<u>**Teaching Statement**</u> - Thaleia Dimitra Doudali - thdoudali@gatech.edu

I'm very passionate about teaching and mentoring students. My teaching vision can be summarized in the following quotes, one being that 'teaching is caring' and that you should 'teach the way you want to be taught'. I describe how I developed this vision and the ways I have already put it into action.

Teaching is caring.

Starting from a young age my first and primary academic role model is my mother, a high school teacher of French. She introduced me to the importance of the learning process and how it not only broadens your knowledge but also your mental abilities and character. Of course this is something that made sense only later in my life, while as a teenager I was struggling to understand why learning a third language would be useful. However, what my mother taught me without her realizing, is the immense love and interest a teacher can have for their students and how much joy and satisfaction someone can gain from teaching. She also taught me that teaching is like giving a gift to someone, where your reward comes from their successful use of your gift, when she was volunteeringly teaching French to financially deprived students.

The act of gifting knowledge and volunteeringly helping students was also showcased very predominantly during my undergraduate degree, where many senior students would gather and help out junior students with their coding assignments of the introductory programming class without being the primary teaching assistants nor being paid for it. That was so impressive and helpful to me and as soon as I passed the class, I joined this group of students and started to grow my love for giving knowledge back. Many times I would stay late with a student making sure he has completed part of his project and fully understood the core underlying concepts. Additionally, I would spend time answering their questions and moderating online discussions at the school's main forum. I would always try to be highly available to the students that needed my help, either in person or online, since this is something I personally appreciated a lot by other students and Professors. For example, during the time I was working on my undergraduate thesis, which was the first time I was exposed into producing a research artifact, I immensely cherished the constant help I received from my advisor, mentor and senior PhD student guiding me through.

During my graduate studies I continue to apply this notion of high availability, patient and focused guidance not only as a teaching assistant for the advanced operating system class, but also as a mentor to junior PhD students, since I have experienced how hard and time consuming it is to find the right approach to research and balance your life and work expectations. If I can help them reach their goal faster and more easily than I did, then I personally feel that I've helped make someone's life better during a stressful time.

Teach the way you want to be taught.

As a student who has gone through a demanding 5-year undergraduate degree consisting of 60 classes, I reached a point where taking exams was very tiring emotionally. That's why I found project-oriented graduate level classes a refreshing change into the way I

was getting evaluated. Although exams are a good way to test students on their knowledge, striking a good balance on the class requirements is indispensable. Additionally, being fairly evaluated is really important, especially in code-based classes with similar projects throughout the years, where online solutions can circulate uncontrollably. The way I personally acted upon such cases as a teaching assistant was to restructure the projects of the advanced operating system class, so as to facilitate plagiarism detection. I also redesigned one project so as to make its context more relevant to modern use cases, while applying the same underlying methodologies. Apart from the evaluation methods, I always highly appreciated professors who have put a lot of effort into preparing their teaching material and delivering a well organized class, especially when they are acting according to the student feedback. This is something I considered very highly as a teaching assistant when students pointed out that the project descriptions had some vague parts, which I immediately fixed.

Finally, as a graduate student I thoroughly enjoyed taking classes that exposed me to the current state-of-the-art practices in my research focus, which is operating systems, as well as relevant areas such as computer architecture, databases and distributed systems. This is a great way to learn about those areas and the best practices used there as well as enrich your own research with ideas that cater for cross stack solutions. By taking such classes I had the opportunity to work with other professors and students from my department towards joint publications. When it's my time to design such classes I already know that I want to design classes that summarize cross stack methodologies and build an environment where I can collaborate with other professors as well as generate publication opportunities for groups of students. Such classes can be with respect to resource and data management on systems with heterogeneous hardware on the compute, memory and storage layers, since my PhD dissertation focused on the memory subsystem. Also, I'm very interested in designing a class that explores how cutting edge methodologies, such as machine learning, can be practically incorporated into future systems, something I also actively explore during my PhD. Again, this is a great opportunity to bridge theory and practice and engage professors and students from diverse research areas.

As a summary, I feel that my personal learning experiences and teaching role models have given me great guidance into how I want to deliver my teaching practices. Being also blessed with a natural talent of a quick grasp and ability to clearly articulate my thoughts, I'm confident that I can effectively transfer knowledge. I've validated this through my interactions with the students of the class I was a teaching assistant, where part of the anonymous feedback said that 'TA could easily understand our questions and always gave crisp, relevant answers'. Most importantly for me I want to help out students to feel accomplished in their lives, through a successful journey in their studies that allows them to develop their skills, interpersonal abilities and self appreciation.