

Teaching Philosophy

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My goal as an instructor is to help students in the humanities and information science to understand and think beyond cultural and disciplinary boundaries. My teaching is always grounded in methodology, including research methods, archival best practices, and the use of digital technologies for archival preservation and communication. At the same time, my use of culturally specific case studies requires students to center the needs of diverse communities, users, and stakeholders in their everyday work. In a moment when the role of digital technology in shaping discourse and policing behavior is under debate, I ask students to take their own cultural knowledge seriously in the classroom, while supporting a new generation of culturally knowledgeable and empowered public intellectuals.

My teaching draws on new developments in engaged learning to combine project-based assignments with more traditional coursework. In doing so, I prioritize three learning goals: professional development, research skills, and cultural literacy. In *Critical Digital Archives*, a graduate seminar at the University of Texas, students apply methodologies that range from close reading and critical theory to corpus analytics and digital curation in order to answer research questions related to the creation and use of historical archives. In place of seminar papers, students participate in a series of practical exercises that include the creation of a library guide, a humanities media grant proposal, and a community-based archival intervention. These assignments invite students to explore methods and tools while developing a firm grounding in group work, project design, assessment, and revision. Students depart from the course with materials for use in job applications or future research projects. They also depart from the course with a more sophisticated understanding of the complexities of community-centered scholarship.

I use integrated course design to align situational factors, learning goals, and feedback and assessment, and to develop impactful instructional strategies and activities. In co-taught seminars like *Digital Archives of the Central American Revolutions* (2016, 2018) and *The History of the Book in the Americas and Beyond* (2019), we accomplished these goals through assignments such as designing a library exhibition, developing pedagogical resources, and publishing multimedia reports. These assignments were integrated into a scaffolded sequence of facilitated conversations, workshops, and reflective dialogue, with the purpose of inviting students to develop public-facing projects and to think critically about the epistemological and social consequences of research methodologies in a global and post-colonial context. An article published by the University of Texas called the Central American Revolutions course “trailblazing,” calling it an “exciting and important” opportunity for historians.

I see teaching as fundamental to my research. In my work with libraries and archives, the communities I collaborate with often ask me to share their archival materials with students in the United States, and students are sometimes able to make real impact in their own communities and beyond by making these histories public. At the same time, teaching has informed my own scholarship; my *Critical Digital Archives* project was directly informed by the associated graduate seminar, and I am currently revising several publications that describe the pedagogical underpinnings of these experimental courses. Like our students, as instructors we benefit from both a critical and practical understanding of methods for scholarly work and teaching. My task as a teacher is to foster this understanding in my students, my community, and myself.