STATEMENT OF TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

I have three teaching maxims: (1) Good instructors care about the ideas they present; (2) Good instructors strive to make a connection with their students; and (3) Good instructors recognize their own fallibility and constant potential to learn more. Enthusiasm is contagious in the classroom. One of the ways I draw students out in my class is by openly expressing how excited I am about reviewing certain pieces of scholarship. But enthusiasm is not enough to keep students attentive, effective instructors strive to communicate with their audiences, always remembering that their words and actions are for people, not for show. Whether in a lecture hall or a seminar room, instructors should think of their words and actions as part of a dialogue. Furthermore, good instructors will endeavor to reach those with different learning styles by engaging a variety of human senses with multi-modal teaching techniques. Finally, a good instructor is also an active learner. To be an active learner, instructors must avoid the occupational pitfalls of arrogance and complacency. Students learn best from instructors when they are able to see in that instructor the same thirst for knowledge. More generally, students learn best from instructors that are with them, rather than above them. There are several functions of continued scholarship among faculty. One of the most important is that peer review and the resulting criticism remind professors of their fallibility, and with this recognition comes empathy and respect for student learning.

Teaching continues to be both challenging and rewarding for me. I am pleased that many of my students describe my courses in similar terms.