<h1 style="text-align:center">Teaching Philosophy</h1>

As a writing teacher, I work alongside students to (re)discover familiar and new ways to write for varied purposes and audiences, using various modalities and technologies. My teaching is driven by the questions *What is "good" writing, and how can we tell/assess it? How can writing help students respond to various demands in/on their lives*? and *How can I best assist students in consuming and producing texts (broadly defined) that enhance their learning and their potential to contribute to the communities in which they live*? I have been inspired and provoked by a range of mentors and mentor-texts, especially those focused on critical and sociocultural aspects of literacy and writing, and in reflecting on my teaching practices, I find three primary goals running throughout:

- to engineer productive learning environments,
- to respect students in order to instill curiosity and confidence, and
- to help students become more thoughtful and critical citizens.

*Engineering productive learning environments*: A key component of my role as a college writing teacher is to engineer productive learning environments, which requires careful planning, attention, negotiation, and flexibility. I begin by choosing or creating provocative texts and activities I believe will help students reach the course's learning outcomes. I scaffold assignments to increasingly challenge students while also helping them learn to break large tasks into smaller, more manageable pieces. I prefer to challenge students with difficult texts and ideas rather than presume what they are (or aren't) capable of; however, I remain attentive and responsive. While assignments and expectations are initially based on programmatic requirements and past experiences, I also use informal evaluations, short written responses, and discussions as the course progresses to ensure students are not over- or underwhelmed, to encourage them to consider their own desired outcomes for the course, and to make any necessary adjustments to the class schedule or expectations.

Another critical step in this engineering process is considering how assessment – mine and students' – will contribute to acquisition and development of the learning outcomes. In fact, I weave multiple and varied opportunities for reflection and assessment throughout each course I teach, and I provide students with ample commentary – from classmates and from me in both oral and written forms – seeking to make connections across various drafts, assignments, and discussions. I also recently engaged in community-based assessment (à la Asao Inoue) with students in my intermediate writing class – that is, we discussed and negotiated what should be valued in each major assignment. Our negotiations and revisions of assessment tools, which manifested in class discussions and digital writing, prompted students to consider how and why their work should be valued, and it required critical self-assessment. Further, this assessment procedure demonstrated the complex and messy process of creating and evaluating written work yet gave students authority within these processes. Overall, I believe helping students to become better writers means giving them the freedom and responsibility to make calculated, rhetorically based choices about audience, purpose, technology, genre, and delivery, and this includes choices that are not always or entirely effective. Therefore, I believe the environment and assessment practices of writing classrooms must allow room for play and failure. By encouraging students to take risks in their writing while also improving their abilities to reflect on and assess their own choices and by doing so in a respectful, collaborative environment, I hope to show students that "good writing" is neither fixed nor unattainable.

*Respecting students in order to instill curiosity and confidence:* I strive to respect the diverse abilities and experiences as well as the various (and understandable) fears and anxieties students bring with them to college. Therefore, I also work to engineer a learning environment predicated on respect and inclusiveness, an understanding between my students and me that we can all offer valuable information and approaches. One way I have done this is to ask students to co- present "technology demonstrations" to the rest of the class. In these demonstrations, students choose their groups and the technology they want to present on, so they are more comfortable than if I assigned them, and they are the experts who teach the rest of the class. Inevitably during these class sessions, students not only turn to the co-presenters for help, but they also turn to classmates sitting next to them to ask questions or offer guidance. I continually look for opportunities like this to build students' confidence and to encourage them to see writing as a social activity, not as something they must suffer through alone.

No matter the subject of the course or how many times I have taught it, I know students always have the potential to offer new ways of approaching and understanding the materials based on their unique identities and passions. Therefore, I strive to create environments in which we all feel comfortable sharing and combining our knowledges, interests, and experiences to create a more supportive and beneficial learning experience for all involved. One way I do this in my one-on-one meetings with new graduate teaching assistants (GTAs), for example, is by drawing on techniques I learned as a writing tutor – by letting the GTAs control the topic and tone of our sessions. Similarly, when they have problems, I strive to fully listen and ask questions before jumping to prescribe action. And when they share great teaching ideas with me or we come up with ideas collaboratively, I ask their permission to share those ideas with others, which is, again, a way to boost creativity and confidence and to demonstrate the social aspects of teaching and learning.

*Helping students become more thoughtful, critical citizens:* Ultimately, in my teaching, I aim to help students have experiences and gain skills that will make them more thoughtful, critical writers who are able to participate effectively in society. This requires helping them to develop their abilities to read and write in a range of genre and with a range of technologies; it also means helping them to develop their abilities to consider and weigh multiple perspectives so they can engage in dialogue and debate effectively in various communities. One way I've done this is to ask students to consider their literacy acquisition and development from various angles by composing multiple drafts in various modalities. We began by composing alphabetic texts on printed pages, then created mixed media collages using art and craft supplies and/or digital programs, and then made digital Voicethreads (which included alphabetic text, video, and audio). In the end, students decided how to most effectively compose their final draft, using experiences with and reflection on the previous drafts. While critically reflecting on their own literacy, they were also reading, critiquing, and responding to a variety of others' texts on literacy or examples of others' literacy narratives. This provided a wide scope of perspectives for us to talk and write about, during which time I encouraged students to grapple with differences across various communities and, when pertinent, to respectfully disagree with one another and to provide clear explanation and support for their own views.

As I continue to write in both familiar and new ways myself, I am reminded both how rewarding and how frustrating writing can be. Nevertheless, I feel it is very important for writing teachers to work together – with colleagues, students, and the public – to continually discover the letdowns and the joys of engaging in the world through writing, even as our definitions of "writing" shift.