

As an educator, I am committed to promoting an environment that fosters diversity and creativity and to facilitating an experience that nurtures each student's unique voice—providing them with a method and means of expression, coupled with crucial theoretical constructs, to understand and further develop their work.

My experience in traditional and new media digital art and design production, theoretical discourse, and undergraduate/graduate discussion and critique provides a solid foundation for students to grow technically, creatively, and critically. I strive to demystify technology, provide a social context for the digital arts, activate cultural agency, and encourage the blurring of boundaries between art, design, media, technology, professional practice, and cultural production. I challenge my students to define their relevance by investigating and transcending the traditional mechanics of art/design production and to recontextualize their work as it relates to their contemporaneous experience and presence in an often-discordant culture. Believing art to be an extension of the human spirit, I try to invoke a sense of excitement and passion in the creative process and instill the drive necessary to continue to research and produce throughout one's life.

Teaching digital arts and design at Penn State since 2001 has been a wonderfully rewarding experience. Among my greatest challenges, one which I enjoy each semester, is keeping my classes fresh, flexible, and open to allow for experimentation and individual student engagement while also creating a safe space for a diverse population of students from varied backgrounds to feel welcome, encouraged, and challenged to consider possible outcomes that may be outside their comfort zones. To that end, I rarely instruct my lessons or lab sessions verbatim. I add, modify, and refine projects frequently—allowing students to try new ideas, technologies, and collaborations in order to connect with that which is timely in the discipline and/or culturally relevant. In this way, I try to help students become confident in their critical and technical skillsets and equally adaptable to the inevitable change and uncertainty they will face as young practicing artists and designers.

Among one of the greater challenges throughout my many years of teaching art and technology is creating balance between technical instruction (providing software related digital proficiencies) and providing students ample opportunities to express themselves creatively—applying important iterative design strategies, critical thinking, social awareness, and self-reflection. This can be a delicate dance as technology related creative fields are continually evolving (through AI or related disruptive technologies), and students often embark on coursework with a wide range of experience levels, creative goals, personal aspirations and expectations, which can become daunting or even overwhelming. An important consideration at the forefront of my instructional approach is to be mindful of the growing level and variety of stressors students experience in their personal and academic lives. As an educator and mentor, listening, and being inclusive, supportive, and equitable while also incorporating as much flexibility of coursework deadlines as possible has helped tremendously and plays an important role in informing my teaching.