

### Pedagogical Statement:

My primary goal as a writing instructor is to equip students with the skills, habits, and techniques necessary for both the specialized kinds of academic writing they will do in their respective and varied majors, and also the kinds of critical thinking and writing they will continue to do after college. To do so, I encourage students first to write about what they know or are interested to know more about, and reinforce the idea that writing can be a natural and exploratory process. Beginning with the premise that the role of the university is to create educated thinkers, I often ask students to write about where and how they might have an impact on their world. I find that students draw from their world throughout the learning process, and that writing has the potential to strengthen critical awareness of that environment. It also has the potential to promote self-awareness within that environment, often to the mutual benefit of both. By writing about their world, students prepare themselves to actively take part in it. Research can play an important role here, and I present the encounter with new information and ideas to students as an opportunity to build confidence in their voice and opinions by challenging assumptions, rather than becoming consumed within an already established discourse that can seem intimidating on first approach.

I believe that developing a voice is a critical component of the undergraduate composition curriculum, and in the classroom I encourage student-led discussions with the instructor taking on a role akin to that of a moderator. By situating their voices and opinions within the diversity inherent to the classroom, students gain perspective on their own subjectivity in a manner not necessarily available in large academic lectures or subject specific courses. I also see the vitality and importance of college composition courses resting in the opportunity for students in their formative years to gain exposure to and practice different academic discourses. Creating the classroom as an interdisciplinary environment to discuss common problems prepares students to participate in our world as educated citizens. Further, engaging these issues within a safe classroom environment gives historically marginalized voices a place to grow more confident, and an opportunity to reaffirm their importance and validity within an increasingly diverse public discourse.

Students in my classes are asked to write, write often, and write fearlessly. Working collaboratively, daily emphasis is placed on writing as a process, with particular focus on drafting and revision. In practical application, this level of crafting is achieved through sustained contact between students in small group writing and research cohorts, with a number of opportunities to present work and works that are in-progress to the entire classroom, and firm expectations for meeting submission deadlines for work submitted to the instructor. I believe, and often tell my students, that writing is something that can always be modified or improved, and that even academic writing is often performed with the intention of reaching a place where new ideas are proposed, thus creating the expectation of subsequent writing and revision. By teaching writing as a living process, students gain perspective and confidence in the act of writing as an expository form of critical thinking that is inseparable from one's own academic, professional, and personal development.

-Benjamin Spanbock, 2014