

## LAUREN FINK

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### STATEMENT OF TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

My responsibility as a lecturer and advisor is to train students to think critically about the information they consume and provide them with the skills to produce their own arguments and knowledge. I aim to equip students with concrete strategies and to inspire the confidence necessary to accomplish the tasks required of them in academia and beyond. In order to do this, I work to create student-centered learning environments that stress the socially-situated nature of knowledge and communication. I also aim to make the often-opaque practices of academia and scholarly writing transparent to my students. Further, I am explicit about my strategies and motivations. I enlist students' input about what they need from me, how I can meet those needs, whether I am doing so effectively, and whether our communication or working style could be improved. This process encourages students to identify their needs and knowledge gaps – skills that will be crucial for them in becoming independent scholars.

This philosophy dictates that I must:

- Teach courses, or advise projects, that are based on the needs and interests of the student(s).
- Encourage my students to see themselves as independent scholars within a community of peer and advisory support.
- Help students make connections from their work to the world outside academia and to see themselves as life-long learners.
- Offer students opportunities to put theory into practice.
- Provide students the tools and techniques they will need to grow as scholars.
- Assess my students in ways that reflect the various types of gains they have made in their communication skills and academic behaviors.

I enact this philosophy using these strategies:

- My students come from a wide variety of backgrounds, and with a diverse set of needs. My responsibility is to discover the needs of each student and develop an educational trajectory that will challenge them to move beyond where they started. I accomplish this by meeting with my students one-on-one to discuss the student's personal learning objectives for the course or research project.
- I want my students to develop writing and reading practices that will sustain them through their academic and professional careers and allow them to voice their informed opinions based on research and critical thinking. As such, I encourage students to think about the rhetorical context of their own and others' writing (situation, audience, purpose, message, individual identity) and try to instill an understanding that good writing is an iterative process requiring multiple drafts. Peer feedback, oral presentations, and communication to the public are all critical aspects of communicative training.
- It is important for students to engage with primary sources (e.g. peer-reviewed journal articles) and to identify and examine the assumptions and personal preferences present in any text. I urge students to think about the rhetorical choices made by authors, whether appropriate analysis techniques have been used given the problem or data at hand, and whether an authors' claims are adequately supported by their evidence.
- I believe that students themselves must be involved in an assessment of their own work; therefore, a foundational aspect of my pedagogy is to have the students meta-reflect on their learning processes and the growth they have observed in their content knowledge and communication skills over the course or research project.
- Ultimately, my goal is for students to become self-sufficient, actively seeking their own information and solutions. I try to model this behavior for them by making my own process of thinking, problem-solving, information-gathering, and writing as explicit as possible.