Statement of Teaching Philosophy

The world coming into view will be defined by opportunities and challenges of unprecedented scale. As digital networking, climate change, and resource stratification merge in increasingly complex global affairs, the task of higher education becomes more urgent. To thrive in this environment, students must gain facility with a wide breadth of scholarly materials. Employing multiple teaching modalities, my courses foster the capacity for critical thought and ethical action. As my pedagogical practice develops, I consistently create learning experiences which support the interests and ambitions of each student. I teach so that they may express the conditions of the future in their own inimitable voices.

In affirmation of my scholarly project, my pedagogy acknowledges the effects of technology on society. I am particularly sensitive to the cognitive load borne by younger people, as their academic and professional success depends on habitual interaction with complicated informatic ecosystems. In the interest of simplicity, my earliest syllabi featured exercises with which many students were already familiar. These included presentations, structured debates, simulation games, and research papers. Over time, I began to experiment with more innovative exercises. I have found that these are most helpful when they span multiple class sessions and embody different concepts. At the beginning of my course "Introduction to Data in Social Context," students collectively write a questionnaire to assess classwide attitudes towards technology. This questionnaire yields a dataset; together, these materials serve as the basis for several assignments. Towards the middle of the semester, students consult the dataset and questionnaire to inquire into the conceptual meaning of "data," "information," and "metadata," and to practice *in vivo* coding. By the course's end, they use these materials to explore the normativity of data collection methods and the epistemology of digital categorization. Because the questionnaire activities are new to most students, they require high attention to procedural detail. These efforts are well-rewarded, as they illuminate theory in practice, promote mutual responsibility, and establish continuity across various course units.

Transparency is a cornerstone of my teaching style. Because my courses integrate material from multiple disciplines, it is essential that students understand the shared conceptual basis for different activities. My syllabi for "Privacy and Media" and "Introduction to Data in Social Context" combine frameworks from Sociology, Philosophy of Technology, and Political Theory to deconstruct myths of ahistorical and politically neutral innovation. My lectures indicate the rationale for blending these perspectives and point to the ideas which run between them. Assignments typically include à la carte options, which urges students to take agency over their course experience and reflect on their learning styles. Throughout the semester, I solicit candid feedback from my students, and routinely incorporate their responses in my course design. In Fall 2020, I am offering a comprehensive project proposal as one option for a culminating assignment. I developed this offering in response to students' interest in pursuing advanced research based on my courses. The proposal allows them to exhibit their mastery of theory and methodology, and has resulted in strikingly original ideas.

My interdisciplinary research background is mirrored in my teaching record. Over four years, I have taught in Virginia Tech's Departments of Religion and Culture, Political Science, and History. "Introduction to Data in Social Context" is cross-listed with the Departments of Sociology and Science, Technology, and Society (S.T.S.). At the time of writing, I am preparing to teach in the Department of Media, Culture, and Communication at New York University. I believe that courses at the intersection of technology and humanistic inquiry are especially well-served by collaborative teaching. In anticipation of future team-teaching opportunities, I frequently invite guest speakers to my class. Recently, I asked a colleague with degrees in Anthropology and Data Science to deliver an in-class lecture regarding his work for a hospital in New York City. As he explained, data science enabled the hospital to predict

equipment needs at the outset of the Covid-19 crisis. He highlighted his humanities training as key to understanding the demography of staff and patients, which informed his approach to coding. We are currently collaborating on a concept syllabus for a seminar on theories of artificial intelligence.

I have advised a number of students interested in graduate school and careers in policy, government, academia, and STEM(M). No career is forged without guidance, and professional mentorship at the college level plays a significant role in future success. Throughout class sessions and in one-on-one meetings, I help students gain the self-trust they need to forge positive working relationships, seek advice, and develop their leadership capacities. As I watch my former students advance in their careers, I keep track of developments in academia and industry so that I may continue to offer timely professional advice.

Although my students' long-term ambitions are of utmost importance, I am equally invested in their immediate quality of life. Students at every level must feel "seen" by their peers and professors, and learning environments should mirror the excitement and curiosity that pervade college campuses. Today, many learning environments — including my own — are virtual. When Virginia Tech transitioned to online teaching in Spring 2020, I emphasized my students' bond with the community. Many students indicated that they not only felt connected to me and one another, but attributed new insights on course material to the affordances of the digital medium, with a special nod to my audio lectures or "podcasts." My online courses feature these "podcasts" alongside Zoom video sessions and real-time activities facilitated by digital platforms.

The best professors give of their time and energy selflessly in the service of each student's intellectual potential, creative vision, and career goals. Further, they consistently exhibit the passion that led them to pursue a career in education. To quote one student review: "it's very seldom that I see a teacher such as Emma whose dedication and passion for the subject shows during every lecture." My vocation extends beyond the classroom, and I welcome the opportunity to build community wherever I teach.