

As a university educator, I view teaching as a duty and honor with the goal of increasing the capacity of future leaders to think critically and produce and act thoughtfully. Three intentions guide my approach to teaching. First, I strive to excite dormant curiosity in students. To accomplish this, I create multimedia lectures and use narrative conventions, such as slow disclosure, to explore and illustrate theory and practice. Second, I work to steer the existing curiosity of students. I keep an ear out for what motivates them and, where possible, provide resources to dovetail their interests with materials from my course. Third, I bridge what students know to what they do not know. I link current events, popular culture, and fragmented ideas and anxieties students may have about how the world works to theoretical concepts.

As an example of my teaching approach in action, I reference my sole instruction of Media and Society, a core, lower division course for all undergraduate students on critical theory, cultural studies, and communication practice. In a presentation on the culture industry, I use advertisements to illustrate modern and postmodern consumer culture. I invite students to interrogate the advertisements using concepts learned previously, such as Gramsci's hegemony and Barthes' mythologies, and discuss the effectiveness, ineffectiveness, and unintended consequences of the ads. Next, I place students in the role of advertising practitioner, tasking them with reinventing the ads by producing their own. Finally, as a unit, we process the complexities of working as advertisers given our knowledge of the culture industry. In another lecture, I introduce students to a South African company that brands a chain of restaurants through Native American imagery. Using corporate documents and television spots, I contextualize the concepts of political economy, globalization, and cultural appropriation for group discussion.

I apply my professional background, including training and practice in project management, to my role as educator. For example, I structure assignments as milestones for final projects and empower students to self-manage completion. In teaching Strategic Writing and Media Relations, an upper division course, students created and refined a prospectus for a final media kit. The prospectus acted as a road map, where, over the term, students drafted communications collateral, such as a press release for a product or service and a pitch email to a journalist. At the end of the course, students were given the opportunity to revise collateral using my critique of their drafts. Just as in the professional world, students were challenged to incorporate supervisor feedback and improve work quality. I have found this project management approach, utilized in additional courses I've taught or assisted, has led to constructive strategy sessions where students lead brainstorming on how to transition their ideas to completed projects.

I remain flexible and adaptive in my approach to helping students learn and grow, which may include using alternative language and means of communicating abstract concepts. For all students, I strive to balance compassion and empathy with firmness. While the lives of university students can be quite complicated, they have shown me many times that they are resilient. I believe in their potential and ability to do their very best.