

Teaching Philosophy

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As an educator dedicated to a vision of what performance can offer to both the community and the academy, my pedagogy, scholarship, and artistic work implement a unique approach that concentrates on social issues through the study of body politics. My broader research agenda explores racial and gender inequity within the American religious landscape, and this grounds my work in the classroom as well. I am firmly committed to the pedagogical needs of a diverse undergraduate student population, as evidenced by my work as a teaching assistant both in the University Writing Program and the Dance Department at UCR. For example, as the lead instructor for an Intermediate Composition course for the UCR Writing Program, I developed a syllabus built upon Anna Deavere Smith's *Twilight*, which not only required the students to think about writing as performative, but actually asked them to embody and reimagine particular scenes from the work. By the end of the course, the students' engagement with performance made them realize the political import and power that they hold as writers and thinkers. Many of them remarked that this class was the first time that they were able to respectfully voice diverse opinions on sensitive topics such as gender, race, and religion.

Additionally, my pedagogical philosophy embraces the use of media and technology as vital components in learning for students today. As the teaching assistant for *Dance Cultures and Contexts*, one of the first online courses developed under the UC Online Pilot Project, I pioneered the use of adobe chat rooms for synchronous discussions. Groups of approximately 20 students were able to log in to my class each week where I utilized items such as groups discussion via webcam, document and screen sharing, online polls, redirection to dance videos online, and even small breakout group discussions. The use of technology is a vital resource in thinking about culture and performance, and my teaching, therefore, seeks to be at the forefront of new media in the classroom.

Finally, my commitment to physical exploration in the classroom is reflective of my embodied, pedagogical research. As an adjunct faculty member at Texas Christian University and lead instructor at UC Riverside, I have utilized embodied research techniques in order to encourage students from all backgrounds to explore the ways in which a body can move intellectually. Valuing the importance of bodily knowledge, these classes challenge the student to

think about how they move in the world, while embracing the various skill sets that each student brings into the classroom with them. In this setting, I emphasize the vital importance of the body as archive, tracing both individual and collective genealogies to uncover the cultural and historical politics of moving bodies in a given time and space.

Practically, my ballet classes utilize Cecchetti and Vaganova techniques as a foundation. Seeking to challenge students both physically and mentally, I emphasize strength, quick thinking, and expressivity in my ballet class. I also require that my students remain attentive to the historical accumulation of knowledge in ballet history so that they don't just execute steps, but understand why they are being asked to do movements in a certain manner. The same dedication to lineage also holds true in my modern dance classes. A mixture of Horton and Limón techniques, my modern classes combine breath-based impetus with strength-based power and agility. I incorporate other physical forms such as yoga or even exercises found in Crossfit techniques in order to encourage the students to fine-tune their body as an instrument. Ultimately, whether a beginner or advanced student, I hope that individuals leave my class empowered with the knowledge that comes from dance as a meaning-making process.

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