Teaching Philosophy **Cory Inman, Ph.D.**

I believe that learning by doing is the most successful strategy to prepare students for their future careers. Thus, the mission of a teacher is not only to convey useful information but to inspire students to own their educational experience through exposure to applied and practical experiences that capture the student's imagination.

Classroom Teaching. My experience teaching online in the Spring 2021 semester has changed aspects of my philosophy for teaching large lecture classes. In my job application, I described my preferred approach to teaching large lecture courses as to flip the classroom, so that background material is learned at the student's pace outside of the classroom and time in the classroom can be spent working on specific projects that provide practical, applied, and instructor-guided experiences. I used this model in my online, asynchronous Brain and Behavior course (PSY2710) in Spring 2021. I taught this class again in Spring 2022 and 2023 but in person. Learning from my prior experience teaching this course and responding to the concerns about the Omicron variant, I gave my students the option to take the Brain and Behavior class full asynchronous virtual, synchronous zoom virtual, asynchronous zoom, and in-person. This strategy has proved highly effective, and students have truly appreciated the wide range of options for learning the course material at the student's pace and preferred context. I also have tried to make the writing assignment in this class personally relevant to the students by asking them to relate the chapter material each week to primary source articles on a neural function or dysfunction of their interest. My teaching evaluations in all 5 semesters suggest that both models and changes to the course have been well received. As I enter my sixth semester teaching Brain and Behavior, I am excited to be confident enough in the course format to modernize the lecture material with new findings from a variety of cutting-edge neuroscience methods, including optogenetics, artificial intelligence and neuroscience, and direct brain stimulation techniques.

The pedagogical training I've received over my career and my experiences teaching thus far have impressed upon me the importance of continued development of my teaching skills through self, peer, and student evaluation. For instance, I recently presented a Guest lecture on Neuroanatomy in my colleague Liz Conradt's Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience course. Afterward, a developmental student, Katie Wyant-Stein, emailed me with a kind email stating "I wanted to share with you how much I enjoyed listening to your lecture. While my experience with cognitive science and neuroanatomy has been informative, it was never a topic that I found very stimulating. However, this was not the case with your lecture. …You did a great job at making the information easy to digest, yet it still challenged my thinking. I was able to integrate the applicable information into my own research interests. I really enjoyed the various ways that we interacted with the material (i.e., using our bodies to conceptualize scale, question and answer, graphics, etc.) and how we frequently revisited key concepts (i.e., interpreting neuroimages). … your pace was perfect for me. I was so tuned in that I didn't look at the clock once during your lecture!" This positive feedback validates my current teaching style.

Small groups offer more opportunities to design experiences that allow students to apply their knowledge. I believe small groups should learn material and skills through real and practical assignments that result in learning general academic skills, like debate and peer review. I deployed this philosophy in my current Neuropsychology course (Psy 5700/6700). In this course, I featured a debate format in which students debate current controversies on cognitive neuroscience after an initial 4-weeks of neuroscience review. Debates were structured and assigned teams of students debated the evidence supporting the sides of a cognitive neuroscience controversy in class. In addition to reading and learning to critically examine various neuropsychological perspectives, I also used a novel writing assignment. In lieu of a long paper writing assignment, I've asked students to peer-review a pre-print each week that was relevant to the debate topic. Students were responsible for reviewing this pre-print manuscript as if they were reviewing it for a journal. I believe this provides practice for a fundamental skill that will shape how students read and evaluate all published and unpublished papers in the future. Importantly, Pre-prints offer an imperfect paper that has not fully gone through the review process and will offer the best simulation of the peer-review process. My hope for these new features of the Neuropsychology class is not only to teach the content but to help students develop skills that will be applicable throughout their careers. This model of the course received overall positive student evaluations the first semester I taught it in the Fall of 2021. In my 2nd semester teaching this course, several students in the class described strong negative evaluations of this course's design and my management of the debates in class. After consultation with many colleagues, I'm excited to make significant changes in Fall 2026 to address their feedback. These include changing the course from a 3-hour class once a week to a 1.5-hour class twice a week, adding more direct lecture material to better prepare students for the following week's debate, making the peer review assignment a paired assignment, and being more communicative about course expectations among many other planned changes to this important course.

Mentorship. As a mentor in the laboratory, my job is to provide a collaborative environment where I can scaffold opportunities for mentees to learn, while still providing space and support for independence when applying their knowledge to specific research projects. So far, I've thoroughly enjoyed passing on my knowledge to my graduate students and my students have earned several awards as testaments mostly to their excellence and partially my mentorship. My first graduate student, Martina Hollearn, received an initial NSF GRFP honorable mention on her first application and was awarded an NSF GRFP in Spring 2022. Martina was also awarded the Nancy Klekas Outstanding Service Award through her flexible time outside the lab. My MD-PhD student, Justin Campbell, has also received a Translational Neuroscience T32 fellowship and applied for an F30 and F31 since joining my lab. Finally, my first Honors student, Wyatt Wilson, was awarded the Psychology Department's Outstanding Honors Thesis in Psychology in Spring 2023. In Spring 2025, my Ph.D. student, Aydin Tasevac received an NSF GRFP Honorable Mention. I am confident he would have been awarded the NSF GRFP if the NSF budget and policies had been maintained.