

Teaching Philosophy

The philosophy that I adhere to in the classroom places an emphasis on accessibility, understanding, and ownership. My goal is to work with the students until they have a thorough understanding of the material and how it applies to their daily lives. I want each student to leave the classroom at the end of the semester with a better understanding of not only sociology as a discipline, but also how they can use some of these concepts to understand the world around them. I attempt from day one, to impart the sociological imagination to them. I feel that this is best done through examples and events that affect their lives. I use ample references and examples from popular culture and do not shy away from the difficult subjects such as race and gender. Part of this learning experience is the student being able to communicate their thoughts and opinions on these issues, because of this I attempt to foster not only dialogue between myself and the students, but between students as well. In this dialogue they are given enough leeway that they can voice their opinions openly, with only minimal policing of the conversation for people who cross the line from discussion into argumentation. By getting the students actively involved in the discussion with not only me, but each other, and framing the issues around events, terms, and topics that affect them, I am better able to achieve understanding of the subject matter and not just regurgitation. This emphasis on accessibility extends to my dress, demeanor, and language (both physical and verbal). I believe that in a less formal classroom where I avoid setting myself apart from the students helps them not only want to learn, but take ownership in the process. When students feel that they are an active part of the process I find that they take more ownership in the learning. The class and subject become important to them and a place

they want to be. It stops being my classroom and becomes our classroom. This is reflected in the level of respect and space I give students not only for their ideas but for their time as well. By avoiding busy work and respecting the students as adults they find joy and learning in assignments that at the beginning of the semester they balked at.