

Statement of Teaching Philosophy

As a media and communication professional and educator, I invite students to think critically, produce thoughtfully, and act strategically. In moving students through this process, I advance them from the conceptual to the material and the material to the mobilized. Mobilized concepts make students positively dangerous; they become forces of competence and confidence in the world. Students characterize my teaching as passionate and engaging. I correlate student assessment with my experience as a Peace Corps volunteer in Togo, West Africa. As a girl's education and empowerment extension agent, I adapted to new vocal and cultural communication to promote, sustain, and evolve social connections that met group and community needs. As an academic, I strive to ground my teaching in as well as advance the life-worlds of students.

I will reference my instruction of Media and Society coursework to provide an example of how I help students think critically, produce thoughtfully, and act strategically. Media and Society coursework brings together critical theory as well as advertising, branding, public relations, and strategic communication practice. In lectures about the culture industries, I discuss modern and post-modern consumer culture. Students pair theoretical concepts with produced advertisements and build arguments based on assigned readings. Students challenge the effectiveness and unintended consequences of a brand's work and reflect on what was seen, heard, and read to substantiate positions on how, when, if, and for whom to employ theoretical concepts as future practitioners. Student diagnoses and remedies intersect with workplace scenarios I construct. These scenarios naturally necessitate refinement of the positions and approaches taken by students. When students rework their ideas and efforts in response to

phenomena in professional settings, they refine strategy and are better prepared to adapt to demands in professional spaces.

There are three phases to each class I teach. First, I begin with a summary of previous material and reiterate its place within the course objectives. This reminds students of core concepts, their contextual use, importance, and reduces barriers to the integration of new material related to those concepts. Second, where possible, I weave concepts into a narrative framework that uses mixed media and popular culture. For example, I tell the historical narrative of a South African corporation that uses Native American imagery to brand itself and its products. Through a lecture built on corporate documents and multimedia advertisements, students identify and situate themes of political economy, globalization, and cultural appropriation. Third, I summarize class discussions, highlight key points discussed by myself and the students, and prepare the class for next steps like out-of-class assignments. Each class is a knot in a term-long thread of engagement with learning materials and knowledge retention.

Learning environments are co-productive; I play a role as do students. We meet each other in a realm of productive discomfort. This discomfort, which I synonymize with risk, pushes students as well as myself to find and share new ways of thinking and doing. Tone is also significant to the learning environment. Tone occurs before students enter my classroom via my language in email correspondence and the syllabus: empowering, compassionate, firm. Tone continues as music greets students entering my classroom, adding an element of fun. Finally, tone permeates each class through spoken and body language that encourages vocalization, tolerance, respect of personal space, and self-awareness to identities.

As an educator, I seek to transition students from ways of thinking to ways of doing that prepare them to cooperate and compete in an evolving and connected world.