UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA

TEXTS *and* TECHNOLOGY *Ph.D.*

COLLEGE OF ARTS & HUMANITIES

Spring 2017 Workshop Series
Supplementary Resources: Teaching Statement
February 9, 2017

UCF Workshops: http://www.students.graduate.ucf.edu/PathwaysDescriptions/

The Academic Job Search – February 15, 4:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.
Create a Professional Portfolio – April 19, 4:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

The Basics

The Teaching Philosophy Statement
https://citl.illinois.edu/citl-101/teaching-learning/certificate-support-materials/teaching-philosophy-statement

How To Write A Teaching Statement That Stands Out
http://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/current/development/how-write-teaching-statement-stands-out

Teaching: Not When and Where but What and How
http://theprofessorisin.com/2013/08/23/how-to-describe-teaching-not-when-and-where-but-what-and-how/

Duke Academic Career Preparation: Teaching Statement
https://studentaffairs.duke.edu/career/graduate-students/academic-career-preparation/teaching-statement

Teaching Philosophy Statement - Washington University in St. Louis
https://teachingcenter.wustl.edu/programs/graduate-students-postdocs/applying-for-academic-positions/writing-a-teaching-philosophy-statement/

Cornell University Graduate School Career Guide
http://gradschool.cornell.edu/career-guide/teaching-philosophy-statement

Writing a Teaching Philosophy Statement
http://www.celt.iastate.edu/faculty/document-your-teaching/writing-a-teaching-philosophy-statement

Fine-Tuning Your Statement

The Dreaded Teaching Statement: Eight Pitfalls
http://theprofessorisin.com/2016/09/12/thedreadedteachingstatement/

The Weepy Teaching Statement: Just Say No
http://theprofessorisin.com/2013/01/18/the-weepy-teaching-statement-just-say-no/

Damning Yourself With Faint Praise–Teaching Edition
http://theprofessorisin.com/2012/10/12/damning-yourself-with-faint-praise-teaching-edition/

What the Heck is "Assessment"?
http://theprofessorisin.com/2012/04/12/what-the-heck-is-assessment-a-guest-post/

Writing the Teaching Statement
http://www.sciencemag.org/careers/2006/04/writing-teaching-statement

4 Steps to a Memorable Teaching Philosophy
http://www.chronicle.com/article/4-Steps-to-a-Memorable/124199/

Statement of Teaching Philosophy
http://www.duq.edu/about/centers-and-institutes/center-for-teaching-excellence/academic-careers/landing-an-academic-job/statement-of-teaching-philosophy

University of Pennsylvania Career Services
http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/writtenmaterials/teachingphilosophy.php

Writing a Statement of Teaching Philosophy for the Academic Job Search
http://www.crlt.umich.edu/sites/default/files/resource_files/CRLT_no23.pdf

Sample Statements

UCF Faculty Center for Teaching and Learning
http://www.fctl.ucf.edu/facultysuccess/professionalportfolios/philosophies.php

Yale Center for Teaching and Learning
http://ctl.yale.edu/sites/default/files/basic-page-supplementary-materials-files/sampleteachingstatements.pdf

University of Pennsylvania Career Services
http://www.vpul.upenn.edu/careerservices/writtenmaterials/teachingresearchsamples.php

University of Minnesota Center for Educational Innovation
http://cei.umn.edu/support-services/tutorials/writing-teaching-philosophy/teaching-philosophy-samples

University of Michigan Center for Research on Learning and Teaching
http://www.crlt.umich.edu/tstrategies/tstpum

Sample Teaching Statement

As a teacher, my role is to help students learn to see that cultural institutions and technologies (new and old) are not neutral. I ask them to rise to the challenge of rethinking their assumptions and complicating their understandings of the media. Ultimately, I help them think about media in a new way and engage more critically as cultural consumers, producers, and citizens.

On one hand, this means making the familiar strange. If the challenge in some fields is that the material is too unfamiliar, the challenge for media is that it is too familiar. I work to guide students toward rigorously interrogating the cultural "common sense" around these technologies, as I have found it's entirely possible to deconstruct what seems culturally "obvious" without alienating students, helping them see what is cultural and particular about what seems to be natural or neutral. This means teaching them to pull back from the received wisdom about "How the Internet works" (or gender, or race, or television, or any other topic) to question what leads them to think so, why things might be structured as they are, and most importantly who benefits from the way things currently are. I ask them to try on different perspectives with assignments such as writing Tumblr posts on assigned readings or participating in Twitter discussion before coming to class. This engagement both helps improve their understanding of course material and facilitates useful habits of thinking for everyday life.

