# Teaching Philosophy

As a scholar of film, media, and theater, my teaching philosophy always centers on the media form, or that which makes a medium unique from others. My course on film, for example, begins with a review of elementary categories such as cinematography, editing, narrative, mise-en-scène, and sound design. Understanding these principles unlocks an appreciation for the ways in which the film form conveys meaning, gripping the audience in laughter or terror through an array of literary and filmic devices. This instructs methods for conceptually dividing form from content, allowing one to define the ways media conveys meaning, and the dialectic processes occurring between these polarities. Delivering critical strategies for scrutinizing one's perception of "real life," this method allows students to consider the ways they have been influenced by the ambient media infiltrating every nook of the quotidien.

Media forms crystalize ideological elements gleaned from the churn of culture, appraising these across a period of time illustrates the evolution of such forms and the social world in which they were produced. One comes to understand ideology not as a fixed regime but a set of beliefs undergoing constant negotiation. Branching outward from media forms facilitates discussions on historical, aesthetic, and ideological processes. Students unlock tools to investigate the ways one group of people has represented another according to ability, sexuality, gender, race, and class. Delving into textual and rhetorical strategies, students engage with the ways media forms naturalize enduring categories for human-beings, and how this is affected by socio-cultural structures of the period. During a time in which life online encourages segregation according to marketable, targetable groupings, it becomes imperative to impart strategies for decoding the "shorthand" that media forms use to persuade and obfuscate. Confronting media in this way requires acknowledging the reality that the production of such forms have largely lied in the hands of masculine, white heterosexuals. White supremacy, the patriarchy, and capitalism, all naturalize the argument that some groups of people deserve more rights than another, but a critical exploration of media can expose these perspectives as mere cultural constructs.

I feel it is necessary to confront students on why certain readings feel "correct," asking them to acknowledge their own position within a spectrum of disparate interpretive strategies. Once they become cognizant that no definitive reading of a text exists, then they can begin supporting their arguments by citing textual evidence. It is my goal to convey that critically evaluating media forms does not reduce one's ability to derive pleasure from their consumption. On the contrary, the analysis of media forms and the ideology crystalized within only deepens the experience. It is my mission to educate the next generation of students, to enrich their capacity to engage as literate, active, and aware consumers in an ever-expanding, hyper-fragmented media environment.