

## Teaching Philosophy

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My primary pedagogical goal is for students to understand how composition and literature provide the infrastructure for their roles in a continuously evolving global society. Even as emergent technologies redefine the academy and [the workplace](#), critical thinking and clear written and spoken communication remain crucial both for a well-rounded education and for [careers that can resist automation](#). Whether I am teaching courses about first-year composition, professional writing, or popular culture, my outcomes emphasize rhetorical analysis, purposeful argumentation, multimodal communication, and collaboration. I reinforce these skills not only to prepare students for their future areas of study but also so that they can confidently and resiliently respond to the challenges of modernization and accelerating change.

Building on [Bloom's taxonomy](#) of cognitive processes, I begin my classes by training students to understand and analyze complex arguments, especially those that respond to the effects of everyday and ubiquitous devices. I often turn to futurist scholarship and speculative fiction for this task, as these genres engage their readers with thought experiments regarding the human impact of technoscientific advances. For example, when I taught a [class about the red planet](#), we considered how Ray Bradbury's *The Martian Chronicles* confronts the ecological and personal costs of colonization for both earthbound and otherworldly environments. After examining the historical situatedness of this text in postwar America, students practiced the higher order thinking skills of evaluation and creation by producing [multimodal adaptations](#) of its component stories. By translating Bradbury's classic work into radio shows, children's books, and board games, the class demonstrated their awareness of genre conventions, anticipated the expectations of contemporary audiences, and worked with the affordances of media beyond the written word.

As [Pamela Takayoshi and Cynthia L. Selfe have noted](#), "in an increasingly technological world, students need to be experienced and skilled not only in reading (consuming) texts employing multiple modalities, but also in *composing* in multiple modalities, if they hope to communicate successfully" (3). This is not to dismiss the importance of writing, which undergirds my assignments beginning with low-stakes elements such as proposals and extending through more advanced genres like recommendation reports. But, I also provide students with a grounding in oral, nonverbal, electronic, and visual communication by crafting projects that account for the demands of the digital marketplace. For example, in my spring 2019 technical writing course, I asked students to build collaborative websites to educate undergraduates about a variety of topics including study techniques and honeybee conservation. In addition to learning how to write and design public-facing websites, these students crafted and presented posters that we featured in a gallery walk. They became mutual participants in the teaching process, designing a multifaceted project that enabled them to engage with one another's ideas in a productive way.

Because [writing and communication are social acts](#), I design my assignments and class meetings with collaborative pedagogy in mind. I teach my students that their audience always extends beyond the instructor, such as when their peers fill out Google forms to assess a presenting classmate's body language, slide design, and core arguments. In addition to crowdsourcing the class for summative assessment, I train them to learn the skills of formative assessment through guided peer review sessions at each stage of the writing process. My aim is that students will think about their writing as emerging from conversations and public responses

rather than simply being born out of individual labor. A recent [podcast assignment](#) of mine put this principle to the test, as small groups of first-year composition students produced 7-10 minute episodes discussing the continuing importance of Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*. By co-hosting and co-designing their episodes, each team was challenged to synthesize their unique voices while drawing on one another's skills, strengths, and disciplinary focuses.

As students evolve to become [producers rather than consumers of knowledge](#), I encourage them to behave as scholars and colleagues and to think about how the humanities are integral to their own areas of study. To achieve this, I design at least one flexible assignment each semester in which students can draw on the research methodologies and composition tools of disciplines beyond English. At the end of my course about Mars, for example, students had the opportunity to explore the real-world technologies behind interplanetary missions, including advances in robotic landers, colony design, and food production (among other topics). In addition to preparing [Pecha Kucha](#) presentations about their research, they transformed their findings into creative projects that demonstrated their ability to craft rhetorical arguments in multimodal platforms. One notable student used SolidWorks, a computer-aided modeling program, to extend extant speculation about [what a future habitable transport vessel to Mars might look like](#).

This kind of interdisciplinary work demonstrates how students leave my classes as well-trained multimodal communicators and conscientious, capable participants in a scientific and technological world. However, I recognize that each learner will reach this endpoint in diverse ways, so [I strive to keep my courses flexible](#) in order to minimize barriers and encourage multiple means of representation, action, and engagement. I provide students with continuous feedback with which they can improve their competency at argumentation, analysis, design, and collaboration. In turn, I remain open to how the shifting needs of students will inform my pedagogical approaches in the future, as I ultimately aim to evolve alongside them as a co-learner in the educational process.