

## 5. DEI Dialogically Informed Teaching Statement

As a queer white woman working at the intersection of theater practice and scholarship, I see it as an essential part of my job to amplify works by global majority, BIPOC, disabled, and queer artists and scholars on every syllabus I write and in every institution I work with. In the courses I teach, I also equip students with the tools they need to critically examine canonical works by placing them in their historical, cultural, and political contexts.

Throughout my time at CU Boulder, I have been committed to cultivating inclusive and equitable classrooms, creating opportunities for more students to participate in the department, and advocating for diversity in our production season. I've built connections with theater artists and local organizations to enrich my students' learning experiences; in spring 2023 I wrote a grant to bring playwright Madhuri Shekar to Zoom with my Theatre and Society class before they saw our production of her play; in 2023-24, I brought artists from Local Theater Company to work with student playwrights and actors in our New Play Lab, and in fall 2024, I invited Indigenous theater artists and scholars affiliated with the Creative Nations First Storytellers Festival to speak with my playwriting class. Through these visits, students have been able to hear diverse perspectives from working artists, and to ask questions that span beyond my own areas of research.

Inclusion is not sufficient, but it is necessary. As Lisa A. Flores writes, inclusion is not, itself, transformative, but it can enact a kind of fissure, without which transformation cannot happen.<sup>1</sup> In my classroom, therefore, I take diversity and inclusion as a starting point, not an end. Once the syllabus reading list includes a diversity of artists, once the course calendar includes opportunities for students to speak with artists and scholars from various backgrounds, and once students see they can participate through multiple modalities, then we can begin. We can start to have the dialogue through which we'll learn together.

I invite students to bring their lived experiences into classroom discussions and their creative work, and I design opportunities for them to collaborate. Through this work, they can learn from one another's different perspectives, and together they can co-construct new frameworks to scaffold their understanding. In my Climate Change Storytelling in Performance course, my students designed creative exercises for each other to try as they developed their final projects. In my Theatre and Society course, students worked in groups to pitch plays to add to the syllabus: they synthesized course learning objectives with their own personal interests to make presentations that were engaging, thoughtful, and persuasive. In seminars, I encourage students to take a collaborative, "barn-raising" approach: building our knowledge together, rather than seeking only to prevail in an argument.<sup>2</sup> I have found that when students are invited into this kind of discussion, they quickly become more curious about each other's insights, as well as more invested in the material.

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<sup>1</sup> Flores, Lisa A. 2018. "Towards an Insistent and Transformative Racial Rhetorical Criticism." *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 15 (4): 349–57. doi:10.1080/14791420.2018.1526387.

<sup>2</sup> McCormick, D., & Kahn, M. (1982). Barn Raising: Collaborative Group Process in Seminars. *Exchange: The Organizational Behavior Teaching Journal*, 7(4), 16-20. <https://doi.org/10.1177/105256298200700404>

As a demonstration of my commitment to increasing equity in higher education, I served for two years as the student representative on the Colorado Department of Higher Education Open Educational Resources Council, which funds the development of openly licensed educational materials to reduce textbook costs for students across the state. In addition, I have served on several department committees during my time at CU Boulder, and I am currently the GPTI Lead for graduate student instructors in my department.

Above all, my teaching philosophy centers on co-creating understanding with my students. I think of a classroom as a place where we can generate knowledge together. For this reason, I begin every semester by telling my students that whatever their major, year, or theater experience, they are all important members of the class community, and they all have unique and valuable perspectives to contribute.