

## CAS Outstanding Teaching Award Teaching Statement

My intentional pedagogical model applies the ethics of care that I write about in my research. Earlier this month I was delighted and inspired when a student of mine from Summer 2021 reached out. In the midst of medical school applications, Diego touched base to discuss his future plans: “I have been doing a lot of reflecting on my journey, and I have to say you were one of the most influential professors I had that gave me the self-confidence I needed to successfully complete a senior Honors thesis and realize my passion for the sociomedical sciences. I loved your class, and I always felt safe in it and with you to share my thoughts.” This was an affirming moment as these are exactly the kinds of competencies I seek to cultivate in the classroom: the sophisticated practices of listening, speaking, reading and writing that provide the scaffolding necessary for a student’s voice to emerge. Diego is an LGBTQ first-generation student aspiring to work in public health, where storytelling skills, evidence-based argumentation and persuasive communication are paramount to success. In my teaching I aim to create learning conditions that offer all my students a safe space to develop their critical dexterity in these areas and thrive as people.

When designing courses as a sole instructor for undergraduates at NYU, including “The Women’s Liberation Movement: Major Texts in Critical Theory” and “Reading as a Writer: Feminist Compositions,” my syllabi have centred a vibrant and diverse array of texts by underrepresented writers challenging norms of gender, race and class in their modes of literary making. My goal of bolstering students’ discernment and analytical expertise as scholars, social actors and citizens has also been a crucial part of my teaching as an adjunct TA: I have taught twice for CAS CORE courses in “Texts and Ideas,” “The ‘Other’: Identity and Representation” and “Revulsion, Nausea, and Disgust,” as well as three times for “Literatures in English III: American Literatures, beginnings to 1900” and “Literatures in English IV: Twentieth and Twenty First Century Literatures.” Transformative critical thinking is an act of rhetorical making, a creative process of cooperation: the classroom and the dialogues generated within it, at their most fruitful, have a conjuring quality, allowing students to make new knowledge together in a stimulating academic community.

As we collectively process the afterlives of COVID, I also treat student wellness and pastoral care outside the classroom and in Office Hours as a fundamental part of my job. When a sophomore student from St. Lucia lost her father, I gave support in filling out forms to get her the financial relief and other resources from NYU needed to continue her education. Providing guidance and reliability when a student’s world has been turned upside down is a privilege, as essential to effective teaching as fostering intellectual excitement. My experience teaching at La Sorbonne III in Paris has made me particularly attuned to the extra challenges facing our international students. Equally formative has been my work in adult literacy, most significantly

as an educator at Brooklyn Public Library, New Lots Avenue. The classroom is just one part of a complex social life: teachers have to meet students where they are that day and on their own personal path. I believe moments of genuine pleasure facilitate learning, and that confusion about a text should be validated and explored. I encourage laughter as an indication of an educational environment that is vital, as curious and playful as it is rigorous.