

Teaching Philosophy

I aim to teach initiative, imagination and persistence in research, critical examination of resources and ideas, and clear, creative writing skills. Since my teaching approach is oriented towards challenging students, it seems especially important that I am able to offer guidance, assistance, and encouragement throughout the development of a course. Most students respond positively to challenge, seeing it as a sign of respect, and many find it stimulating. Also, students will take quite a bit of constructive criticism if they believe the instructor is aware of their hard work and supportive of it. Over the course of a writing seminar, my students are expected to master some basic tenets of strong writing, critical thinking, including asking analytical questions, establishing arguable theses, and supporting their claims with evidence. As these skills are deeply linked to critical thinking, focusing on them produces not only better writers, but also fundamentally refined thinkers. This approach has given me a better sense and awareness that an engaged student is more likely to retain information than a passive one.

I nurture a friendly and professional environment by delegating assignments where the students feel their research and collaboration to the course engages everyone in a productive and open discussion and allows everyone to express their candid response or interaction with each other. The incorporation of visual media, sound files, power point presentations, for example, has a role of providing a broader experience in the classroom. Students today come with an intense need to explore and engage in a more interactive and challenging method of delivering content information and data beyond text books. I often serve students from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds including countries in Latin America (Cuba, Mexico, Ecuador, Colombia, Brazil, Argentina) as well as students from mainland China, Taiwan, India, Iran, Australia, Mozambique, and France. The Dutch Anthropologist Geert Hofstede¹, in *Exploring Culture: Exercises, Stories and Synthetic Cultures*, 2002 offers a broader definition of how can one learn and use personal experiences to engage others in the discussion of music. Based on cultural experiences and understandings proposed by Hofstede, I also rely on personal and professional experiences to acquire new information and to promote each individual student by engaging them to explore their natural talent and to present their views and interpretation on assigned topics.

¹ Gert Jan Hofstede, Paul B. Pendersen, and Geert Hofstede, 2002. *Exploring Culture: Exercises, Stories and Synthetic Cultures*. Intercultural Press.

Since every class is different, especially those that differ in topic and size, I pay close attention to teaching evaluations and adjust my approaches each time I teach a new course.

I attempt to match the level of my instruction to that of students' abilities, holding them to high, but attainable, academic standards. Furthermore, I recognize the need for flexibility in my choices regarding both curriculum and teaching methods, tailoring each to the needs of the class. Such adaptability extends also to the departmental level: I am open to assisting my colleagues within the classroom and to accepting new teaching assignments in order to accommodate departmental needs. Furthermore, my approach to teaching is based on responsibilities of a humanities professor in the classroom. Having been inspired by the example of excellent instructors, I often express that what complements any professor pursuit in the independent realm of scholarship is to value the positive and the human qualities of each individual. My students are treated at the highest regard and consideration, and I constantly give them my assurance that I will always expect their class work to be a reflection of their ability to do their best. In this manner, I can advise and offer suggestion on topics or issues that are still needed to be expanded or better explained. This is my view that impassioned teaching as an indispensable complement to any professor's pursuits in the realm of independent scholarly research, and I always welcome professional and positive collaborations.

In my research course, "Applied fieldwork Towards New (Ethno)musicologies" I incorporate additional information and screening fieldwork data to add another layer of information outside the assigned textbooks. I take advantage of the available technology through our digital library and other search engines to obtain specific information on assigned tasks. I also use personal data to complement some of the topics for this course which encompasses: research design and methodology; data gathering, chiefly through the practice of fieldwork; analysis and operations performed on field data; ethnography and modes of representation; history, philosophy, epistemology of fieldwork and ethnography; familiarity with documentary equipment (video, audio); and communication of ethnographic findings.

I continually seek to add variety and engage musical curiosity without sacrificing detail and thoroughness. Utilizing media, technology, and my research interests, my goal is to continue this vital connection between research and teaching, enabling students to gain experience through my own work, as I learn from their experiences.