



Teaching Statement

I have had the privilege of teaching Race & Ethnic Relations at Emory University, an interdisciplinary seminar for first-years and seniors at Emory, six courses at Oglethorpe University, and will teach two courses as a Mellon Fellow for Morehouse College this year. My goal is to give my students what so many professors haven't given to me over my own academic career: an understanding of the connection between history and present day social phenomena, an ever-growing fascination with sociological inquiry, and a deeper understanding of their place in this world. Writing this teaching statement reminds me of the memorable professors who have undoubtedly contributed to my own teaching style.

First, there was Earl Lewis, a gifted historian and professor in African American Studies at the University of Michigan. For years, I hated history until he taught me that history is about *whose* story is being told. He introduced me to the writings of Frederick Douglass, W.E.B. DuBois, Malcolm X and Lorraine Hansberry. He demanded our best and inspired me to give him my best. With every lecture, I grew more convinced that I would major in African American Studies because I wanted to learn more about African American history, art, music, literature and the like. Learning more about African American history ignited in me a fervent desire to seek scholarship about my own culture as a Chicana.

Because of this influence, I teach my students that they cannot understand present day racial and ethnic social issues without connecting it to the past. I begin every Race & Ethnic Relations course with a "Timeline of Oppression" outlining how state action from 1492 to 1965 allowed systemic, legal and overt racism and discrimination to exist. They learn that structural and social inequality in the United States is deeply rooted in history. The effects of this oppression cannot be erased in only 51 years after the Civil Rights Movement. Through this course, I introduce students to the writings and research of W.E.B. DuBois, Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, Ronald Takaki, Joe Feagin, Ruben Rumbaut and Patricia Hill Collins to help them hear the voices and stories of historically oppressed communities. Per my evaluations, students have responded positively to this style. One student, in Fall 2014, wrote, "I liked that the instructor included history and historical evidence in each section, so that we know where racial issues all came from."

Next, there was Elsa Barkley Brown, an expert in Black women's history. One day she brought in a recording of Nina Simone and played *Mississippi Goddam*. She relayed a story of how she drove through the snow to see her in concert. Because of the weather only a few people showed up to the show. Miss Simone, however, played the venue as if it were full. Dr. Barkley Brown's eyes lit up as she spoke about Nina Simone. Two things happened that day: 1)

I became a Nina Simone fan and 2) I was determined that whatever I was going to do in my life needed to make me light up like Dr. Barkley Brown did that day.

A recurrent theme in my student evaluations is my passion for the subject area. One student, in Fall 2015, wrote, “Marisela is clearly very passionate about the subject, cares for students, and wants them to excel.” Like, Dr. Barkley Brown, I try to use all the resources possible to help students understand the material. From online video clips to organizing a field trip to the Civil Rights Museum, I will use a variety of tools to help students learn and get excited about sociology. A colleague in Academic Advising shared with me that several students declared a major in sociology after taking my course. It is, for me, the highest compliment.

Finally, in law school there was Norman Amaker, my constitutional law professor. Professor Amaker was notorious for his relentless use of the Socratic method. Getting behind in readings was never an option because you never knew when he would call on you. We even came up with a term to describe his teaching style called, “Getting Amakered.” It was not his in-class style that inspired me. It was the time I spent with him during his office hours. I would visit him nearly every week and he would regale me with stories of the Civil Rights movement and his appearances before the Supreme Court. He was always available and happy to talk about anything related to the study and practice of law. He not only taught me...he mentored me.

This availability and mentoring is what I am committed to providing a diverse, student population. As a Chicana who is the first in her family to pursue higher education, I understand what it is like to traverse historically white institutions. Students of color as well as numerous first-generation students have made their way to my office in search of support and mentoring. What they find is that I make myself available through all mediums even using FaceTime and Skype. I mentor students with their coursework, their honors thesis, and their decisions to attend law school and/or graduate school. Professor Amaker always found time for me and it inspires me to make time for my students while still balancing my own responsibilities at work and home.

