

Jeremy Flick Teaching Statement

I believe, as an educator, it is not only my duty to help students learn new skills and be able to apply them to their studies and future careers, but also to make sure they leave the course with a better understanding of the culture and world around them. By applying rhetorical concepts to a theme within a cultural element, for example: music, to which we can all relate in some fashion, I find that students gain the skills necessary to engage these ideas later in their lives while also expanding their horizons. The most important aspects of my teaching are applying rhetorical concepts to themed courses, pushing students to think critically, and creating a stress-free learning environment that fosters peer relationships.

When I was an undergraduate student in first-year composition courses, I was consistently bored and underwhelmed with the subject matter, taught mostly through lecture, which led me to forget most of what I was taught. While I know I cannot keep every student engaged, I try to avoid a similar outcome for my students. Therefore, I would say one of my main (and most challenging) goals as an instructor is to keep students absorbed in the course material—having a course theme helps my students engage even further through interest in the subject as well as providing a different avenue for rhetorical discussion. For instance, at Anderson University, having a course themed around music allowed me to show a weekly music video of which the class could rhetorically deconstruct and come to conclusions about the argument within each element. At Ball State University, I taught a hero-themed course which led students to analyze the current job environment and financial issues of teachers, firemen, policemen, etc. and build arguments to help change those problems. By frequently using engaging techniques throughout the class, I have seen students' knowledge of rhetorical concepts flourish.

My approach also helps students leave behind stereotypes and begin to think critically about things they may not yet understand. By researching topics such as music, heroes, and places, I have seen students conclude that metal music does not make someone inherently violent, but instead can be an outlet for those with anxiety, depression, and anger management issues; discover few universities are actively engaged with mentally disabled students and lack specific programs dedicated to their educational needs; and, even amongst the recent backlash against police officers, argue for giving police higher wages, because their wages do not accurately compensate for the situations in which they work. Each of these conclusions, among many others, asked the student to reach outside of their comfort-zone, to be objective, and to actively use the courses' foundational principles to form their own decision.

My teaching also relies heavily on students building peer relationships in a stress-free environment. There are many days my students are working in groups for class activities and major assignments, such as their multimodal presentations. I intentionally make students break free of their comfort-zones to work outside of their small groups or cliques so they can get to know each student in their class. Not only have I found this to create lasting friendships (which is especially important in first-year courses), but it also helps the students perform better when presenting in class and makes it easier for them to reach out for help.

I believe my teaching philosophy truly encompasses the ability to engage students beyond lectures by using technology and active engagement while still embracing a traditional teaching method. In the future, I hope to increase the use of digital technologies to further the impact of a non-traditional approach to rhetoric and composition.