

TEACHING STATEMENT

My teaching philosophy centers on creating inclusive, accessible, and student-centered learning environments where academic rigor is balanced with compassion and flexibility. I employ active, cooperative, and experiential learning strategies that recognize varied learning styles and create multiple avenues for engagement. These approaches encourage students to engage critically with course material, with their peers, and with me as the instructor. From the outset, I invite students to co-create classroom norms, establishing a foundation of mutual respect and shared responsibility. I also use Socratic dialogue to stimulate critical thinking, facilitate discussion, and model respectful inquiry.

Teaching Experience

Before beginning my doctoral studies at Arizona State University, I taught for three years as an adjunct professor and lecturer at Georgia Gwinnett College and Georgia College and State University. Since then, I have continued to teach and guest lecture at ASU and other institutions. Across ten upper- and lower-level undergraduate courses, I have taught and developed courses on nearly every aspect of the criminal legal system in multiple modalities, including in-person, synchronous online, and asynchronous formats. These experiences have equipped me to adapt to different institutional contexts and respond effectively to varied student needs.

Pedagogical Strategies

To support different learning approaches, I integrate podcasts, documentaries, current events, debates, group projects, and guest speakers. These tools enhance accessibility while connecting content to real-world issues and lived experiences. I also assign readings authored by practitioners and formerly incarcerated people to ensure students encounter perspectives often absent from traditional textbooks.

My assignments are designed to foster creativity, critical thinking, and application. In *Introduction to Criminal Justice*, for example, students select a song that addresses crime and analyze it through criminological theory, submitting their work as either an essay or video blog. In *Undergraduate Statistics*, students trace the original empirical source behind a news article and compare data presentation in both contexts. This assignment builds media literacy and cultivates a critical understanding of how statistics are used, and misused, in public discourse. These are two examples of how I translate my teaching philosophy into practice by designing assignments that encourage students to apply theoretical concepts in creative and applied ways.

I intentionally create opportunities for students to engage directly with professionals in the criminal legal system, bridging academic and professional domains. I regularly host guest speakers, such as public defenders, police officers, and victim advocates, which allows students

to ask critical questions, build professional networks, and connect classroom concepts to practice. These interactions have led students to secure internships, volunteer with community organizations, and pursue career paths they had not previously considered. As a faculty member, I will continue cultivating campus–community partnerships that expand applied and experiential learning.

Service and Mentorship

Service is a core part of my identity as a scholar and educator. Beyond the classroom, I mentor students and model civic engagement through campus and community initiatives. Having taught at both open-access and Hispanic-Serving Institutions, I have worked with students from a wide range of backgrounds. As a first-generation college student, I connect closely with first-generation students and am often invited to participate in campus events through these mentoring relationships.

At Georgia Gwinnett College, I initiated the campus’s first Clothesline Project to raise awareness about gender-based violence, securing in-kind sponsorships and coordinating an event that featured community service providers, campus police, and Syrah Paws, an emotional support animal therapy group. I also organized a Constitution Week seminar, “Know Your Rights,” which brought together public defenders, private defense attorneys, and the police chief to educate students on their legal rights. At Georgia College and State University, I partnered with the Women’s Center to organize a period product drive and spoke about period poverty in community and carceral contexts, and I was invited by a student to serve as keynote speaker for the campus’s Take Back the Night walk.

Through these experiences, I have demonstrated a commitment to integrating service with education while building partnerships with colleagues, students, and community organizations to foster engaged learning environments.