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May 2016  
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## STATEMENT OF TEACHING PHILOSOPHY

At the heart of my approach to teaching are critical thinking and communication skills. Students of English will develop written and oral communication skills that are highly portable and applicable to future postsecondary and career opportunities. In our increasingly diverse communities and global culture, the need for creative and critical thinking skills is not diminishing but rather increasing. Equally important in both educational institutions and workplaces is the need for constructive dialogue and written communication that can enact the effective exchange of ideas.

Furthermore, by presenting the perspectives of some of the best writers in my discipline, I wish to foster in students mature reflections on the relationship of literary studies to their culture and society. As literary critic Ann Banfield asserts, the benefit of fiction is that consciousness and the self are cut loose from “I” so that readers may experience something that is otherwise impossible in the everyday world—that is, to enter the consciousness of another person. In other words, we may see from another’s perspective. This experience stimulates social responsibility, interconnection, and the development of the whole person.

My goals for English courses are therefore twofold. The first goal is to encourage students to discuss texts, literary and cultural, in ways that are at once analytical and reflective. Students are invited to think and to enter into dialogue through engagement with a variety of texts and critical discourses. Required readings offer a survey of fiction, poetry, and critical perspectives that are socially and historically relevant in order to introduce students to the language and forms of analysis. I seek to organize meaningful classroom discussions in which students may explore and test their ideas, while learning from the texts, each other, and their instructor. They are encouraged to develop simultaneously the values of inquiry, integrity, and commitment to excellence and social justice. At the same time, I myself wish to model values of inquiry, creativity, responsibility and academic freedom. Thus, I seek to create a classroom environment that emphasizes dialogue and interpretation by asking students to listen, question, and participate in discussions. I also seek to create a cordial relationship with students by learning their names in the classroom and by offering an open door policy during regular office hours. In short, my methods include lectures combined with classroom discussions, as well as five-minute discussions with neighbours, group discussions, and sometimes group presentations.

The second goal is to help students to express ideas effectively in written form. Through composition assignments, essays, and examinations, students are empowered to express ideas effectively in written form, whether these skills are later applied to essays, reports, oral presentations, letters, or other forms of communication in academic and professional endeavours.

### **Works cited**

Banfield, Ann. *Unspeakable Sentences: Narration and Representation in the Language of Fiction* (qtd. in Wallace Martin, *Recent Theories of Narrative* [Ithaca: Cornell, 1986], p. 141).