

STATEMENT ON TEACHING

A single candle can light thousands, and its life will not be shortened, nor its radiance depleted.
-Buddha

I see teaching as a collaborative role, one in which my primary responsibility is creating an environment that promotes student development while resisting traditional hierarchical relationships between teacher and student. Drawing from Paulo Freire's critique of "empty vessel" approaches to teaching in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, I imagine the learning environment containing not one teacher, but four. As the first teacher, I draw on accumulated knowledge to establish a class structure that will set the students on their path. The second teacher is the work of other artists shared with the class through readings and slide lectures. The third teacher is the student's peers who offer feedback and insight. The fourth, and most important teacher is the student, who brings their own knowledge and experience to the course and ultimately has agency over their learning process. It is my job, as the first teacher, to cultivate an environment of openness so that the student feels safe enough to allow all of the teachers (including themselves) to help them learn and grow.

Whether I am teaching studio courses, art history, writing, or leading a critique, my main focus is engaging the student as a complete individual. This means connecting what we learn in the classroom to their journey of growth as a student as well as their development as an individual within a larger cultural context. When students have completed my course they will have a set of tools to approach their work in new and creative ways, whether it's sculpture, video-making, curating, or studying biology or politics. This is achieved by balancing lectures, readings, and discussions with experiential learning opportunities grounded in Social and Emotional Learning and Healing Informed Strategies.

In a broader view, my courses encourage students to consider discourses regarding the place of visual art within the framework of post-secondary education. Through the concept of "creative response" to readings, students engage with traditionally academic material in innovative ways. While one part of the brain processes written information through the act of reading, and verbal information through class discussion, the "creative response" encourages students to find connections and insight beyond the modes of thinking which are most familiar, allowing for a deeper integration of these important ideas. This might take the form of a poem, video, performance, painting, or sculpture that "responds" to the material being studied.

An important facet of my course design is an individualized system for evaluating student's progress in order to accommodate the varying levels of experience and interests of each class. Beginning students are asked to use a grading rubric I design to evaluate their performance at the end of each project, allowing for reflection and self-correction as needed. This also serves as a starting point in one-on-one meetings should more direct intervention in the student's learning process become necessary. This helps students develop a growth mindset, identify personal strengths, and build a sense of self-efficacy. Advanced students set their own goals and standards of achievement that are tailored to their individual interests. These goals and evaluations, along with class participation and completion of projects, ultimately determine a student's final grade.