Conversely, I make the strange familiar. I challenge students to understand complex social structures as well as experiences they may not share. Technology, media law, economics, and race/class/gender/sexuality are key areas in which I teach. I am both interested in courses specifically devoted to these topics and committed to integrating these modes of analysis into every course that I teach, incorporating analysis of gender in a course on economics or law in a course on technology, for example. I also routinely introduce students to challenging theoretical texts. I assign Walter Benjamin and Jürgen Habermas in Introduction to Media Studies; Judith Butler provides a foundational text on gender in the first week of Gender in the Media; I use Michael Warner to teach about counterpublics in Queer Media Studies. I find that students can and do hold their own with such texts and that having such high expectations, coupled with appropriate support, facilitates my pedagogical goal of expanding student horizons. This support has two prongs: first, I assure them that their pre-class writing is not graded based on whether they understand a text but rather whether they engage and think critically and make connections; second, I pledge to them when assigning such challenging texts that, through my lecture and our collective in-class discussion, they will understand these readings by the end of class on the day we discuss it.

Students consistently give me high quantitative marks on teaching evaluations in "broadening understanding of human thought and achievement" and "stimulating intellectual curiosity." To go along with the numeric measures, I have received qualitative comments from students about my course being "eye opening" and giving them "new perspectives." This type of feedback demonstrates that students, too, value these pedagogical goals.

As part of helping students understand media, I work to get them to see themselves not just as people who are affected by the media but also as people with the capacity to affect the media if they understand how it works. Toward this end, I routinely use assignments designed to help students think about the participatory potential of new media—and the ways it can give us alternatives to entrenched social ideas. For example, one assignment asks them to produce and

distribute a digital video that makes an argument about an aspect of media relevant to the course material. The assignment asks students to look at technologies they have around them already—both personal smartphones, tablets, or PCs and the equipment available to check out through the campus—as possibilities for media creation. Rather than training students on any specific piece of hardware or software, this group project is self-guided and specifically requires them to find ways to use multiple media (video, audio, still images) so that they gain the broadest experience. The video project also provides an opportunity to teach about copyright, fair use, and Creative Commons to help students comply with the law as they collect and remix media sources in their videos. Finally, in asking them to make an argument and support it with evidence, students see that the same analytical skills I asked for in their papers are necessary in producing for other formats. Overall, this is a skill set and a way of orienting oneself toward media that is not only production experience of a practical sort useful in an increasingly social-mediated career landscape but vital for digital citizenship more broadly, and students routinely identify it as among their favorite aspects of the course.

Ultimately, students are best served by learning how to think critically: how to interrogate and understand complex structures and navigate areas where the answers are not simple. Students leave my classes knowing how to ask questions, assess evidence, and make arguments about things that impact their lives. To extend the platitude, my job is not to give them a fish, but it is also not to just teach them how to fish in a particular pond under controlled circumstances. I teach how to figure out how to fish on whatever body of water they encounter. That is what I think we owe our students: a set of tools for rigorous thinking allowing them to act as informed citizens as they produce the future.

Creating an Effective Teaching Philosophy & Portfolio

Adapted from a worksheet by Nancy Ruggeri, Northwestern University (http://www.fctl.ucf.edu/facultysuccess/professionalportfolios/content/teaching_philosophy_activities.pdf)

Your teaching philosophy should be supported with reasoned evidence. If you say, "My role as an instructor is to find ways for students to take ownership of their learning," you should include support for this statement. You might include why you believe this statement to be true, how you practice this in your current or future classroom, or what this means to you personally.

Statement:

Reasoned evidence (beliefs, intents):

Explicit examples supporting statement (actions):

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Writing a Teaching Statement

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What is a Teaching Statement?

- Gives job search committees a window into what you do in the classroom
  - Because they can't observe you
  - To decide whether to invite you to campus
  - It's not the most important document, but it can help you (and doing it badly or skipping it can hurt you)
- It's also a useful exercise to improve your teaching generally, since we don't often sit down and think about these things

Three Groups

- If you brought a sample statement
- If you brainstormed the questions in advance
- None of the above

Brainstorming

- What is it that I believe teaching is really about?
  - Why do you teach? Why do you teach the way you do?
  - What do you believe or value about teaching and student learning?
  - If you had to choose a metaphor for teaching/learning, what would it be?
- What are some of my teaching successes/things I'm proud of?
  - What do you want students to learn? How do you know your goals for students are being met?
  - What are your strengths as a teacher?
  - What specific activities or exercises do you use to engage your students? What do you want your students to learn from these activities?
- How can I set myself apart from other recent PhDs in terms of teaching?
  - What are your growing edges as a teacher?
  - What feedback have students given you? Integrate strong, supportive statements from student course evaluations.
  - How do you utilize multiple pedagogical approaches in your teaching?

Hall of Fame

- What did you see/hear from your group members that you think you want to try?

Key Tips

- This is a persuasive document.
  - Make a claim. Provide some evidence. Explain how your evidence supports your claim.
- Tone matters.
  - You are applying to be their colleague. Act like it. But also even if you are the greatest teacher ever to grace a classroom, don't put it that way.
- Play to your strengths.
  - If you have a lot of experience, go with that. If you didn't have syllabus control, you were working within departmental framing.
- They have WAY too much to read.
  - Be clear and concise and easy to get key points at a glance.

What questions do you have?