Teaching Philosophy

Dr. Michael Barrett, Ph.D.

As an art history educator, I aim to provide my students with a profound understanding and appreciation of the impact that art can have. I firmly believe that art has the power to inspire, challenge, and enrich our lives. I am committed to creating a welcoming and engaging learning environment that encourages an exploration of the complex stories and substantial influence of art history.

My teaching methodology emphasizes active learning and critical thinking. I endeavor to inspire my students to delve deeply into artworks, pose thought-provoking questions, deconstruct visual elements, and examine social, cultural, and historical contexts. I employ horizontal techniques, including visual analysis exercises, group discussions, and hands-on experiences, to enhance observational skills, interpret visual information, and share perspectives.

At the heart of my teaching philosophy lies diversity and inclusivity. Contemporary art history encompasses a range of traditions, unique perspectives, and diverse voices. As such, I am committed to presenting works by underrepresented artists, challenging Eurocentric views, and delving into how socio-political issues, identity, race, and gender intersect with art. By presenting a history that is contemporary and inclusive, I can inspire my students to analyze power dynamics, appreciate the value of diverse perspectives, and acknowledge the wealth of humanity throughout various cultures and periods.

As a pedagogical tool, I utilize technology to impact students' education. By incorporating online resources, developing virtual reality exhibitions, and exploring interactive digital archives, students experience an eclectic range of artwork from across the globe. Additionally, I introduce new media and technology into assignments to encourage students to explore digital archives, create presentations, and develop online art communities. This approach develops technological abilities and provides creative outlets to express interpretations and engage in collaborative learning.

As an educator, nurturing a supportive and inclusive classroom environment is important. My goal is to cultivate a respectful atmosphere that stimulates open dialogue and intellectual curiosity. By constructing a safe space for students to express their thoughts, ask questions, and share their experiences, I aim to facilitate active participation and foster a sense of community within the classroom. Furthermore, I greatly value individuality and recognize that each student brings unique experiences and perspectives that enrich our discussions and elevate our understanding of art history.

I aim to equip my students with the tools of critical thinking, visual literacy, and a lifetime appreciation for the arts. I believe art history can shape our worldview, foster empathy, and inspire innovative solutions to complex challenges. By encouraging my students to engage with art on both an emotional and intellectual level, I empower them

to explore their creative potential, admire the accomplishments of others, and navigate the complexities of our interconnected world.

In essence, my teaching approach centers on empowering students through art history. I am dedicated to fostering a welcoming and inclusive learning space that embraces diversity, integrates technology, and cultivates critical thinking. My primary objective is to inspire students to participate fully in the ongoing discourse of art, equipping them with valuable knowledge and abilities that can be utilized in all areas of their lives. Let us embark together on a fascinating expedition through the enthralling realm of art history, unlocking its impactful potential and uncovering its enduring significance in our lives.