In addition to these pedagogical role models, I have had the pleasure of taking courses with and learning from outstanding scholars at Emory University. There I have solidified a teaching philosophy dedicated to:

- Rigorous, intentional inclusivity;
- Well-prepared, organized, and universal-designed class structure;
- Creativity in the course assignments that appeals to and accommodates different learning styles;
- Incorporation of mediums familiar to students (i.e. comedy, pop culture references, etc....), and
- Straightforward, clear rubrics that lay out my expectations.

According to evaluations, students respond positively to my pedagogical style. During my time at Emory University, I taught Race and Ethnic Relations three times earning department scores of 4.74, 4.88 and 5 out of a 5-point scale, respectively. Furthermore, in 2015, I was awarded the Graduate Student Teaching Award from the Department of Sociology.

I have also had the pleasure of teaching full-time at Oglethorpe University in Atlanta, GA. There I taught six courses including Introduction to Sociology, Elites and Inequality, and two special topics courses of my own design called "Girls" and "Civil Rights of a Different Color." Oglethorpe boasts a diverse student population accustomed to demanding, challenging coursework and I have thoroughly enjoyed serving this population. In the Fall, I taught two Intro courses and a course on Gender and Inequality. In the Spring, I taught an Intro course, Elites and Inequality, and a Race, Difference, and Social Movements course. While I only supply a sampling of my evaluations for my application, my complete evaluations are available for review upon request. A table of my courses and evaluations is available on the following page.

Teaching from a place of passion is a gift that I am humbled and grateful to choose as my profession. My goal is for students to learn, be challenged, and discover their own passions. I encourage students because I was encouraged. I challenge students because I was challenged. I support students because I was supported. It is a privilege at the end of the course to read statements such as, "This may have been the most life-transforming course I have taken at Emory thus far." Little do the students realize, they transform me as well.

Course Evaluations

University	Course Level	Title	Year	Overall Mean	Sample Student Remarks
Emory	SOC 247-001	Race & Ethnic Relations	FA14	4.74 out of 5	<i>"I gained so much relevant and historical knowledge that I find life-changing and view-altering."</i>
Emory	SOC 247-001	Race & Ethnic Relations	FA15	4.88	<i>"She really wanted us to do well. (She FaceTime called me when I was unsure about a midterm question—who does that? She does!)"</i>
Emory	SOC 247-001	Race & Ethnic Relations	SU16	5	<i>"The instructor was clearly passionate and looking to treat us as adults and engage us in critical discussion."</i>
Oglethorpe	SOC 101-001	Intro to Sociology	FA16	10.1 out of 11	<i>"My favorite parts of the course were the discussions we had over sociological concepts and debates about social issues."</i>
Oglethorpe	SOC 101-002	Intro to Sociology	FA16	9.3	<i>"This class has better equipped me to not only pursue the study of sociology but to be a more engaged citizen and advocate in my community."</i>
Oglethorpe	SOC 290-001	Girls	FA16	10.5	<i>"This course has completely changed the way I view myself and the world around me for the better. Sociology classes should be meant to not only teach the curriculum but to inspire students to work for positive change in the world."</i>
Oglethorpe	SOC 101-001	Intro to Sociology	SP17	9.6	<i>"Professor M was the best professor I've had in my college career. I walked into the classroom thinking I was a true psychology nerd but left being a sociology nerd."</i>
Oglethorpe	SOC 290-001	Civil Rights of a Different Color	SP17	9.4	<i>"This is one of the few, if not only, classes that considers all of the racial minorities and their struggles with their own civil rights movement."</i>
Oglethorpe	SOC 307-001	Elites & Inequality	SP17	9.0	<i>"Marisela is a very skilled instructor. She is knowledgeable, kind, and courteous. It is rare to find a professor that is accommodating of learning disabilities but Marisela gets it...I am a psychology major now but I'm seriously considering switching my major to sociology."</i>