

## J. Gillentine Teaching Philosophy

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My Teaching Philosophy as a Counselor Educator

### **Personal Value Statement**

I am a Christian! It is not simply an activity I participate in as a spectator, but it is who I strive to be. I like to believe if you cut me, I will bleed Christian blood. I am not trying to make you think I live this out perfectly, but it is my intention! I serve the God (the uncaused cause, source of absolute truth) who spoke and caused time, space, matter, and mankind to come into existence. I strive to live by what could be called a Biblical or Christian Worldview. I hope to find myself teaching at a university that honors God with its work and finds that integrating Biblical values and counseling principles is strongly encouraged where appropriate.

### **General Summary of Teaching Philosophy**

I am very much aware of the vastly different ways people learn. People see things differently; sometimes, I wonder if they are looking at the same information. I have personally had a unique path getting here today. I learn best by doing where my brother will read something once and seem to understand it. Being intentional about my learning has allowed me to work harder and see that some students need additional help or a personal word of encouragement. I want to know my students and not simply be a facilitator to make assignments and grade them. I believe in relationships; This is the reason God created us. I desire to build a relationship with each student. I want them to leave a class I have led and feel they have gained knowledge of the course and felt a sense of empowerment by the relationship we built throughout the course. However, I want students to be driven primarily by their personal autonomy and efforts. Solution Focused Brief Therapy is the method of counseling I primarily utilize. One of its central ideas is to lead from behind or alongside. This principle carries over into my teaching philosophy. I want to support students in gaining skills in a way that empowers them to succeed during our time together while also preparing them to be equipped to build on their knowledge independently of being guided by a professor. Additionally, I hope the relationship-building efforts will help me to be made aware of any learning struggles or personal life issues they may need additional flexibility or alternative means of demonstrating an understanding of the material.

### **CES Identity Information**

I strive to treat others as I like to be treated. I am a person who pays attention to the world around me. Through this mindset, I have learned things that are irritating and others that are beneficial from a student's perspective. So many of my instructors over the years make you feel that you are extremely important when in front of them, but when you are not, you simply

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become another thing to get to if it is convenient. I know the cost students pay (financial, time, energy, etc.), and I want to help them know they are important and valuable to our program.

### **Pedagogy Identification**

I believe in an eclectic approach to my teaching philosophy.

One of the concepts is the Socratic method. Stoddard and Odell (2016) said this of the Socratic method, "...[T]eaching consisted in prompting students, through cross-examination, into acknowledging their own fallacies and then asking them provocative questions to steer them towards realizing true knowledge via introspection." I genuinely love to argue. Not in a rude way, but with others who are seeking to grow and gain a better understanding for us both. I want my students to know we are in a safe place where opposing ideas are not only allowed but encouraged while seeking truth or the best reasonable answer possible.

A second concept is critical realism, which allows for absolute truth while having confidence in what we think we know and acknowledging it is reasonable to question truth as we understand it (Ferguson, 2022). I want students to have confidence in themselves and counseling theories while also being driven to examine the theories in a manner that will drive future discoveries and new modalities.

A third idea I partially agree with is that of being a constructivist. I like the idea that students are building on their past knowledge and being open to the ideas of multiple interpretations of an event, but I do NOT align with the main idea that there is no absolute truth (Haddock & Whitman 2019, pg. 18).

A fourth idea is parts of transformative learning. I strongly desire that students think critically about their understanding of the world and consider the facts supporting their views (Haddock & Whitman 2019, pg. 20-21). A person who has lived in a small cultural bubble will typically think their bubble is a microcosm of the world when, in reality, it only represents a small area compared to the world's vastness.

### **Practical Evaluation**

Evaluation is an ongoing process. I like to utilize interactive class discussions for classes that meet as a group to see if students grasp concepts or if we need to circle back around. I prefer writing and verbal assignments (i.e., blog posts, essay tests, papers, recordings, etc.) to allow students to demonstrate an understanding of the subject matter. Especially with the career choice of becoming a counselor, students must be able to use their words to explain ideas.

### **Diversity**

I love being with people of different cultures. I once had a respected person tell me I should stop reading 'those' people and read the people who see the world the 'right' way. I choose to read varying opinions because the truth is often skewed by our perspectives and

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shaded by our environments and culture. Diversity often helps shed light on a situation, develops some areas to be more precise, and offers opportunities to learn from each other's world.

### References

- Ferguson, S. L. (2022). Teaching what is "Real" about science: Critical realism as a framework for science education. *Science & Education*, 31(6), 1651-1669. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11191-021-00308-w>
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