

Kevin Patton's Teaching Statement

My approach to teaching philosophy is centered on finding the right balance between the intuitive and the technical. I believe that a deep understanding of philosophical concepts requires not only a grasp of their technical details but also an intuitive feel for their broader implications. Therefore, I strive to present material in a way that is accessible and engaging, yet rigorous and challenging. This dual focus helps students appreciate the beauty and complexity of philosophical inquiry. Staying current with the latest research on best practices in class structure and assessment is a priority for me. I continually refine my teaching methods based on emerging evidence about what works best in the classroom. This commitment to continuous improvement ensures that my students receive a high-quality education that is grounded in the most effective pedagogical strategies.

Transparency is another cornerstone of my teaching philosophy. I make every aspect of the class clear and accessible to students, from the syllabus and grading criteria to assignment expectations and feedback processes. This transparency fosters a trusting and open learning environment where students feel supported and informed about their progress. I am acutely aware that many students come to my philosophy classes without the preparation necessary for the rigors of philosophical reading, writing, and thinking. The basic public education system often does not equip them with these critical skills. To address this, I rely on pedagogical research to help bridge the gap and support students in developing the abilities they need to succeed. My goal is to meet students where they are and guide them to where they need to be. One of the strategies I employ to support student success is scaffolding readings and assignments. By carefully structuring the progression of course materials and tasks, I help students build their skills incrementally. This approach allows those who struggle at the beginning to find a clear and manageable path to success by the end of the semester. Scaffolding not only aids in comprehension but also boosts student confidence, enabling them to tackle increasingly complex philosophical problems with assurance.

In summary, my teaching approach is characterized by a balance between intuitive and technical instruction, a commitment to staying current with educational research, transparency in all class aspects, an understanding of students' diverse starting points, and the use of scaffolding to support and enhance student learning. Through these methods, I aim to cultivate an engaging, supportive, and effective learning environment for all my students.