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### TEACHING STATEMENT

As an instructor of media and culture, I seek to engage my students in critical research that spans media formats and disciplinary distinctions while meaningfully connecting students to their research subjects and to the real-world implications of knowledge production. I use three primary approaches to accomplish this goal. First, I integrate theory and practice as intertwined aspects of scholarship, and I emphasize both as collaborative artistic forms. Second, I teach critical thinking and making as obligations, not rights, and I focus on their importance to a just and moral society. Third, I foreground learning as an evolving process rather than the product of memorizing closed forms or canons. A student in my Media and Cultural Analysis class at New York University once told me, “You are the only professor I have who asks me to think about my regular life. It finally feels like what I’m studying connects to what I do outside of school.” I take this statement as evidence of successful teaching and as a mantra for future instructional design.

My courses challenge students to engage topics both conceptually and practically because I believe this approach invites students to think critically about the relationships between abstract ideas and lived experiences. I first developed my approach while working as an instructor and advisor in Communications at the College of New Rochelle’s Manhattan Campus. From 2005 to 2008, I designed and taught five courses and supervised more than two dozen independent projects that integrated theory and practice. In my class Mass Communication and Society, students developed collaborative public service campaigns while learning to think and write critically about popular persuasion techniques and mass culture industries. And, in Media and the Black Experience, they created a collaborative documentary about race in New York City while learning to critique racial stereotypes in films, news, and television. These were challenging goals at an institution with few resources. To overcome these challenges, I connected students to public supports. For example, students in my Media and Representation course worked with the Chashama art space in Manhattan to produce a public exhibition of their films and photographs titled “Colors of New York City.” And, a group of my independent study students worked with the Women’s Press Collective in Brooklyn to publish their writings. I also used Blogger to develop online communities to share and discuss course ideas and materials. For the working class women who attended my courses, this approach challenged them to be critical of media environments while attempting to create interventions. Students responded in overwhelmingly positive ways to their new roles as artists and critical thinkers, stating they felt more aware, connected, and empowered. “You have opened my eyes to the world,” one student commented, “and I now have the toolbox to make it better.” My CNR students went on to pursue graduate degrees and careers in media industries, including making films and publishing books of poetry.

I continue to adapt approaches from my time at CNR to the needs of students in diverse contexts. At York College CUNY, I developed a Digital Portfolio Design course that challenged students to consider their public obligations as artists. In addition to curating their work, this course asked students to reflect on their process and its engagement with larger social issues. My courses at New York University, The New School, and Rutgers also emphasize students’ critical obligations toward media by shifting ethics discussions from a rights-based model to one concerned with hospitality and responsibility (following Roger Silverstone). This shift is as central to my research as it is to my teaching. It involves foregrounding my obligation to listen and hear above my right to speak. I attribute the success of my courses and my research to this shift above all else. It is a shift students in my Media and Cultural Analysis course described as “stimulating,” “inclusive,” and “enthusiastic.” It is a shift many felt as a “shared excitement” shaping the classroom into a space of passionate, but critical listening. These are skills I believe central to media, culture, and education.