

## **Ann Chapman Price**

### Teaching Statement

My teaching is grounded in the conviction that education can expand students' freedom, agency, and capacity to flourish. I understand learning as an active and collaborative process through which students develop knowledge and skills while also developing a greater ability to examine assumptions, grapple with complexity, and engage thoughtfully with people and ideas different from their own. Students bring to the classroom varied cultural and linguistic backgrounds, educational histories, professional experiences, responsibilities, perspectives, and aspirations. My role is to create rigorous and accessible opportunities through which students can draw upon their existing strengths while developing new capacities.

Across my teaching, I seek to help students cultivate what I think of as a critical habitus: not simply a collection of analytical techniques, but a disposition toward attentive, reflective, and responsible engagement with the world. Critical thinking requires students to identify and evaluate arguments and evidence, recognize assumptions, consider alternative explanations or interpretations, and revise conclusions when warranted. But it also requires intellectual humility, curiosity, patience, perspective-taking, and a willingness to sit with ambiguity or uncertainty. I therefore encourage students to seek first to understand before moving to evaluation and response. Through careful reading, collaborative inquiry, discussion, and analytical writing, students practice taking ideas seriously enough to understand their logic, context, and implications while also learning to question them rigorously.

My teaching is inspired by feminist, constructivist, critical, and culturally responsive pedagogies. I seek to cultivate classrooms grounded in mutuality and reciprocal exchange, in which knowledge is constructed collaboratively through sustained engagement with texts, ideas, evidence, and one another. This does not diminish the responsibility of the instructor to provide disciplinary expertise, intellectual direction, and clear expectations; rather, it means creating the conditions in which students can participate meaningfully in the constructive work of learning. I want students to understand that their questions, perspectives, and experiences are resources for inquiry while also learning to test, complicate, and revise their own understandings through encounter with others.

Culturally responsive teaching, for me, involves more than diversifying course materials, although representation matters. It also means attending to whose knowledge is treated as authoritative, inviting students to examine how perspective and social location shape interpretation, designing multiple points of entry into difficult material, and remaining responsive to the particular students actually present in the classroom. The humanities and social sciences provide especially rich opportunities for students to encounter unfamiliar perspectives while examining the assumptions through which they themselves understand the world.

A strengths-based approach similarly shapes how I respond to students' contributions. In discussion, I deliberately draw out what is perceptive or promising in an observation before asking a student to clarify, substantiate, complicate, or reconsider it. I use carefully sequenced questions, collaborative annotation, visible thinking routines, think-pair-share, brief reflective writing, and other structures that allow students different ways to formulate and contribute ideas. I regularly bring students back to texts, evidence, and the reasoning underlying their conclusions. Guided by backward design, I select these activities purposefully in relation to

the enduring understandings and transferable skills at the heart of a course. In this way, I seek to maintain high intellectual expectations while widening meaningful participation.

Accessibility and equity, in my teaching, therefore do not mean lowering expectations. I believe in transparency rather than lowered expectations: making intellectual processes visible, explaining the purposes behind assignments, modeling unfamiliar practices, scaffolding complex tasks, and providing students with clear criteria for success. Students enter higher education with varying degrees of familiarity with academic and disciplinary conventions, but no one arrives already knowing precisely what a particular discipline or instructor means by close reading, strong analysis, effective use of evidence, or successful academic writing. For that reason, those practices and expectations should be made explicit rather than treated as hidden knowledge students are simply expected to possess. I also remain responsive through informal feedback, individual conversations, and adjustments to course structures when those changes can widen access without diminishing rigor.

Close reading is central to much of my teaching. I draw students into sustained engagement with sources through discussion, collaborative analysis, annotation, and other forms of active interpretation. Particularly in history and religion courses, I ask students to notice detail, substantiate their claims in specific passages, and situate those passages within their historical and intellectual contexts. In doing so, students practice reading not as passive reception but as a form of inquiry—one that requires attentiveness to what is unfamiliar as well as reflection on the assumptions they themselves bring to interpretation.

Writing is likewise central to my teaching because I understand it not merely as a means of displaying thought but as a discipline for developing it. I teach writing as a holistic process, from inquiry and investigation through drafting, feedback, revision, and publication. I foster a generous and generative culture in which revision is understood as an essential practice of continual growth—the means by which all writers continue to develop—rather than as the correction of failure. I emphasize clarity and precision because students increasingly need these capacities as the ideas with which they engage become more complex and nuanced. Grammar, mechanics, and disciplinary conventions matter, but they serve the larger purposes of thinking carefully and communicating effectively. I also understand writing as a relational and communal practice: we write to enter conversations with others, and rhetorical awareness requires learning to make purposeful choices in relation to audience, purpose, genre, and context.

Ultimately, I understand education in the humanities and social sciences as preparation both for students' immediate academic and professional goals and for lifelong learning and thoughtful, engaged citizenship in the world. These disciplines give students an environment in which to consider difficult but important questions, recognize the complexity of human experience, and develop the intellectual tools to participate thoughtfully and ethically in their communities. I therefore seek to create classrooms that call students toward ambitious intellectual growth while recognizing the knowledge, capacities, and experiences they already bring—classrooms in which students are challenged and supported, experience a genuine sense of belonging, and find themselves increasingly empowered to undertake the shared work of thinking well.