertising major created a promotional plan. At the end of the assignment, students crafted both team and individual reflective statements indicating how their work of project management, digital production, and persuasion met the content and learning goals for the course. When students take responsibility for integrating existing and new knowledges, they come to understand the relationships between and values of different fields and practices of expertise.

I design assignments, assessment procedures, and classroom structures that promote metacognitive learning.

We – both students and instructors – are never done learning, especially in rhetoric and cultural studies. In these fields, the texts, structures and situations we engage are constantly in flux, as are the media in which we communicate. So that students can effectively respond to novel stimuli, both in my classes and throughout their careers, I prioritise 'learning to learn'. In my rhetoric and technology classes, students design their own deliverable to persuade a specific audience, identifying the most appropriate genre and medium for their text – for example, an infographic to convey dense statistical information to a time-poor audience. Students develop expertise in multimodal composition, but also learn to select appropriate responses to unfamiliar situations. My assessment strategies also encourage metacognition. My undergraduate writing classes are assessed using the Learning Record, a portfolio-style evidence-based evaluation system. Students develop portfolios of work, personal reflections, and instructor and peer feedback, and use this documentation as evidence in persuasive essays arguing for the grade they have earnt. These essays document both *what* students have learnt and *how* they learned it, evaluating their progress both towards the concrete course goals and as learners. In traditionally-assessed classes, students write, and publish to a class website, critical self-reflections which examine their learning and development over the course of the semester. In both cases, students must examine – and revise – their own practices of learning and remain engaged with the course goals. This helps students develop learning strategies that will serve them both in and beyond the classroom.