

Tab 1

PFF X8000: TEACHING FOR LEARNING SUMMER INSTITUTE* - 2026

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Office Hours: by appointment on Zoom

Course Website (Canvas): <https://www.canvas.umn.edu>

*Significant portions of this syllabus were drawn from Bill Rozaitis's GRAD 8200 Teaching for Learning Course.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This focused, summer-intensive institute is designed to support graduate students, post-doctoral fellows, and early career professionals in becoming student-centered and reflective instructors in higher education. The instructors and course participants will model a variety of learning and teaching strategies, take part in discussions addressing learning and teaching, and draw on theory and engage in practice. By combining action and analysis, participants will explore, reflect on, and develop teaching skills that promote learning within a diverse student body across a variety of settings.

The institute is offered in three units, each of which focuses on a different aspect important to effective teaching in higher education: foundations of teaching, the practice of teaching, and continuing your growth as an instructor. Expect to spend approximately five hours per week engaged in the Institute, including reading, participating in discussions and completing assignments. Active participation, interaction with others, and substantive, thoughtful posts submitted on time are integral to deep learning in this institute.

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Through curated readings and collegial discussion, you'll acquire the ability to:

- Align principles of how students learn with instructional decisions
- Articulate the benefits of student-centered learning
- Apply active learning theory and practice to their disciplinary contexts
- Design formative and summative assessments that measure both student learning and teaching effectiveness
- Distinguish and discuss approaches to grading student work
- Evaluate the implications of Generative AI (GenAI) in course policies and assessment design decisions
- Structure course interactions and learning activities to foster student belonging
- Construct elements of a professional teaching portfolio incorporating a teaching philosophy and a syllabus centered on principles of course design

ABOUT YOUR INSTRUCTORS

Ten toi la Elizabeth (liz) Anh Thomson/My name is Elizabeth (liz) Anh Thomson. I feel privileged to be in this space supporting new instructors. I have worked in higher education nearly 25 years, mostly in Student Affairs, but also teaching Women and Gender Studies, Asian American Studies, and Disability Studies. I believe we all have significant and meaningful roles in supporting all students. I bring my multiple and intersecting identities to the work and affirm that all students have the capacity to succeed.

Jessie Dockter Tierney (she/her): I have been teaching for over twenty years in various spaces and places from preschool to the university. In those years, I have been and continue to be a student-centered teacher who seeks to create a space for dialogue, interaction, and active engagement that fosters inclusion and learning. Thinking, talking, and teaching about effective, student-centered learning is among my favorite things to do, and I am eager to be part of your journey into teaching.

COURSE WEB SITE

Our course activities will be conducted using Canvas, and all the materials you need to complete the course can be found on our Canvas site.

COURSE READINGS

You'll find readings for each week in the course linked in Canvas. No other texts are required for this class. These resources will help you think and write about the issues raised in our course, so it is expected that you will read these materials prior to submitting your assignment posts.

HOW TO SUCCEED IN THIS COURSE

Read the week's Task List every Sunday

You should get in the habit of looking at the Task List for each week's activity early on Sunday (or when it works in your schedule) to see the goals for the week, what's expected, and assignment due dates. Typically, assignments and written work will be due on set days during the week. We will communicate the structure at the start of the course. Acclimate to the rhythm of the course so that you don't fall behind in what will be a fast pace. All due dates are also listed in the Canvas calendar.

Keep up with the work

Although the course is asynchronous, we will move through the material week by week together as a cohort, with opportunities to interact in discussion forums and written materials. For the benefit of the cohort and your own learning, it is important to keep up with the weekly posting and submission schedule.

Put effort into your discussion posts and reflections—we will all benefit

Our discussions will mainly occur in the Canvas forums. Our goal for our discussions is a discursive give-and-take that affords you an opportunity to process the material we're reading actively and deeply while at the same time allows you to interact with and learn from your peers. Your comments should be substantive and reflect comprehension and thoughtful consideration of the issues raised. To achieve this in an online environment, make your posts clear and concise, respond to specific points, offer ideas and examples. Draw from your own experience as an instructor or your observations and experiences as a learner.

Use AI only where allowed

Unless otherwise specified, you should refrain from using Gen AI tools to author discussion posts and assignment responses or to summarize readings. This course depends on reading, reflecting, and consolidating what you're learning through writing. Unfortunately, there are no easy shortcuts for this work.

Don't wait until the deadline to post to forums

Don't wait until the deadline to submit your postings, especially in cases where others are asked to respond to your work. It's a good idea to submit your postings as early as you can and check back frequently to see what other classmates have added to the discussion.

Read your email

We will send announcements to the class via email, generally weekly. All course-related correspondence will be sent to your U of MN email account; if you use another account, please set it so that U of MN email is automatically forwarded. Please check your U of MN email account daily if you don't already.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

Discussion Postings

For each of the units, you'll complete weekly readings, followed by regular writing activities—in the Canvas forums or other activities intended to help you reflect on the material. Frequent and consistent postings and due dates will help keep you engaged. This course depends on students interacting with one another. Thus, it is crucial that you complete your posts and other assignments fully and on time. Weekly tasks are clearly outlined in the Task List for each week.

Syllabus Assignment

In order to apply principles of course design, you will create a syllabus for a course you might like to teach one day. The assignment will occur in stages. Early in the term you will generate a course plan, learning outcomes, and ideas about how to assess your students. Later, you will develop that into a syllabus draft that you will share with peers for feedback. For a complete assignment description, see the Assignment Resources page in Canvas.

