TEACHING STATEMENT
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I believe students learn best from teachers who display a passion for the subject matter and who actively encourage students as co-creators of knowledge. When possible, I utilize a combination of lecture-based and interactive teaching techniques to promote active student participation in the learning process. My teaching philosophy includes two primary objectives: to equip students with the capability to meaningfully apply theoretically based reasoning to better understand and evaluate real-world communication problems and to encourage students to be active, critical thinkers inside and outside of the classroom.

Within the classroom, I employ multiple interactive teaching techniques such as in-class discussions, case studies, and simulations to help students develop higher order thinking skills. I strongly believe that students learn not only course concepts but also learn the implications of their assumptions when they are exposed to diverse viewpoints and are able to discuss these viewpoints within the safety of the classroom. The most conducive classroom for the development of critical thinking skills is one where students from diverse cultural, racial, and religious backgrounds actively contribute their personal views and approach the material by drawing upon their personal vantage points. In order to achieve the goal of mutual understanding, I ask my students to write reflections about the course material during class. I believe that completing a five-minute in-class reflection exercise encourages students to acknowledge how their personal viewpoint and potential assumptions influence their understanding of the course material and their ability to address solutions to communication problems. To foster in-class discussion, students may volunteer to share personal insights gleaned from this activity. Diversity within the classroom is imperative to foster not only the sharing of ideas regarding complex issues, but more importantly, fostering a respectful understanding of peoples and cultures and the impact of such diversity on understanding complex communication problems.

I believe that case studies and simulations are powerful tools for students to apply theories and concepts in a meaningful process to address real-world problems. I approach the case study method by first dividing the classroom into teams. Each team works to address a complex and often contentious case study problem that must be solved through the application of theories and concepts previously introduced within the course. At the conclusion of the case study activity, students are asked to summarize and defend their solution-based approach to the case's dilemma. In my previous experiences this teaching approach has been received with great enthusiasm, where students are eager to question and debate the solutions arrived at by each team. It is within the moments of peer group discussion and debate where it becomes apparent the students are solidifying their understanding of the core course concepts and acquiring the skills to better question the methodological approach of scientific inquiry. I also believe that simulation exercises represent powerful teaching tools. Simulations are very similar to case studies; however, the students are assigned to particular stakeholder roles appearing within the case study. Each student is given multiple classes to utilize theory and course concepts to investigate

and become familiar with how their stakeholder would perform and solve the case study problem.

Incorporating continual assessment and feedback is critical to understanding how well the students are able to understand, apply, analyze, and evaluate the material being taught. I believe in a collaborative classroom where students also assess my teaching approach. For example, I previously instructed a class where students gradually became withdrawn and less eager to discuss the course topics. To better understand why, I administered anonymous questionnaires asking for a critical assessment of my teaching effectiveness. I asked what teaching methods they believed were working well and what aspects of the course and my teaching approach could be improved upon. Completing the teacher assessment enabled me to better understand that the material had become too complex for the students. I shared the students' feedback with the class and we spent time developing a plan to incorporate more in-class activities where they could apply course concepts and receive direct feedback.

I strive to be a teacher who is enthusiastic, engaging, and enabling of collaborative learning. I hope to continually grow in my ability to create a learning environment where students build confidence in their understanding and application of complex theoretical concepts through application and are able to develop technical and professional competencies. I strive to ensure that students not only leave my classroom with an understanding of key course concepts but also leave with an understanding of their role as members of a diverse and interconnected world.