

Pedagogy Statement

The classroom can be a space that holds endless possibilities; a space for learning of course, but also a space for reflection, for growth, for whatever you make it. Although my focus in any classroom is to help students learn, create, and think critically, my true goal is to do so in a way that shows them that all of that can happen and still be exciting and fun. I work to make my classroom a space that is supportive, engaging, and built on student learning and agency by focusing on exploration, collaboration, and inclusion.

Students are encouraged to push boundaries, take risks, and use their work to explore. This can manifest in many different ways—researching a completely new topic, incorporating creative or personal writing, or thinking through complex or controversial concepts. I also support students' exploration of new approaches to creating and sharing meaning. I invite all shapes and sizes of multimodal projects and work to provide students with needed support and ample opportunities to engage with and create such texts. This is accomplished through offering a range of assignment options and incorporating digital and multimodal content in my teaching materials and in-class activities. Multimodal projects give students chances to explore in ways they never would have before while developing different kinds of communication skills beyond just the realm of alphabetic text.

In order to create an environment where students feel comfortable doing so, I work to establish an open and inclusive classroom community where they feel supported enough to take leaps and safe enough to not fear the possibility of falling. The incorporation of labor-based grading has been instrumental in that task; it helps to alleviate the pressure of creating perfect final projects by focusing on students' engagement and writing process. Take away the threat of a bad grade, and students are emboldened to take on challenging, nuanced topics and create accordingly.

Collaboration—a foundational element of my teaching—also plays a huge part in the classroom environment. Students collaborate with each other consistently throughout the semester in a variety of ways during classroom activities, peer review, and for assignments. Additionally, I collaborate with students in a variety of ways to ensure that their voices are reflected in the course materials and assignments. One example of this is the course grading contract. At the beginning of the semester, I propose terms for each grading contract and invite students to discuss and negotiate them. In addition to clearly articulating the expectations for the course, the act of negotiation also works to ensure students that their voices will be heard and their ideas supported, that they will have agency in their learning experience.

For many students, my class is decidedly different from others that they take in their undergraduate career. This puts me in a unique and, I would argue, powerful, position, and it makes the space I create in the class that much more important. I strive to create a space of inclusivity where every student is respected as an individual that brings with them distinct experiences, talents, and knowledge; a space of exploration where students radically transform their views of their work, themselves, and the world around them; and a space of community where students are supported and encouraged as they learn, create, and grow.