

Teaching Philosophy

Informed by critical, sociocultural and Freirean ideas of teaching and learning, I believe that (1) issues of power and oppression need to be centered in teaching and learning, (2) we learn and teach in relationship/dialogue with one another and (3) learning is a process or practice that requires active engagement with the world around us. My ultimate goal is for students to gain experience in critical thinking and dialogue, foster their commitment to continual growth and support them in strengthening their commitment and skillset for anti-oppressive transformational practice. These objectives serve as a guide for course design, reading selection, assignments, assessments, and classroom environments.

Teaching Experience

I have successfully taught courses on social work history, policy, administration, organizations, and community organizing. I also have experience guest teaching participatory research methods and meta-theory in PhD courses; and also have hosted/facilitated quarterly seminars for the Community-Centered and Integrated Practice (CCIP) MSW concentration. I have been a sole instructor for both the BASW and MSW programs. My teaching evaluations confirm the effectiveness of my pedagogical practice. Students have reported feeling constructively challenged, but also supported. My dedication to the subject and teaching is made clear through my course design, interaction with students and consistently high evaluations/feedback. I value the role of teaching in personal and social transformation, and as one student reported, *“Angela is great and her obvious passion for social work is contagious”*. Another student noted that this commitment to social change work helped them identify and articulate their own commitment, *“Angie is really passionate about research, poverty, inequality and macro approach to addressing issues by being informed, critical and curious”* and that I provide *“everyone the time, space and willingness to speak to what makes it passionate for them.”*

Teaching Style & Practice

Dialogue is a central practice in my online and in-person classrooms. I use a variety of different dialogical structures (pairs, small groups, large groups, rotating groups, project-based & course-long working groups) in the classroom. Each structure illuminates different ways of relating to one another and exploring ideas. I actively encourage students to reflect not just on the content of their dialogue, but also analyze the dialogue process itself. For example, when students have quarter-long working groups, I schedule routine exercises where they assess how they are working together and what they can change/adapt to best support each other’s learning needs/goals. This models routine reflection on group dynamics, helps normalize accessibility and provides a relatively low-stakes environment where students can practice having potentially difficult or uncomfortable conversations with one another. I try to give space for students to work out minor conflicts/discomforts amongst themselves, but also stay engaged and present to social and power dynamics (e.g. observation, anonymous mid-quarter surveys and 1-1 meetings). I step in to coach, facilitate or mediate when needed. Finally, as demonstrated in my student evaluations, I create a warm and inviting space, *“Angie was great--she has a very warm and invitingly casual demeanor that made me feel safe talking to her about issues and problems”*.

Issues of power and oppression are central to my course design, reading selection and assignments. I work to make the central questions of the course clear (e.g. ‘What is the role of social work in both maintaining and addressing poverty & inequality?’) and divide each week into smaller, more focused guiding questions (e.g. ‘What is the role of non-profits in both maintaining and addressing poverty & inequality?’). One student referenced the effectiveness of this scaffolding, *“She took the topic and made it manageable and helped me to feel much more confident in my knowledge”*. I focus on helping students critically examine the specific ways that power and oppression play out. I invite them to consider that in the process of exploring conflict, tension, and contradictions, we can expand our own thinking and transform our environments. I make it clear that there is no singular socially just path forward, but through critical dialogue we can unlearn harmful myths and assumptions, learn about each others’ experiences, and imagine different ways of doing

things. One student reported on my WI 21 evaluation, *“I have not been provided the opportunity to think about Macro Social Work so critically till this class”*.

I select readings that examine the same issue from different positionalities (particularly multiple non-dominant positionalities) and create assignments that allow for students to deeply explore the core tensions through multiple modes (e.g. observation, essays, research papers, reflection prompts, attending community events, etc.). As one student shared, *“This class stretched my thinking as well as introduced me to a lot of new viewpoints on specific topics. I felt that I was able to learn from all aspects on the information presented.”* Another commented, *“I enjoyed this class and did not expect it to cover as many intersections as it did”*. I routinely close class sessions with open questions that encourage creative thinking and visioning of alternative ways of doing things. We discuss the ways that their proposed actions could feed into a larger theory of change or contribute to the practice of building something different. This practice can help combat feelings of defeat that can come up when critically examining our systems and structures, and helps students identify specific ways that they can take action in their lives, practicum sites and communities.

Future Teaching

In the years to come, I look forward to teaching across the BASW, MSW and PhD programs. I would like to teach the historical foundations of social work (BASW, MSW), mezzo and macro practice courses (BASW, MSW), introduction to research methods (MSW), qualitative methods/design (MSW, PhD) and meta-theory courses (PhD).