

Feminist Pedagogies
Fall 2008
Teaching Philosophy Assignment/Thoughts

You are required to write a 4-5 page statement in which you discuss your own teaching philosophy. You will submit a draft of your statement on November 12th for peer review and a final version on December 10th.

- Your statement should address some of the following: your motivations for teaching; the instructional challenges you face and how you meet them (or plan to meet them); your pedagogical values, goals, strategies, and/or methods.
- Your statement should *explicitly* reflect on the ways in which you employ (or do not wish to employ) principles of **feminist** pedagogy. Describe how you understand **feminist** pedagogy and how you may wish to incorporate principles of **feminist** pedagogy in your teaching.

WHAT IS A TEACHING PHILOSOPHY?*

A teaching philosophy is a **self-reflective statement** of your beliefs about teaching and learning. In addition to general comments, your teaching philosophy should discuss how you put your beliefs into practice by including **concrete examples** of what you do or anticipate doing in the classroom.

Teaching philosophies are typically between one and four double-spaced pages but may be longer or shorter depending on your circumstances. They are written for two particular audiences. The first is search committees, since teaching philosophies are increasingly becoming part of the academic job search dossier. The second audience is yourself and your colleagues. In this case, the teaching philosophy serves a formative purpose—a document that helps you reflect on and improve your teaching.

*from the U of M teaching philosophy tutorial <http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/teachlearn/tutorials/philosophy/index.html>

Questions:

Your concept of **learning**: Ask yourself such questions as "What do I mean by learning?" and "What happens in a successful learning situation?" Make sure to note what constitutes "learning" or "mastery" in your discipline.

Your concept of **teaching**: Note your values, beliefs, and aspirations as a teacher. (For example, do you wish to encourage mastery, competency, transformational learning, life-long learning, general transference of skills, critical thinking, etc.) What does a perfect teaching situation look like to you? Why do you consider this "perfect"? What is your role as a teacher? Are you a coach, a general, an evangelist, an entertainer?

Your **goals for students**: What skills should students obtain as the result of your teaching? You may think about your ideal student and what the outcomes of your teaching would be in terms of this student's knowledge or behavior. You may address the goals you have for specific classes or curricula and the rationale behind them (i.e., critical thinking, writing, or problem solving).

What **methods** will you consider to reach these goals and objectives? What are your beliefs regarding learning theory and specific strategies you would use such as case studies, group work, simulations, interactive lectures, etc.? You might also include any new ideas or strategies you have used or want to try.

Your **interaction with students**: What are your attitudes toward advising and

mentoring students? How would an observer see you interact with students? Why do you want to work with students?

Specific examples: How are the values and beliefs noted above realized in classroom activities? You may discuss course materials, lesson plans, activities, assignments, assessment instruments, etc.

How will you **assess student understanding**? What are your beliefs about grading? Do you grade students on a percentage scale (criterion referenced) or on a curve (norm referenced)? What different types of assessment will you use: traditional tests, projects, portfolios, or presentations?

Professional growth: How will you continue growing as a teacher? What goals do you have for yourself and how will you reach them? How have your attitudes toward teaching and learning changed over time? How will you use your student evaluations to improve your teaching? How might you learn new skills? How do you know when you have taught effectively?