

Statement of Teaching Philosophy

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As a teacher of writing, theory, and American literature, I work to create dynamic classrooms in which students of diverse social identities can find community, engage in active-learning experiences, and achieve success by collaborating with one another and with me. My objective in all of my courses is for my students to feel challenged and supported as they develop identities as responsible citizens invested in understanding and creating positive change in their communities. And I hope that my scholarship on pedagogy and my pedagogy-related service to the College render student-centered, high-impact teaching as central to twenty-first century academic work.

My courses allow students to explore texts by a diverse range of authors and topics of interest to them by inviting them to respond to carefully sequenced low- and high-stakes writing prompts—prompts that ask them to write meaningful writing in real genres for real audiences, often through digital means. Among the most important of my assignments is one I give in nearly all of my courses: an assignment that invites multilingual and monolingual students to reflect on their personal goals as writers in English or on how or why they write. This assignment helps them understand that their own idiosyncratic writing practice is very much the subject of my course because an effective process can help them develop better writing. Subsequent assignments ask students to engage in and understand differences among summary, evaluation, and analysis. For instance, my students explore existing perspectives on issues in research proposals. They write analyses of literary or theoretical works by authors such as Barbara Kingsolver or Vershawn Young and then remix their essays into multimodal presentations that they present in in-class conferences. Or they develop iMovies that explain scientific concepts to general audiences and post them to online ePortfolios. In the process, I hope they come to crave both the slow process of revealing complexity in texts and the thorny process of producing writing that moves readers to new ways of thinking and acting. Moreover, I hope that reflections they write about their reading and writing experiences enable them to transfer skills they acquire in my courses to future academic and professional experiences.

Conversation and collaboration function as the centerpieces of my courses because I seek to celebrate reading, writing, and learning as social and idiosyncratic processes. I teach students effective approaches to engaging in dialogue about reading and writing, for instance by asking open-ended questions and providing experiential responses. And I then invite students to work in pairs and in small groups to analyze passages from texts; compare ideas or reflections; and peer review one another's work. My students problem-solve alongside and learn from one another, and when they visit me throughout the semester to talk about their drafts during extensive office hours I hold for them, they learn to negotiate my feedback and the values I convey through my rubrics with peer feedback they have received and with their own goals. They learn that expertise in writing constitutes a commitment to returning to a messy process of writing through revision. In full-class discussions that complement our one-to-one and small-group work, students welcome my efforts to decenter my classroom because they see that their peers and I learn from their perspectives. They welcome opportunities for popcorn-style conversations in which they call on one another or exploding atom activities via which they take positions on questions by physically moving to different areas of the room and then discussing their moves. Hence through my courses, my students reshape their essays, their views of the student-teacher relationship as insular, and their views of learning as solitary. Most importantly, they begin to develop a sense of themselves as professionals with valuable insights.

The learning experiences that students and I have in my classrooms inform our work in real-life situations beyond the classroom. I help students see ways in which they can use the work they do in my courses as a foundation for further research and professional development, for instance by publishing peer-reviewed academic articles with them and by mentoring them to present at academic conferences such as the Mid-Atlantic Writing Centers Association Conference. Likewise, I help them apply their learning experiences to professional work experiences, most notably through the Writing Fellows Program I started with support from a Chancellor's Grant. After a semester-long course on writing pedagogy, students emerge as one-to-one mentors themselves and lay groundwork for careers across disciplines that will require them to work as effective mentors. I also help my students develop connections with professional writers, editors, and educators who mentor them in internships, for instance in the Office of Strategic Communications at University Park. In turn, I work to develop my own pedagogical expertise by publishing on teaching-related subjects in journals such as *Praxis: A Writing Center Journal* and by positioning teaching and learning as central to my service initiatives for the College. I have enjoyed the work of mentoring faculty one-to-one and in professional development meetings as the Writing Program Coordinator; holding workshops for faculty in different disciplines; serving on the Learning Center Task Force and the Retention Committee; and serving on the College's Strategic Planning Committee.

Ultimately, I enjoy teaching because I love to learn from my students—to think about their ideas, experiences, and goals and to use their feedback to think through new approaches to engaging them in meaningful work. I hope my students use my courses as springboards for developing as writers, thinkers, and learners throughout their lives. And I hope they see that through genuine curiosity, critical thinking, and thoughtful writing, they can create positive change in the local, national, and international communities of which they are a part.