

Shannon Creighton
Teaching Philosophy Statement

Why do you teach?

The act of teaching simultaneously requires great humility and great wisdom. I teach because I know the transformational power of education and would not be half the person I am today without the education I received in my life. Not only does teaching allow me to share the gifts of learning imparted onto me but it also encourages the continued need for growth and renewal, both personally and collectively. More specifically, the act of teaching *art* and *art history* serves to preserve and strengthen an increasingly marginalized language of creativity and ingenuity. I believe that our culture is in desperate need of artists who integrate the current events of our time and make meaning of the moment while teaching art to both the future generations and those who long for a greater diversity of creative engagement. I teach to expand my own critical consciousness and that of my students.

What do you teach?

I teach visual arts including painting, drawing, photography and art history. My personal background is in photography, both film (35mm and large and medium format) and digital (dSLR). My art history class looks across the human arc of creativity beginning with prehistoric art and ending with modern and postmodern movements. It aims to move beyond the Euro-centric canon and incorporate the masterpieces from a diversity of global cultures. My beginning photography class begins by addressing the fundamentals of form and the historical canon of photography. This is a building block to the Advanced course where students focus on subject matter and develop conceptual work. Across both courses students will discuss the historical, psychological, ecological, political, geographical, or economic aspects to their subjects and develop skills in critical analysis, revision, and ongoing project development, assess the work of fellow students by applying a theoretical framework, develop basic vocabulary of how to discuss and describe photographic imagery and increase technical skill of chosen photographic equipment.

How do you teach?

As a teacher I highly value collective knowledge. I believe that one of the best ways to learn is to facilitate an environment where students are empowered to share what they know and to learn from each other. This is achieved by beginning the course with class agreements that acknowledge learning and discussion styles, establish guidelines for respectful and honest feedback, and honor the diversity of individuals, cultures, and histories present in the classroom. My teaching style utilizes a combination of group work, discussions, and experiential learning.

How do you measure your effectiveness?

Class participation and students' level of engagement will be one of my largest measures of effectiveness. I believe that if a group of students is actively participating in class discussions and projects, this is a large indication of success. Further, students' academic engagement in assignments reflects my clarity of instruction and ability to meet students where they are at, while challenging them to critically reflect and broaden their thinking. To ensure that students know they can offer feedback toward the class and the teaching, I make myself available after each session to converse and invite individuals to share thoughts and challenges and any ideas for improvement.