

Teaching Statement

I chose teaching as my future profession after being impressed by the efforts of instructors in U.S. universities to cultivate students not only as capable professionals in a rapidly evolving digital environment, but also as thoughtful and responsible members of society. Coming from Bangladesh, where education was largely lecture-driven and questioning authority was uncommon, I encountered a different model of learning during my master's and doctoral studies in the United States: one grounded in care, dialogue, and active engagement. During this transition, I struggled with unfamiliar technologies and new expectations. What enabled me to persist was not only instruction, but the patience, clarity, and encouragement of my instructors. These experiences shaped my understanding of teaching as a continuous effort to create conditions in which students develop confidence, participate meaningfully, and strengthen their abilities through challenges in learning--preparing them not only as future professionals, but also as thoughtful members of society.

My teaching philosophy is guided by four interrelated goals: supporting students in developing confidence and articulating their perspectives; strengthening analytical thinking through engagement with real-world problems; encouraging reflection and growth through iterative learning; and cultivating a collaborative learning environment that prepares students to engage responsibly with others and the broader society. I pursue these goals through an intentional progression that moves students from individual reflection to shared discussion, critical engagement, and practical application, while maintaining a classroom environment grounded in clarity, responsiveness, and mutual respect.

First, I emphasize learning through practice. Drawing on my 17 years of professional experience as a journalist, I approach journalism as a practice-based discipline in which students learn most effectively by actively producing content. In my recitation sections for CMDI 1040 (Spring 2025, approximately 20 students), I taught multimedia storytelling using Adobe Express by combining structured instruction with immediate application. I begin by explaining how visual and textual choices shape meaning, then demonstrate each step using slides and live examples, ensuring that students complete key components during class. This approach enables students to translate concepts into practice within a single session and build confidence in using unfamiliar tools. An observation of my teaching by the course instructor noted my use of clear objectives, visual aids, and step-by-step demonstration, as well as my efforts to support students in completing tasks during the session.

Second, I strengthen analytical thinking by engaging students with multiple perspectives through structured and respectful dialogue. In my classes, I observe that some students hesitate to speak initially, not because they are disengaged, but because they are processing unfamiliar ideas or expectations. Recognizing this, I design multiple entry points for participation, including individual reflection, small-group discussion, and whole-class dialogue. I also establish clear expectations for interaction, such as listening to understand before responding, grounding interpretations in one's own perspective, and critiquing ideas rather than individuals. These practices position students as contributors to one another's learning and help create a classroom environment where they can engage thoughtfully with complex topics. In this process, students encounter differing interpretations and, at times, tensions in how stories are understood, prompting them to examine not only what they think, but why they think it. As they move from reflection to discussion, their responses become more analytical, as they begin to explain how and why interpretations differ.

Third, I encourage reflection and growth through iterative learning. Early in my teaching, I observed that some students struggled with digital tools and became disengaged, while others progressed more quickly. In response, I adjusted my approach by breaking down tasks into manageable steps, incorporating guided practice, and providing additional resources for students who were less familiar with the tools. Students receive feedback during in-class work, through peer review, and on submitted assignments, allowing them to revise their work and improve over time. As a result, students who were initially hesitant become more active participants, complete tasks more independently, and engage more confidently with both technical tools and storytelling concepts. This process reflects professional journalistic practice, where work develops through revision rather than one-time performance.

Finally, I cultivate a collaborative learning environment that connects technical skills with ethical responsibility. As the instructor of record of Media Law and Ethics (JRNL 3651, Summer 2025, 14 students), I designed the course around real-world case studies, legal decisions, and ethical dilemmas. Students analyzed situations where legal rights and ethical considerations do not always align and were expected to support their conclusions through reasoned argument. These exercises encouraged students to move beyond identifying issues to articulating and defending their positions, often reconsidering their assumptions about responsible journalism. Student feedback described the course as critical and thought-provoking, noting that it deepened their understanding of ethical decision-making and the importance of considering marginalized communities in professional practice. Through this work, students come to see journalism not only as a technical activity, but as one shaped by choices that affect how different voices are represented.

My teaching is informed by my research on journalism, media systems, and the influence of political and economic structures on news production. I encourage students to consider how ownership, market pressures, and technological platforms shape journalistic work. Even in skills-based courses, I ask students to reflect on whose voices are represented, how stories are framed, and how different audiences might interpret the same content. This integration of practice and critical inquiry helps students develop both technical competence and analytical awareness.

As an instructor, I view teaching as an evolving practice. My early experiences revealed areas for improvement, particularly in explaining technical tools and supporting student engagement. Through reflection, classroom observation, and student feedback, I have developed a more structured and responsive approach. Moving forward, I aim to continue integrating research and teaching, expand opportunities for collaborative learning, and adapt my courses to changing media environments.

Ultimately, my goal is to prepare students not only to become skilled journalists, but also to think carefully about the responsibilities that come with producing knowledge for the public. By creating a classroom that supports reflection, dialogue, and application, I aim to help students develop the confidence, judgment, and awareness necessary to engage with journalism as both a profession and a public practice