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TEACHING PHILOSOPHY
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Pedagogical Approach

Decades of research show that students learn best when they are actively engaged in the learning process and are supported by an inclusive, welcoming environment that features opportunities for one-on-one mentoring. My goal as an instructor is to facilitate such learning and mentor students so they not only succeed in class, but grow in their personhood through writing and reading. This is why I am a passionate educator of undergraduates of all majors. I believe that a rigorous reading and writing liberal arts education is a benefit to all students, regardless of their area of study. It is my experience that creative writing, especially, teaches undergraduates the skills they need to advocate for themselves and their communities.

In my creative writing classes, students hone their writing skills by studying and applying craft techniques such as lineation, narrative structures, and defamiliarization. They sharpen their critical reading skills by undertaking close readings of texts and critiquing peer work. Most importantly, they expand their empathy by reading widely across class, race, gender, sexuality, location, and time, and develop confidence in self-expression by using their voices to exercise their agency.

My introductory creative writing classes are split evenly between poetry and fiction. The first half of every week is devoted to class discussions, craft lectures, and generative writing exercises. The second half is devoted to workshop. As the course numbers increase, representing an increase in skill acquisition and difficulty, my pedagogy also incrementally increases in pacing and expectation.

In workshop, I create a collaborative environment in which students take responsibility for their own, and each other's, growth as writers. Before our first workshop, I instruct students on what to expect from the process and how to give constructive criticism, then lead a discussion in which we develop classroom expectations around participation and civility so that students are ready to engage on day one. To emphasize the importance of collaboration in a workshop setting, students are graded equally on their creative work and the responses they write to their peers. During workshop, I encourage a conversation centered on how the poem or story could evolve instead of how to make the piece "better." For example, using a technique borrowed from my mentor Rebecca Gayle Howell, I ask students to imagine they are in front of a soundboard with all sorts of sliders and switches that could change the work's systems for meaning and music. What would it look like if the writer moved the slider from sparse language towards opulence? What would it look like if they flipped the sonnet switch? In this way, students are encouraged to focus on the craft of the piece instead of whether they like it. They integrate their classroom learning into their writing, critique, and revision and with it, are able to exercise their agency.

With reading lists, I aim to show students the range of language available to them as writers and readers. Students read example texts that are diverse across identity, tradition, content, and form. For example, in a recent creative writing II class, we read Ross Gay's *Catalog of Unabashed Gratitude*, Alice Oswald's *Dart*, Caitlin Horrocks' *This is Not Your City*, and Linda Hogan's *Power*. The stunning plain language free verse of Gay's *Catalog of Unabashed Gratitude* contrasts with the ever-changing voices and forms of Oswald's *Dart*. Horrocks' *This Is Not Your City* welcomes students with relatable characters in "Zolaria" and quickly surprises them with the inclusion of visual elements in "It Looks Like This." Hogan's novel *Power* appears straightforward with its familiar three-act structure yet introduces students to fabulism and the (usually) unfamiliar landscape of Indigenous politics in rural south Florida. Students take turns leading class discussions on the day's reading. These discussions include both open-ended questions designed to engage their fellow students and presentations in which the student identifies and analyzes craft via a close reading.

Teaching Experience & Expertise

I have had the pleasure of teaching many kinds of students in many kinds of institutions, preparing me to be able to meet students where they are at. As a writer with backgrounds in both science and community engagement, I am equipped to teach writing to majors and non-majors alike, and to both traditional and non-traditional students. In my role as non-tenure track faculty at the University of Arkansas, I have taught multi-genre writing to undergraduates of all majors. As a longtime instructor for the Arkansas Writers in the Schools program, I have also worked with a diverse mix of K-12 students through the Arkansas Writers in the Schools program, and for the Hindman Settlement School, I taught children and adult learners in the economically and environmentally distressed eastern Kentucky coalfields. These diverse experiences have equipped me with a wide range of pedagogical methods.

At the University of Arkansas, I teach creative writing workshops, technical & professional writing courses, and first-year composition courses. Through Arkansas Writers in the Schools, I taught two-day generative poetry workshops for children, which culminated in student readings and the publication of a yearly print anthology. I began my teaching career at the Hindman Settlement School, where I created and taught courses aimed at fostering healthy eating habits and small-scale entrepreneurship in a food desert community. I also helped support education-centered literary programming for that same community while at the Hindman Settlement School, including facilitating the school's week-long creative writing institute for Appalachian writers. Further, I directed experiential learning trips for K-12 students on subjects such as environmental ethics, basic agricultural practices, and canning tomatoes. This wide range of experience has made me adept at teaching an array of student populations using student-centered pedagogical techniques that foreground experiential education, special topics, and community outreach.

