

Teaching Statement

Philosophy is not just a body of knowledge or a list of facts to be memorized. First and foremost, it is a skill: a way of critically approaching and evaluating texts and arguments. Like any skill, it is improved through practice. My approach to teaching philosophy is guided by a simple principle: the best way to learn philosophy is by doing philosophy.

A primary way students do philosophy is through discussion. Whenever class size allows, I teach in a seminar format and aim for my students to speak at least as much—and ideally more—than I do. I focus my lecturing on two tasks: situating the day's reading within its broader philosophical context, and guiding students through especially challenging passages. This approach serves two purposes. First, when students realize that lecture time won't simply summarize the reading, they are more likely to come to class having engaged deeply with the primary texts, which promotes genuine understanding. Second, it maximizes the time students spend actively doing philosophy: raising objections, clarifying confusions, and evaluating arguments.

My goal is to foster a classroom where students are comfortable questioning both the readings and each other, and where philosophical inquiry is a shared endeavor. I see my role not as dispensing answers, but as facilitating conversations that help students make intellectual progress and discover insights collaboratively. This is reflected in my approach to structuring discussions. I often begin by eliciting students' intuitions about the central problem. Since discussion is centered on their personal reactions, the stakes are low, and this warms students up to participating in other parts of class. I typically set aside one part of class for focused small group work, usually revolving around reconstructing an argument or generating objections and counterexamples. This encourages active participation from all participants and gives students the confidence to share their small group contributions with the whole class.

Philosophical writing is also a crucial skill, but long-form academic writing can be intimidating or inaccessible for students with varying academic backgrounds. Assigning a single, high-stakes term paper with little scaffolding doesn't encourage the experimentation, creativity, and intellectual risk-taking that good philosophy require. Instead, I assign a variety of writing formats alongside traditional essays. One especially effective method is assigning short weekly reading responses. This gives students the opportunity to "test-drive" an argument in a low-stakes context and receive feedback before deciding whether they want to pursue it in a longer paper. I also believe that students write best when they have ownership over and investment in their topic. In my aesthetics course, I assigned the optional prompt of writing a "blog post" that highlights the philosophical significance of their favorite genre or work of art while connecting it back to class material. This assignment invited personal engagement, encouraged

informal yet rigorous writing, and helped students connect philosophical ideas to their own experiences.

I set high expectations for my students, and I see it as my responsibility to support their progress—especially given the wide range of backgrounds and learning styles they bring to the classroom. My approach is informed by my experience teaching summer classes at NYU that have no pre-requisites, yielding a class that ranges from incoming freshmen to senior philosophy majors. It is also shaped by my experience teaching an introductory outreach course to high school students across New York City, many of whom came from under-resourced schools. Finally, I've participated in several inclusive pedagogy workshops, which have equipped me with specific strategies for supporting diverse learners. One small but effective strategy that helps to facilitate discussion in a diverse classroom is to repeat and rephrase student's contributions back to the class. This helps translate advanced comments into more accessible language and draw out the philosophical insights in less polished remarks. These prior experiences also inform how I give feedback on assignments: tailoring my feedback to the student's ability level and being proactive about setting up meetings for students that need extra support.

Inclusive pedagogy also means bringing a wide range of perspectives into the course content. This was doubly important for my aesthetics course, in which diversity of art was just as important as diversity of philosophy. I would prepare slides with examples of artworks that were referenced in the reading or that are relevant to the philosophical issues we were discussing. This helped to compensate for differing artistic and cultural backgrounds. I invited students to contribute their own examples as well, which gave less vocal students another way to participate while expanding the range of different artforms and art traditions we considered. I structured my syllabus to challenge the traditional on Western high art, and to explore how underrepresented art traditions can help to inform and reframe traditional philosophical questions. In future courses, I plan to build on this practice by continuing to include non-Western, feminist, and other underrepresented philosophical traditions across my syllabi.

I see teaching not as separate from my research, but as central to my identity as a philosopher. The most rewarding moments in my academic life have come from seeing students light up at a question or puzzle. These moments remind me why I do philosophy, and they fuel my commitment to helping students become rigorous, reflective thinkers—regardless of where their lives take them beyond the classroom. I would be thrilled to build a career teaching philosophy in a way that cultivates that same joy and intellectual curiosity in others.