I firmly believe that my role as an educator is to aid in the development of students as conscientious contributors to a democratic and global society. To accomplish this, I foreground four primary educational goals in my pedagogical process: critical thinking and problem-solving skills; analytical writing; collaboration and experiential learning; and conceptual and affective learning.

To successfully employ these goals I am dedicated to cultivating and maintaining a classroom atmosphere of universal respect based on thoughtful debate and discussion. To prevent the marginalization of voices in my classroom, I begin all my courses by telling my students "I don't want you to think like me; I just want you to think." By modeling respectful language and behavior, contextualizing multiple sides to issues, actively soliciting student opinions and thoughts, and teaching students how to engage in discussions by separating opinions from facts, I create a classroom environment where students feel safe to express themselves without fear of judgment. This safety, however, does not mean shying away from difficult topics or conversations. The topics I teach in my courses take up issues of institutional, interpersonal, and systemic injustice, including issues of gender, sex, sexuality, race, class, ability, power, and privilege, which can be challenging for many students. I explicitly ask my students to be "intellectually uncomfortable" as a way of challenging preconceived notions, opening up new lines of critical thought and investigation, and discovering new interests. Rigorous, challenging, and informed thought respectfully expressed in a nonjudgmental space is the baseline of any of course I teach. I hold both my students and myself to these high expectations.

"It sparked a lot of introspective and culturally conscious thought." (student evaluation statement)
Many students enter my classroom with preconceived notions about the audiovisual materials that make up cinema and media studies; they see them as modes of entertainment and distraction. My goal is to give them the tools to understand contemporary media products as sites of cultural and ideological investigation. By positioning media products as vehicles through which we can understand the construction and perpetuation of social, cultural, political, and economic dynamics, students learn to use their everyday media consumption to critically analyze and make a mark on their world. Specifically, I assign screening reports (introspective response essays to visual material screened in class) asking students to tease out the aspects of the material that resonate with them as most relevant to their understanding of class theories and discussions, their everyday lived experiences, and potential lessons for their chosen profession. Giving students the freedom to make sense of the material by integrating class concepts with their own experience and professional aspirations encourages connections between class material and their lives outside of class while simultaneously asking them to form and articulate their own critical analysis around the major themes of the class. For example, a screening report gave a student the structure and space to articulate how issues of GLBT representation in the media were correlative to his experience as a Latino of being—as he put it—"missing" from mainstream media. The assignment not only facilitated his understanding around issues of identity and representation in media systems, it also allowed him to connect those concepts to his own life and fostered a new connection and solidarity with other marginalized groups.

"Was beneficial in encouraging people to think critically." (student evaluation statement)
Critical thinking skills and analytical writing are reciprocally constituted; effective and persuasive expression is a crucial extension of critical thought. I emphasize analytical writing skills as a critical component for course work, as well as a valuable professional skill. Understanding that all students come from various educational backgrounds, I set clear expectations for student writing and have developed a phased developmental process that ensures all students can succeed at their own level while simultaneously evolving their personal writing and language abilities. For example, students participated in a semester-long writing assignment, culminating in a final original research paper. The project was divided into separate assignments—paper proposal, preliminary bibliography, outline, and final paper—each of which allows me to provide continuous feedback to, and engage in discussion with, the students. This phased process allows

students to master the necessary components of an academic research paper, learn project and time management skills, and most importantly, to cultivate an original idea from inception to fruition.

"I loved the perspective it gave me." (student evaluation statement)
I strive to make students feel accountable for their own educational process, and collaboration and experiential learning is a very effective way to cultivate student investment. These strategies are particularly effective for students new to cinema and media studies, as it allows them to actively apply disciplinary concepts to their own lives through concrete actions, making course work relevant beyond the classroom. For example, I have students submit discussion questions based on their readings prior to class. Students use these questions to flag what topics they find most interesting, most difficult, would like to learn more about, etc. In crafting the questions they often comment on how they understand the reading in relation to their own lives and interests, many times using themselves as examples when formulating questions. I use the questions to help stimulate and guide in-class discussions, targeting our dialogue to their needs and interests, and cultivating their investment in the course material.

Importantly, I believe course work should extend past traditional assignments and integrate new technologies into learning. Students were asked to produce a digital video for their final assignment. Working in groups, students were given a topic, and together were responsible for producing an original 4-5 minute video that not only needed to respond to the topic, but also had to integrate class concepts and demonstrate learning goals. Students were responsible for defining the content of their project, assigning individual and collective tasks, assessing technological needs, obtaining technological resources, and casting, shooting, and editing their video. They then presented their video to the class, followed by a question and answer period. This type of experiential learning helps students to understand the joys and burdens of media making, the connection between media consumption and production, and gives them a creative outlet that accommodates different learning styles and experiences all with the means of production that they already carry in their backpockets.

"Who knew that all my years of television watching would actually do me some good" (student evaluation statement)
Engaging in conceptual and affective learning aids in drawing abstract theories down into the concrete lives of students. Affective learning targets student's ability to receive, respond to, and value the information they are learning, allowing information to transform from simple facts and ideas to internalized and personalized concepts. Affective strategies "make learning real" and are critical components of cinema and media studies education, particularly considering media's everyday ubiquity. I invoke affective learning through the use of media journals, an assignment designed to link classroom-based intellectual ideas with everyday life. For one week students are asked to chronicle all the media—in any form—that they consume. The following week they are charged with avoiding all media (unless educationally required). After the two-week period students contrast, compare, and reflect on their weeks. Students are often surprised by—and remark on—how the assignment forced them to realize their overdependence on media and media technologies to structure their days, do their work, facilitate relaxation, and even provide simple information like the weather forecast. These can often be startling realizations, and the stark contrast between the two journal timeframes drives home an affective comprehension of the place of media in their lives and helps students to develop a deep connection to their own media education.

These pedagogical processes provide both the intellectual foundation and the communicative environment to help successfully guide students through their lives academic lives. It also provides them with the tools to translate their education outside of institutional walls, allowing them to develop as productive and conscientious global citizens and life-long learners, a core value of academia.