

Teaching Philosophy/Statement  
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As an educator I am dedicated to recognizing my role in the larger community of teachers, students, and education in general. My teaching practice centres on student and peer mentorship; personal growth; centering the whole student as a citizen; and diversity and a place for all abilities in the classroom.

My role as an educator is to guide my students in acquiring critical thinking skills that will allow them to better analyze the world around them as they continue their educational journeys, but also as they take their places as full citizens of the world after graduation. I feel that education must be fluid and student-led. That is, knowledge construction must come from students in order for it to be useful, personal, and long-lasting. I strongly believe that the analytical skills and theoretical concepts that I am imparting are skills all students should acquire as part of their lifelong learning. The study of communication, media, and the ways in which we engage with the world around us requires that students are critical thinkers. I encourage my students to question the structures and norms of that culture through examination of cultural objects with which they can identify.

My teaching style is built around the concept of modelling the research community in that I treat my students as fellow researchers with valuable contributions to add to our conversation about the content conversation. I can provide some background for the content through a lecture or short introduction, depending on the length of the class and my role, but the learning comes through discussion and application of the topic. I find students understand a subject best when they can make a personal connection to it, so I regularly make use of cultural artefacts and up-to-date relevant news stories to spark discussion. Making personal connections between real world materials and the theoretical concepts we are discussing often helps students to retain the concept for use in later courses or when considering similar media in their own lives.

Tied to this interest in making meaningful and tangible connections in the classroom, my methods of evaluation are focused on the ideas of applying concepts to case studies rather than technical understanding and regurgitation of terminology or facts. I design evaluations that allow students the opportunity to apply their knowledge through application of research to a real-world case study, creation of a representative object, and collegial discussion where they work through the issues together. Specifically, in a recent course I designed and administered, I asked students to write a final essay applying research to an advertising campaign of their choice, analyze a Super Bowl advertisement for meaning, audience, and success in achieving its goals, discuss the course material together online, and create their own "subvertisements." These activities allow the students to apply the critical knowledge they have gained while also offering them the opportunity to flex their evaluative and creative skills which will all be very useful in their future careers. I place an emphasis on student improvement over time, content and the learning process over formal style, and the potential of an interesting argument over a decent, but obvious argument.

My students are a diverse group that increasingly represent minoritized, low socioeconomic groups, and international students. Additionally, my classes consist of a multitude of both

documented and undocumented disabilities. The demographics of higher education represent challenges that are not always acknowledged directly in the classroom. I begin every course by reminding students that I am there to help them learn and anything I can do to help them do that is going to help the entire group. I try hard to make the education space safe for all people and all questions and I point out that many things are considered accommodations, though we no longer call them that (eyeglasses, using a laptop in the classroom, etc.). My goal is to make the course as accessible, safe, and open as possible with input from my students.

I feel strongly that being an educator does not begin and end in the classroom. It is my job to continually grow for myself, my students, and the health of the program or course I am delivering. This growth comes from three main areas: (1) formalized and non-formalized professional development; (2) regular conversation; and (3) personal reflection. I believe strongly in periodic professional development and I have taken every opportunity offered to me to add to my pedagogical toolset, including completing the [Teaching Assistant Certificate in Teaching](#), an Educational Developers Caucus accredited course, in 2015. The second area of professional development that I find very valuable for all educators is that of discussion. Educators are part of a larger community to which we can all look for collaboration, recommendations, and constructive criticism. Regular engagement in both my research field of study and discussions of education practices ensure that my content, evaluation methods, and teaching methods are up-to-date and under constant consideration to the benefit of my students.

The final area of professional development is, in many ways, the most important: that of self-reflection. Discussion with students and meaningful evaluation from students is an important part of this area, as is peer evaluation. While it is very important to evaluate the effectiveness of course assignments, readings, lectures, and their delivery, this part of professional development is also about reflecting on how my teaching has aligned with my own understanding of what it means to be an educator and my stated goals for the seminar, lecture, the semester, and the course.

I have been fortunate to work within diverse courses and programs and feel comfortable teaching in these areas. In particular, I have a strong background in film and media studies. I am often called upon to guest lecture on topics related to my research in fan studies and marketing practices in the media industries which requires that I provide some context and history for the study of fans and/or the audience. While still an MA student at the University of Lethbridge, I designed and administered a directed reading course on fanfiction and fan studies for a third-year student. I have also designed and administered a third-year course on advertising, which was a critical examination of advertising as a part of the media industries. I have a particular love for introductory courses as I have found the balance of introduction to university content with actual course content to be difficult, but ultimately fulfilling. I also enjoy showing students how the content and skills that they are learning in my classes are transferable to other courses or to their future careers. Beyond this, I would enjoy the ability to teach courses related to the media industries, film franchise creation, the role of the fan in the media industries, transmedia storytelling, audience analysis, advertising, and Canadian film and television content. Finally, I appreciate the opportunity to educate in many different spaces and environments. Working in many different classrooms, both virtual and physical, with different tools and teaching styles has given me the chance to build my own teaching toolkit.