Statement of Teaching Philosophy

My objectives as an educator in philosophy are to 1. motivate the value of philosophy 2. develop interdisciplinary skills in teamwork, close reading, critical thinking, and clear communication, and 3. help students to apply these to multidisciplinary questions.

To motivate its value, in courses like "Introduction to Philosophy," "Philosophical Ethics," and "Philosophy of Religion," I show how different disciplines have evolved from philosophy, forming around common questions and ways of addressing them. On this understanding, philosophy is uniquely suited to integrate different methods and forms of knowledge to address common human questions. Since this is difficult, requiring time and practice, I organize my courses around final projects, integrating skills and knowledge students develop throughout the semester.

For example, in "Global Engineering Ethics," groups of 3 - 4 students research, write up, and present original case studies about technologies and/or engineering-related incidents and their social implications. Groups pick topics related to their own engineering research and work experience, since the course is taught to engineering majors. In recent years, projects have focused on facial recognition technologies and responsible videogame development. The course demonstrates that engineering problems involve more than technical expertise alone. I have continued to work with students after the course, turning final projects into case studies used for global engineering ethics training.

To build up these skills throughout the course, on the first day of class, students list ethical issues encountered in their own lives, discussing these in small groups, and deciding on and giving reasons for the most important ones. Then, in the first homework assignment, students identify relevant and missing facts in a hypothetical case of a building collapse. Later in the semester, we watch *Deepwater Horizon* and an episode of *Black Mirror*, clarifying terminology and applying ethical principles to resolve issues, and identifying mitigating circumstances and ways of avoiding these issues in the first place.

To apply these skills to multidisciplinary questions, in "Introduction to Chinese Philosophy," students develop empirical, quantitative studies to assess if and how contemporary Chinese culture is based on ancient Chinese philosophy. This requires 1. identifying and explaining cultural information and/or empirical claims that appear in ancient Chinese texts, for example, Confucius' claim that people think benevolence consists in fathers covering for sons and sons covering for fathers, and then 2. describing ways of assessing these positions and/or their cultural relativity, for instance, if Chinese culture is more Confucian than US culture, then Chinese should endorse sons hiding crimes committed by their fathers at higher rates than US participants. This helps students to understand the nature of culture, as well as identify and question the sources of their own beliefs and behaviors.

To develop the requisite knowledge and skills for these projects, for each reading, I assign a ¼-page cultural/empirical identifier, wherein students identify cultural information and/or empirical claims that appear in the text. Students share this work in small groups in class. This provides a starting point for class lectures and student presentations, to facilitate greater participation and discussions. Students give one 20-minute presentation during the semester, where they are required to lead an exercise, for instance, a thought experiment, related to course contents, to elicit audience participation.

To summarize, my teaching is collaborative and project-based, working with students to conduct original research spanning multiple disciplines, to address pressing questions facing humanity.