

## Teaching Philosophy Statement

Before a person can navigate the nuances of any system, whether a language, a discipline, or a digital platform, they first have to reach a threshold of functional competency. Digital literacy is no different; the tools and platforms affecting contemporary workplaces are evolving faster than most curricula can track, and students who cannot operate fluently in digital spaces find themselves on the outside looking in. In this way, language and literacy both grant and deny access to social networks, academic spaces, professional opportunities, and forms of legitimacy.

I believe students learn best when the work asks something genuine of them and when they are permitted to bring their full selves to the task. They will leave with a working digital literacy: the ability to operate tools, and also the capacity to understand what those tools are doing and why that matters professionally and ethically. Students engage in many ways of demonstrating comprehension of course material that diverge from conventional assignments, such as video essays, infographics, and visual art. In several cases, those projects take longer than a traditional essay would have. Students make work that is inspiring to other students; I can only hope it is because the format aligns with how they personally process and communicate understanding. I scaffold assignments, so students begin with structured, expository work, building the foundational skill of clear communication, before moving toward more abstract or multimodal forms of expression.

Conformity can be a silent summoning; it is easy to apply only the assessment frameworks built for traditional written work. The problem is that assessments designed for non-digital, non-creative contexts might not map cleanly onto digital or multimodal work. Art has long used structured peer response as a primary evaluative tool, asking whether the work is communicating what it intends to communicate to the intended audience. That method transfers

directly to language learning, linguistics, and writing instruction. For expository work, intelligibility is the standard: if the writing does not reach its audience, it needs further development. For creative or multimodal work, I use criteria calibrated to that form, evaluating whether the work communicates what it intends to communicate, whether the process shows genuine intellectual engagement, and whether revision has occurred with purpose.

I value meeting students where they are, rather than where they should be. The instructor's responsibility is to make the path to the material as clear as possible. Providing detailed and lucid instructions is my way of indemnifying a system that rarely lets students be only that, students. I aim to design courses around interaction because writing improves through feedback, revision, and the friction of having to explain yourself to another person; this is an interactionist approach that I value.

Many curricula operate on the assumption that a generation raised online must possess innate technological literacy. This is often not the case, and the onus for this digital competency is placed on students. Walking students through LMS notifications, Microsoft Office, Zoom, and other tools acknowledge that access to the material and access to the tools that deliver those materials are equally important. I am both a first-generation and a returning adult student. Many of my future students will be too, alongside multilingual learners and returning adults navigating academic English alongside other languages they possess, and that shared experience informs how I design every aspect of a course.