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**Teaching Philosophy**

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I have been teaching at the collegiate level for more than fifteen years – as a teaching artist and as a professor, serving at a number of diverse and distinguished institutions before arriving at Bucknell University in the fall of 2017. My commitment to facilitating not only critical thinking in students, but also their dynamic engagement with “a history of present,” including and beyond the limits of genealogy, has grown stronger over time. This is necessitated by the innovations in telecommunications and digital technologies that challenge students’ reflective capabilities as much as they increase access to information, innovative impulses and, when deployed strategically, enable knowledge. As such, I believe in creating an atmosphere that empowers students’ imaginations and that enables their ability to think politically and historically as well as technically, in order to engage the ways that historical processes thought to be temporally or spatially distant continue to shape the understanding of consumers of news, arts and media. In this way, students are primed to contemplate interactions between race, class, gender, sexuality, ability and age in ways that integrate their liberal arts education with the practice of their disciplinary pursuits. A direct extension of this synthesis is through their ability to take seriously what the arts offer for thinking about the question of global modernity as such and how they might engage this question over the long term, regardless of the field(s) they choose along the way. These teaching experiences have helped me to realize that my particular concerns about blackness as a political predicament and existential condition – concerns that open onto the most general questions of modern life – fuel my love of teaching the gamut of theory, dramatic literature and performance studies within the rubric of Black and Africana Studies. In fact, my more recent perspective as a formally trained scholar has enhanced my pedagogy with regard to theatre history, criticism and theory; and my training in textual analysis has strengthened my approach to both the crafts of playwriting and the directorial analysis of the work as they, in turn, inform how I direct and teach plays, both on their own terms, and/or as portals into other modes of critical and political inquiry. I have, for example, conjoined symposia with actual productions of plays as means of involving students in discourses about the work these plays are forging beyond just their aesthetic concerns, but also their socio-political and paradigmatic queries. Moreover, I am engaged in a continued expansion of my syllabi to include older and contemporary work in concert, as means of illustrating the analytical potential of dramatic literature that is possible with regard to, in particular, structural racism and its violent performances.

My student evaluations have been consistently excellent, with 90% and higher of each course strongly agreeing that my level of instruction was effective. Students have found me to “provide a safe environment in which difficult issues could be discussed in a give and take manner” and they have praised my “ability to address questions and comments in an open, informative, and very gracious way.” Additionally, they have described my classes as “very helpful and accessible, filling in a large gap in [their] knowledge of [the field].” Graduate students at the Universität Bremen, where I have been a guest seminar instructor, composed an unsolicited letter of recommendation for the seminar on African American Drama that I taught there. They subsequently invited me back to teach again. Among other comments, they expressed “great respect and gratefulness for the intellectual ardor and fervent sense of social responsibility [I] brought to class.” In that vein, they observed: “it was extremely helpful that [the instructor] was always able to connect fictional dramatic texts, theory, and real-world issues, both historical and contemporary.” These reviews hopefully give some sense of how I have negotiated not only students’ diverse backgrounds and varied learning styles, but also the shifting institutional emphasis from broad liberal arts education to pre-professional training in the STEM fields, which has posed a terrible conundrum for the Arts and Humanities. This trend has prompted me to redouble my commitment to a pedagogy that exposes students to archives of creative, political and historical work and modes of critical analysis they might not otherwise encounter in their major fields of study.