***Statement of Teaching Philosophy and Advising Statement***

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**TEACHING STATEMENT**

I approach my teaching activities with three primary goals in mind: 1) to educate students at the boundary of research and practice; 2) to implement multiple pedagogical techniques of learning; and 3) to continuously improve my instruction to meet student, curricular, and professional needs. I accomplish these goals by designing courses and assignments that rely on a variety of instructional techniques and evaluative approaches. I carefully connect learning objectives to classroom instruction and assignments, and continually evaluate the effectiveness of my teaching to identify areas where I am able to improve. In the classroom, I use multiple methods of teaching to encourage critical thought and to cultivate competencies that are essential in all areas of life. I also find it important for students to know the history of a subject and to be able to use that when making sense of concepts and theories in the discipline. I advocate for student engagement by applying the Socratic method of asking questions and by having group discussions. Both of which are beneficial for students in their ability to connect theory to practice. I also make strategic use of guest speakers and technology to make room for experiential learning and to expose students to a variety of perspectives that go well beyond the halls and walls of the institution they are earning a degree from. Outside of the classroom, I assign readings and multimedia that introduce students to scholarship, ideas, and sociological perspectives other than my own.

My assignments vary from writing op-eds to reviewing media sources to community walking tours. I strive to give prompt, meaningful, clear, and concise feedback to students on their assignments in order to help them improve as writers, thinkers, and communicators. These are core skills that will serve all students whether they plan to graduate and pursue a career immediately or continue their education by pursuing a graduate degree.

My teaching record shows that I am an engaged and effective educator. I have worked to make my traditional courses, independent studies, department assistantships, and advising relationships meaningful and rewarding for students, and have improved my teaching through research and ongoing professional development. My course evaluations continue to be strong and reflect ongoing improvements that I have made to the courses I teach. Each semester I revisit my teaching materials to make sure content is current, reflect on my teaching strategies, and to make any necessary changes to my courses (e.g., updating content, adding new content, revising current content, and continually attempting to improve the quality of the courses that I teach each semester). In addition to working with undergraduate students, I am also the chair of the William Penn University Institutional Review Board (IRB) where I assist undergraduate and graduate students in developing ethical practices that they outline in the design of their research proposals and capstones.

Following are descriptions for the courses that I teach and some of the assignments that students complete in them:

**Introduction to Sociology (SOCI 101)**: This course is offered every fall semester. This course examines the processes and structures which shape both individuals and social groups (i.e., friendship groups, families, corporations, and nations). The course provides students with interpretive tools for understanding themselves and others in the rapidly changing contemporary world. I teach the course as a seminar, relying on group discussion, critical engagement with the readings, and occasional lectures and in-class activities. Student evaluations for SOCI 101 have been consistently high for the quality of course content and instruction. During the fall 2021 semester my colleague and I adopted the open-source Introduction to Sociology textbook from OpenStax for this course.

**Sociology of Contemporary Issues (SOCI 123)**: This course is offered every spring semester. This course investigates current social problems with an analysis of causative factors and possible solutions. I run this course as a seminar with group discussions, critical engagement with readings, and occasional lectures and in-class activities. Evaluations for SOCI 123 have been consistently high. Each year I review and adjust the syllabus to reflect cutting-edge research published about relevant contemporary issues of the day.

**Introduction to Criminology (SOCI 211)**: This course is offered every fall semester. It is a core course for students who desire to earn an undergraduate major of Sociology with an emphasis in Criminology. The course analyzes the meaning, identification and causes of crime and the role of social institutions in the control of crime and the correction of criminals. For some students, the course is the first introductory course they take. For others, some of the material may be a review from other undergraduate courses they have already taken. Finding the right balance for the course – of the right depth of content and discussion – has been a major focus and an area of teaching improvement. I have worked to integrate multimedia into lectures and discussions, modify course assignments to emphasize student interests, improve writing feedback that is in-line with course objectives, and use more multimedia to create engaging content for group discussion in-class.

**Religion and Society (SOCI 212)**: This course is offered every spring semester. Religion is one of society’s significant institutions. The course focuses on the practices, social structures, historical backgrounds, development, universal themes and the roles of religion in society. Emphasis is placed on the dialectical relationship between society and religion. In the classroom I combine lectures with hands-on activities that are centered on applying course content to everyday life. For example, one assignment requires students to conduct analysis of a set of religious photographs and apply course concepts and theory in their interpretation of those photographs. Based on student feedback, I have continuously adjusted the course to help students understand how they can apply course readings to what they see in the photographs. I have also developed slideshows and chapter notes for students to use as they are completing course readings.

