

Statement of Teaching Philosophy

My teaching philosophy has been influenced by my diverse experience in higher education as an undergrad, as well as personal influences throughout my life. As a student having attended three undergraduate programs, I understand the importance of fostering a sense of belonging and accessibility. As a high school student, I have experienced teaching methods that emphasized regurgitation and memorization rather than deep understanding and reutilization. Coming from a STEM background, I remember the fine arts being overlooked countless times. Now, as an educator, I am driven by the belief of creating an inclusive, accessible learning environment, encouraging conversation and critical thinking, and emphasizing the marriage between STEM and the arts.

Despite only teaching for a short time, I have come to the understanding that student engagement is driven by comfortability and security. Students must feel comfortable to engage with the material and secure in their abilities to fail. I make space to hear about their thoughts and opinions by allowing time for discussion within lectures. Each class, I allow myself to be humanized by my students, answering fun questions with no real meaning. I ask genuine questions of my students about their days and allow them to discuss their struggles if needed. Instead of seeing students as solely students, I push myself to see them as fully fleshed out human beings that I have the chance to engage with for a short amount of time. This drives me to make my time with the students lighthearted. If they leave my course not remembering how to hang a light or who the grandfather of light design was, I hope they leave remembering how the class I teach was a break from the stress, somewhere they could take a breath.

While I aim to make this course accessible and myself approachable to students, there are expectations I place on my students. I impart on my students an experiential learning model that allows them to truly understand the material through tactile involvement. I focus on explaining

concepts in lectures or model a task during labs, then allow my students to perform the tasks or implement the concepts in their own designs. Following that, I ask students to explain what they did in order to demonstrate their thinking. This model is all in the hopes of giving students agency over their work and confidence in their knowledge. The conversations I have with students aim to influence their own thinking about why or how they make choices as well. I do not come into the course evaluating how aesthetically pleasing their designs are; instead, if they are making choices and are able to justify said choices.

In my classes, I aim to push the understanding that all science has art and all art has science. One specific course I've taught, the Intro to Light Design/Technology, has been passed down from graduate student instructor to graduate student instructor, with little changes over the past 4 years, from my understanding. However, when I began my time as the instructor of record, I noticed a gap of lecture covering the technology aspect of the course, solely educating in the more "artistic" material. In my iteration of the course, ideally, the students learned the basics of electrician work first to build a foundation for their future design education. They learned why light works in the manner it does and how to make it do what they want, with this specific structure. In short, my students learned the science behind design before learning the artistic or aesthetic elements, marrying the idea that art and science go hand in hand. This is especially beneficial when teaching engineers and computer science majors, a large portion of the student body.

While my teaching approach is only summarized here, these three core ideals shape how I interact and engage with my students' education. Humanizing myself to be approachable and create an inclusive learning environment, encouraging confidence through conversation and experience, and attempting to bridge the gap between science and art are the three most

important things I offer as an educator. In every interaction with my students, I hope to build confidence and security within themselves so that they may take that influence further.