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## TEACHING STATEMENT: *COMPOSITION, LITERATURE, & MULTIMODALITY*

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Students identify these key terms about my teaching: **engaging and passionate; interactive and exploratory; offers new perspectives on creativity and research; process-oriented; and creates a collaborative learning environment.** Let me give you a portrait of how these characteristics played out in my first-year writing classes at Georgia Tech.

### ENGAGING & PASSIONATE



Writing, research, and teaching are deeply reciprocal. I work diligently in the classroom to model for my students the imaginative and intellectual work of being a professional writer and scholar. This engagement catalyzes students' ownership of their writing and drives them toward innovation as communicators. I support students' work and reaffirm their intellectual agency through consistent one-on-one feedback.

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**“Dr. Sturm's greatest strength was his passion for the subject. He knows so much about the material that it inspired me to become more involved and learn more independently.”**

### INTERACTIVE & EXPLORATORY



Students in my courses collaborate with working artists and community organizations; visit archives as well as art and history museums; and engage in exploratory field work. This network of activities energizes students' ability to see themselves as meaningful contributors both in and outside of the classroom. As shown here, my students volunteered at an urban farm in Atlanta after reading Inger Christensen's ecological poetry while also studying the history of segregation in this neighborhood.

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**“I enjoyed the technical, hands-on approach of the class. I've never had a writing class revolving around doing so many activities outside of the classroom that reflect learning in the classroom.”**

### OFFERS NEW PERSPECTIVES ON CREATIVITY & RESEARCH



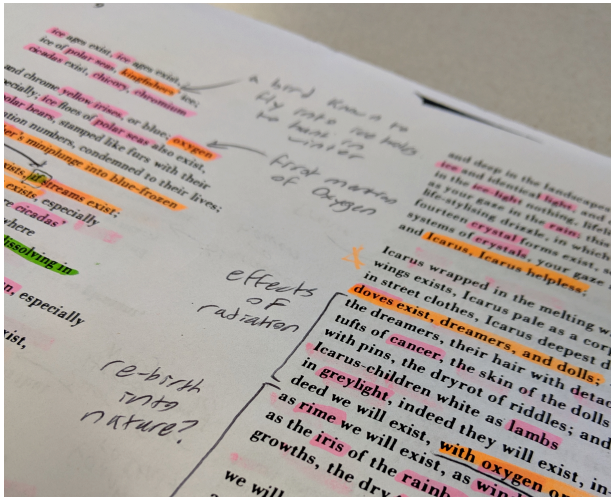
I aim to make my students responsive to how meaning is produced throughout all the processes of reading, thinking, looking, and writing. Whether I'm teaching first-year writing, literature, or creative writing, I mobilize texts and visual artifacts in ways that encourage students to challenge their expectations and produce their own creative-critical vocabularies. My composition students regularly visit the High Museum of Art in Atlanta where they respond to generative questions about paintings as they produce their own collaborative podcasts about visual art.

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**“Dr. Sturm helped me to positively change the way I approach poetry by focusing on the descriptive question 'What does this say?' instead of the received question 'What does this symbolize?'”**

From top to bottom: Dr. Sturm with students, Fall 2019; Students from Summer 2019 course at Aluma Farm; Students from Spring 2018 course view Alex Katz's "Meadow" (1997).

## PROCESS-BASED PEDAGOGY



## CREATES A FRIENDLY & COLLABORATIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT



From top to bottom: A student's annotation of a poem in Dr. Sturm's Summer 2019 course; Students at Dr. Sturm's Spring 2019 New York School research showcase.

**"Personally, as a young black man from the Caribbean, I have always struggled with communicating my thoughts. Reading Fred Moten's poetry in Dr. Sturm's workshop gave me this special language to be consumed in, and that week of studying his work has had a greater impact on my life than I can articulate. Between the rolling movement of Black Lives Matter, my own college graduation, and grappling with my identity, Moten became the first point in a line of voices that have helped me shape my own." — student in Dr. Sturm's poetry workshop at Florida State University, Summer 2015**

"A reader is a beginner," I tell my students, echoing poet Lisa Robertson's idea that the act of reading is always one of renewal and revisiting. In literature and writing courses where students are sometimes unsure of their abilities as readers, the belief that critical thinking is an always-opening space strengthens students' skills as innovative critical and imaginative writers. I aim to make my students responsive to how meaning is produced via compositional processes. This involves teaching active reading processes, like the annotations to the left; creating low-stakes, generative assignments that scaffold larger learning outcomes; and offering productive feedback and insightful criticism verbally and in writing. I want my students to see themselves in an intertextual conversation with what we study, me, and their own ideas.

**"Dr. Sturm's greatest strength was providing feedback at every point in the drafting process for our projects. The open class discussions and questionnaires were also really helpful."**

My students are co-creators in the intellectual and creative process of writing and research. In first-year writing courses, my students produce websites, zines, posters, data visualizations, experimental indexes, podcasts, and other multimodal artifacts that allow them to explore their interests while experimenting with new modes, genres, and communicative situations. In creative writing workshops, students experiment with mimetic and collaborative writing techniques that allow them to study writing as a craft-based practice and a history of aesthetic innovation in which they become experiential learners within contemporary global lineages.

**"It was fun to explore literature in ways that facilitate collaborations with different people and encourages out-of-the-box thinking."**

## COMMITMENTS TO DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

Teaching books by writers of color, women, and queer writers is an integral part of my pedagogy. As an educator, my responsibility is to teach marginalized traditions, canonical and non-canonical writers, and to prompt challenging conversations about systemic inequity and its representations in both literary history and literary scholarship. I have led courses on diasporic and global literature, third cinema, and contemporary nonfiction by women, including work by poets, artists, and filmmakers such as Bhanu Kapil, Fred Moten, Eileen Myles, and Samira Makhmalbaf. These choices have real-world implications. My literature students have attended asylum hearings at immigration courts, experimented with water quality studies in urban waterways, and created digital humanities projects that explore the intersection of poetry and civil rights. Supporting and amplifying marginalized students' voices in these issues and facilitating other students' listening is key to my work.