**Ethnic and Race Relations (SOCI 217)**: This course is offered every fall semester. The course explores the historic and current problems faced by ethnic and racial minority groups in American society and beyond; the causes and consequences of prejudice and discrimination and the nature of current minority-majority interaction. Over the past three iterations of the course, I worked to integrate case studies into lectures and discussions, modify course assignments to emphasize individual student interest, improve writing more feedback to students, and create more engaging in-class activities.

**Sex and Gender in Society (SOCI 219)**: This course is offered every spring semester. The course takes a sociological exploration of the changing roles of men and women. Students are given an opportunity to examine the formation of male and female identity; problems encountered between men and women; interpersonal, romantic, and work relationships; and the implications of changing sex roles for major social institutions. Central to the course is for students to be able to apply course knowledge to experiences in their daily life. One key assignment that I have incorporated into the last three iterations of the course is a podcast review where students select from one of many sample podcast episodes that I list for them on Moodle or select one of their own and use their sociological lens to evaluate what they hear.

**Social Organization (SOCI 220)**: This course is offered every fall semester. The course is a study of organizational society, its formal and informal structure, the development of bureaucracy, and the use and misuse of power. An assignment that is central to this course is for students to go to the archives and find a collection of photographs from a specific social organization and/or era, conduct analysis, and apply course content in their interpretation of the photographs. The visual component of photography provides students with insightful knowledge about some of the challenges that people in social organizations faced throughout history in terms of bureaucracy and (mis)use of power. It also provides students a visualization of what social organizations looked like throughout history.

**Marriage and Family (SOCI 311)**: This course is offered every spring semester. Marriage and contemporary family life; exploration of questions, problems, and alternatives. Over the past three iterations of the course, I have worked to integrate academic journal articles into the lectures and discussions, modify course assignments to emphasize the use of scholarship as evidence, and improve the feedback that I provide to students. A key assignment that is central to this course is an in-depth literature review that requires students to become intimate with *at least* one area of content discussed throughout the course.

**Sociology Capstone (SOCI 390), Graduate Capstone (MBL 548 and SMGT 590), and Undergraduate Advising**: Working with undergraduate students who are earning their Bachelor of Arts degree is an important part of my teaching activity at William Penn University. Since spring semester of 2018, I have served as the primary teacher for SOCI 390 Sociology Capstone and have worked with 96 students on their undergraduate capstone project. I have also served on three capstone committees for graduate students who were working on their Master of Business Leadership and/or Master of Sports Management degree.

**Independent Studies**: In addition to courses, I have also supervised two independent studies from 2015 to 2021. The first, completed during the summer of 2017, was designed to introduce students to the fundamentals of planning and organizing job search strategies in the field of Sociology. Emphasis was placed on students identifying

individual goals, self-assessing one’s own talents, exploring career options, analyzing the job market, and effectively using employment search tools (e.g., resumes, cover letters, interviewing, networking, and management of career pathways). The course stressed the value of the liberal arts degree in the labor market and develops job search skills that will be useful throughout life. The second independent study, from spring semester of 2021, was focused on the use of “public sociology” and required the student to produce public sociological work. The student who completed this independent study explored different sociological audiences, the relationship between academia and public intellectual life, how to write and address the public to determine the relationship sociology (and sociologists) have with different publics. The student read “Celebrating the Third Place: Inspiring Stories About the ‘Great Good Places’ at the Heart of Our Communities” by Ray Oldenburg among other readings. The workshop component of the course involved participation in the production of a blog in an effort to disseminate and translate sociological work to broader publics. The student in this course learned about the production of a blog from the inside by participating in the writing, editing, and publishing process of her own blog.

**Additional Courses**: In the summer of 2016, I taught a one-time summer course “Sociology of Mass Media.” This course used a variety of sociological perspectives to understand how media and popular culture is produced and experienced in both everyday life and in a broader social context. Students were taught theories about social organization of the mass media industry, the relationship between cultural consumption and social status, and the social significance of leisure activities from sports and shopping. Central to the course was for students to be able to think critically about media content and its social meaning, and to apply sociological concepts to understand media messages.

**Guest Lectures**: From 2015-2022 I delivered five guest lectures. Three of these guest lectures were at William Penn University and two of the guest lectures were at external institutions. At William Penn University I was invited into Sam Allen’s course to discuss an assignment on soundscapes and noise pollution as a contemporary issue. I have also been invited into Sam Allen’s Principles of Communication course to discuss collaborative projects I have worked with her on. I have also been invited to speak to students at University of Indianapolis (2020) and Appalachian State University (2021) to discuss my research on *The Queen and Her Royal Court: A Content Analysis of Doing Gender at a Tulip Queen Pageant* and the unobtrusive methods I used in this study. I have also given talks on podcast episodes of *Untenured Tracks*, *Down the Research Rabbit Hole*, and *The Social Breakdown* to discuss my research.