In addition to my own experience in the classroom, I have had the unique opportunity to learn creative writing pedagogy from my mentors. The University of Arkansas MFA in Creative Writing & Translation is one of the oldest and most unique MFAs in the country; whereas most MFAs are two years long, ours is four years. Designed to be a terminal degree, the UARK MFA course work

is taught at the PhD level, and while I studied poetry, fiction, creative nonfiction, translation, and publishing, I also learned a great deal about the many modes of teaching cross-genre creative writing from our faculty. I was then able to implement these modes in real-time as a graduate teaching assistant and instructor of record.

I was fortunate to be immediately hired upon graduation as a full-time Instructor of Writing, a role in which I have gained further professionalization as an untenured member of the English Department's faculty. I have also sought out additional opportunities to mentor students and improve my pedagogy by serving as an Instructor Coach with Student Success, and I will soon complete my Certificate in Effective College Instruction from the Association of College and University Educators (ACUE). As an Instructor Coach, I mentor forty at-risk students per semester by connecting them with university resources, facilitating self-advocacy, and guiding them in their learning journey. As for my own learning, I am currently applying many of the evidence-based instructional approaches I have learned from ACUE, such as asking for and implementing student feedback mid semester, in my writing courses. ACUE courses have been especially helpful for professionalizing my approach to making my classroom hospitable for students identified with marginalized communities.

Commitment to Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

As an educator who identifies with more than one marginalized community, I am deeply committed to fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion in my classroom. While my department, university, and city actively work to decrease inequality, there are still major structural and environmental barriers to student well-being, especially for students identified with one or more marginalized groups. In my classroom, I aim to minimize these barriers to student well-being and create an environment where all my students are safe, valued, and respected. Further, I aim to empower my students to use creative writing as a tool for developing value for themselves, their families, and their larger communities.

In my syllabi, I lay the groundwork for an inclusive classroom by building diverse reading lists. I also extend the document to include a list of campus resources that support students from different identity groups. On the first day, I issue a voluntary take-home questionnaire that offers students the opportunity to tell me relevant information about themselves such as their pronouns or accessibility needs at the start of the semester. Students are further encouraged to use their voice for the benefit of their community when I invite them to co-create a list of ground rules for classroom discussions and workshops.

As I mentioned, in workshop, my students support one another's work by commenting on the craft of the piece and how it could evolve instead of whether they "like" the content, making space for experiences and modes of living different from their own. This approach is modeled beforehand in our class discussions of example texts. Unlike the traditional workshop model, the student being workshopped is allowed to influence their session by asking questions to the class, clarifying points of contention, and moving the discussion to the topics most impactful to them. In these and other ways, my students and I collaborate to make the classroom a hospitable space

for learning, experimentation, and discovery, bringing my pedagogy in alignment with Felicia Rose Chavez's foundational text, *The Anti-Racist Writing Workshop*.

I am proud of the success of this approach. In workshop, students regularly write and share material that deals with and is reflective of their cultural backgrounds and individual experiences, signaling that they feel safe in the class and in the workshop environment. For example, a neurodivergent LGBTQ student brought a short story to workshop about a lesbian autistic teenager's first love. Further, in anonymous evaluations, students regularly comment on how the classroom was a safe space for them: "[Professor Hintz] created an encouraging and supportive environment" and "they were very constructive with our writing and provide[d] a rare relaxing environment for us to work in." Students also believe the workshop process was both helpful and inclusive, writing: "the feedback from my peers and teacher was amazing," and "they never put down anyone's work or ideas and were respectful when making critiques." My hope is that by reading a diverse group of authors, expressing themselves through writing, and workshoping in a supportive environment, students both expand their worldview and recognize the value of their voices and their cultures.

In Summary

I serve the University of Arkansas as an Instructor of Writing, where I teach a 4/4 load of undergraduate multi-genre writing courses. In 2023, I earned my M.F.A. in Poetry from the University of Arkansas Creative Writing & Translation program, a four-year terminal degree during which I also taught a 2/2 load. My student evaluations are consistently high, at or above department averages, with students often commenting how they feel valued by my commitment to creating a classroom that is equitable, supportive, and inspiring.

As an educator, I am dedicated to providing my students with inclusive, rigorous, experiential writing instruction in order to empower them to advocate for themselves and their communities. My multi-genre introductory creative writing classes feature a lively pedagogy that includes workshop, reading discussions, craft lectures, and generative writing exercises. Students read example texts that are diverse across identity, tradition, and form, and they are encouraged to experiment widely with their own writing. I facilitate a collaborative workshop model in which students take responsibility for their own, and each other's, growth as writers by collectively setting expectations and giving constructive criticism focused on craft instead of content. In these and other ways, my students and I collaborate to make the classroom a hospitable space for learning, experimentation, and discovery.