Teaching Philosophy

You will write a teaching philosophy that articulates your attitudes and beliefs about teaching, as well as how you put those attitudes and beliefs into practice. You will draft your essay in stages, with an initial draft being followed by a peer review. For a complete assignment description, see the Assignment Resources page in Canvas.

ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSION POLICIES

Ensure that Discussion Postings, Teaching Philosophy, and Syllabus assignments are submitted on the due date and time noted in Canvas. Check back after the posting is due to view what your classmates have posted.

GRADING

There is no grade given for PFF X8000. Instead, participants will receive a notice of Complete or Incomplete after the eighth week of the institute. Participants must complete all assignments satisfactorily to earn the Complete designation.

On the assignment level, we will provide developmental feedback on discussion posts and assignments and will provide feedback about your performance midway through the institute (week four). If your work is not of sufficient quality, we will invite you to revise and resubmit your work.

If you are not progressing toward a Complete, we will reach out to you for a conversation.

To receive a Complete you will submit the following:

Discussion postings

- Twice weekly posts
- 3-2-1 reflective essays
- Mid- and end-term self-assessments

Syllabus Assignment

- Developmental drafts
- Peer review
- Final draft based on revision feedback

Teaching Philosophy

- Rough draft
- Peer review
- Final draft based on revision feedback

GENERATIVE AI POLICY

In our class, it's permissible to use GenAI for certain tasks and not permissible for others.

Teaching Philosophy

The teaching philosophy is a personal statement, a reflection of who you are as a teacher. One of the major benefits of writing a teaching philosophy is doing the hard work of thinking about what you value and believe about teaching in your discipline and reflecting that through your own experience and voice. These are things that GenAI tools can't do optimally.

For these reasons, you shouldn't use GenAI to draft your essay or parts of your essay for you. There are circumstances, though, in which GenAI may be useful. You may use it to brainstorm ideas, to generate examples of teaching practice for you to reflect on, to help you think about how best to present your ideas, or to edit your text (written without AI) to be more readable. If you do use GenAI, you must include a statement at the end of your teaching philosophy describing how you used it, the tools you used, and the prompts that you used.

Syllabus Assignment

A major goal of this course is to give you practice applying course design knowledge and skills to your discipline. For that reason, your overall course design (course goals, learning objectives, activities, assessments, course structure, and alignment) must be developed without the assistance of GenAI. However, you may use GenAI to generate "boilerplate" policy statements, help you draft course and assignment descriptions, find other syllabi to review, and edit language. If you do use GenAI, you must include a statement at the end of your syllabus describing how you used it, the tools you used, and the prompts that you used.

Weekly Writing and Assignments

These are fundamental to our course by providing opportunities to reflect on and discuss course readings. Using GenAI to generate responses for any of this material is strictly prohibited as this is the thinking work you must do. As with the teaching philosophy, you may use GenAI to edit your text (written without AI) to be more readable if you wish.

OTHER POLICIES

It is our hope that this institute can be a space for us to engage openly and supportively with one another about the possibilities and challenges of teaching. In order to create that space, we expect that all participants will interact professionally and with respect to one another in their course communications. Additionally, we expect that participants will complete their own work and adhere to the GenAI policy outlined above. Failure to do so may result in an Incomplete.

For a complete list of university policies—including academic dishonesty, accommodations for students with disabilities, student conduct, and sexual harassment—see <https://policy.umn.edu/education/syllabusrequirements-appa>.

WEEKLY RHYTHM

Visual of a week

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Preview tasks and read	DISCUSSION POST	Assignment drafting	DISCUSSION RESPONSE	ASSIGNMENT DUE (If Friday is a holiday, assignments are due Thursday)

COURSE CALENDAR

For session objectives, readings, and specific due dates, see the pages in Canvas.

UNIT 1: FOUNDATIONS AND PREPARATION FOR TEACHING

DATE	TOPICS	DUE
Week 1 Begins June 8	Orientation to the Course Characteristics of Effective Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introduction Survey ● Video Introductions ● Readings ● Discussion post/response
Week 2 Begins June 15	Teaching for Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Readings ● 3-2-1 Reflective Essay
Week 3 Begins June 22	Active and Student-Centered Learning Writing a Teaching Philosophy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Readings ● Discussion post/response ● Teaching Philosophy Drafting
Week 4 Begins June 29	Course and Syllabus Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Readings ● Syllabus Assignment Drafting ● Midterm Self-Assessment ● Teaching Philosophy Draft 1

UNIT 2: THE PRACTICE OF TEACHING

DATE	TOPICS	DUE
Week 5 Begins July 6	Creating a Culture of Inclusion and Belonging	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Readings ● 3-2-1 Reflective Essay ● Teaching Philosophy Peer Review
Week 6 Begins July 13	Formative Assessment Classroom Assessment Techniques	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Readings ● Discussion post/response ● Teaching Philosophy Final ● Syllabus Assignment Full Draft

DATE	TOPICS	DUE
Week 7 Begins July 20	Assessment: Assignments and Exams Grading Student Work Generative AI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Readings ● Discussion post/response ● Syllabus Assignment Peer Review

UNIT 3: CONTINUING YOUR GROWTH

DATE	TOPICS	DUE
Week 8 Begins July 27	Course Closure: Continuing Your Growth as a Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Readings ● Discussion post/response ● 3-2-1 Reflective Essay ● Syllabus Final Due