

## Teaching Philosophy

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February 1, 2018

While we have our individual teaching philosophies, here we will speak to the teaching philosophy that we have shared since we began designing and co-teaching INTR 100: Popular Culture and University Writing in 2010 and that we have affirmed while designing and co-teaching INTR 101: Digital Media and Literature.

There were three primary motivations for developing the interdisciplinary courses that we co-teach.

1. We believe that both co-teaching and interdisciplinarity deconstruct the learning process and allow students to engage with their own learning process in a more explicit manner. One example of this can be seen when the two of us debate an issue in class. The debate shows the students that knowledge is a live, flexible domain, thus welcoming students to participate.
2. Recent genre theory<sup>1</sup> has helped make sense of some of the challenges and nuances of university writing (writing in the research genres). From the outset, we shared a view of recent genre theory and its implications for knowledge construction, learning, and writing.
3. By creating a 6-credit course in which the teaching of university writing and research is integrated with a specific disciplinary study such as popular culture, the teaching of writing and research can occur in an existing discourse: in practice, this achieves the theoretical goal of teaching writing from a genre theory approach.

We both see the practice of co-teaching across disciplines as having significant professional development and personal benefits because it makes transparent how teaching is always active learning. Our goal for our students is to mobilize our own active learning so that we learn with the students (rather than just being knowledge experts).

We both share the teaching philosophy of expecting our students to engage with conceptually difficult material. While we provide the tools and tactics to help our students build foundational skill sets, we also challenge our students by treating them as capable learners. This approach is consistent with recent genre theory, which acknowledges all knowledge as an expression of historical conversation (which students are joining) and which makes the signs of knowledge under construction visible at each stage of the learning and teaching process.

We believe that learning is fundamentally project- and discussion-based. Thus, at every point, we ask students to engage with problems and questions and to assume responsibility for class discussion.

We see writing as a pervasive activity of our classes, utilized at each stage of the learning process (rather than just a product). As such, students write constantly as a means to consolidate their own engagement with readings, to capture discussion, to develop their projects, and to consolidate and articulate their understanding.

We both believe that active dialogue, with all students participating as equal creators of knowledge, is a core learning modality that is significantly enhanced through the mechanism of interdisciplinarity (which breaks down rigid knowledge hierarchies) and co-teaching (which works against the process of knowledge reification that occurs in traditional lecture-based class environments).

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<sup>1</sup> Recent genre theory is rooted in mid-twentieth century accounts of language by theorists such as Michel Bahktin and M.A.K Halliday. As elaborated by Carolyn Miller, Amy Devitt, Aviva Freedman, Peter Medway, Janet Giltrow, and others, genre is seen as typified rhetorical action produced by recurring situations; recent genre theory emphasizes user-based agreement and shared practice as key aspects of speech acts.