

Scholarly Teaching Statement

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Introduction: Student-centred learning

When I first started teaching I thought that my role should mainly be a content expert who delivers content in as clear a way as possible so that students can learn it. I still think that is part of my role, but over the past ten years or so I've begun to expand my role into also being a facilitator where more of the work of learning comes through student activity rather than only my activity in delivering information. In this I am following a model of student-centred, rather than only teacher-centred, learning. O'Neill & McMahon (2005), summarizing work by other researchers, explain that teacher-centred learning happens when the teacher is active and the students are (mostly) passive, when the teacher is in the mode of transmitting knowledge or other content, and the students have little choice in what they are learning and how. Student-centred learning occurs when students are more active in the process of learning, the teacher acts as a facilitator of this activity, and there is more student choice.

In my teaching practice I strike a **balance between teacher-centred and student-centred learning**, spending time on content delivery and directing what and how students will learn where appropriate, but also including elements of student-centred learning, as described below.

Active learning

One way to promote student-centred learning is through active learning, which refers to students engaging in activities to learn (such as discussing, writing, problem solving) rather than only learning through (more) passive means such as listening and taking notes. See, e.g., Fink (2013, pp. 115-137) for descriptions of various kinds of active learning techniques and see Prince (2004) and Michael (2006) for evaluations of the efficacy of active learning.

In teaching most of my courses **I balance lecturing with active learning**. I will often lecture for about 20 minutes and then take a break to ask the students to engage in some kind of activity, such as clicker-

type questions (I use a system called [Learning Catalytics](#)). I also often ask them to engage in small group discussion and to write short responses to open-ended questions. I will then talk about the results of the students' activities and transition into more lecturing.

One active learning activity I often use is to ask students to do presentations. In my Philosophy courses I put students into small groups for the term, and each student signs up for one or two days during the term on which to do **a presentation to their small group** on the readings. This is because my classes are often too large for each student to present to the entire class. These presentations are focused on the particular reading for the day, and end with a set of questions the student would like the group to discuss. I ask students to post a written record of their presentation, either in blog posts on the course website or on a course page on [the UBC Wiki](#). That way, it's not just the students in their own group who can see what they were talking about.

In a recent course, some students stated on the course evaluations that too often their group members hadn't done the readings so that the presentations and discussion questions were not as effective in generating discussion as they should have been. In response, starting in Summer 2015 I started using [Learning Catalytics](#) (like clickers, but students use their own devices) at the beginning of class meetings to test whether students had done the readings. I had some questions that were purely meant to test whether they had done the readings (multiple-choice, true/false type questions), but then I soon started to use the system to ask them more open-ended questions about the readings to gauge their reactions. For example, I tried using [the SPUNKI rubric](#) to ask students questions about the readings: what did you find surprising, puzzling, useful, new, knew it already, interesting. This had the benefit of both testing whether students had done the reading and also eliciting very interesting reactions to the readings that I could use to frame the rest of the class meeting. A couple of students mentioned on student evaluations for PHIL 102 in Summer 2015 that they found it interesting and useful to see what others were thinking because all the answers from Learning Catalytics were posted on the screen (anonymously).

Another thing I have started to do in my Philosophy courses over the past few years is to ask students to respond to a question (individually or in groups) by writing their thoughts on **a shared document that I can post on the screen**—e.g., on the UBC wiki or on Google Docs (though I also tell them they should not put any identifying information on the Google Doc, and enter their answers only when not signed into Google, in order to comply with BC's privacy laws). In large classes I will have students work in their small groups on a particular problem or question and then put their answers on the shared document. I then discuss the document when we all come back together, highlighting some of the answers (or all, if there's time). I also post these documents for later viewing on the course website or UBC Wiki. This way everyone can see what happened in the other groups, and I can attend each group's discussions virtually. You can see an example of the groups' answers to discussion questions here, from PHIL 102 in Summer 2015: <http://wiki.ubc.ca/Course:PHIL102/in-class-discussion>

Student choice and collaborative learning

Weimer (2013) emphasizes **student choice** and **collaboration** in what she calls "learner-centered teaching," which

- motivates and empowers students by giving them some control over learning processes

- encourages collaboration, acknowledging the classroom (be it virtual or real) as a community where everyone shares the learning agenda (p. 15)

She explains that when students have more power and control over the learning process, they are more motivated to learn, and treat the class more as a cooperative community than a space where the teacher exerts all the authority (p. 97). Ambrose et al. (2010) also argue that student motivation relies significantly (though not fully) on the perceived value of the learning activities (pp. 74-76). One way to motivate students is to provide activities that have intrinsic value for them (though instrumental value in the form of marks can also be effective). The authors suggest providing “flexibility and control,” such that students can choose activities that align with their goals and interests (p. 89).

In Arts One, a course with only first-year students, the three hours of seminar discussions per week are guided in large part by **students' choice of discussion topics**. To facilitate this, I usually have two students per day sign up to be in charge of raising discussion questions for the class that day, so that we are discussing what the students find important as well as what I find important. In Philosophy courses, as noted above, I often ask students to prepare questions for their small groups to discuss so that what they talk about in their groups is what they themselves are interested in. In both types of courses students are collaborating in what happens in the course, by being in charge of what gets talked about.

In addition to allowing students choice of essay topics in most of my Philosophy courses, I have started to allow students to do **different sorts of assignments** rather than only traditional essays. In PHIL 449, Continental Philosophy, in Spring 2014, students had the choice between a short paper and a non-traditional project (they all had to do a research paper at the end of the course, though). About half the students chose the latter, and they produced things ranging from a video to a podcast to a written dialogue to visual artworks. The projects for which I got permission to do so are posted here: <http://blogs.ubc.ca/phil449/> In PHIL 102, Introduction to Philosophy, in Summer 2015, I asked students to write a blog post talking about where they see philosophical activity out in the world beyond the classroom, including in their own lives. They produced blog posts ranging from philosophy in music to film to stand-up comedy and more (see [here for their posts](#)). See the course materials in the appendix of this dossier for the instructions for these assignments (or, in the online version of the dossier, see here: <http://chendricks.org/portfolio/teaching/course-materials/>).

Starting in Fall 2015, in my Philosophy courses, I will be trying for the first time a system in which students have a **choice in the weight of each assignment for their final course mark** (e.g., the first essay could be worth 10%-20%, the second worth 15%-30%, and so on). Students will sign a contract near the beginning of the term with their choices. This will allow them a choice in what they want to spend the most time on in the course, without implying that some activities aren't important (they still have to do them all; they just have a choice in the weight of each one for the final mark).

In all of my courses I also ask students to **collaborate on rules and guiding principles for discussions**. In Arts One I ask students to write down some behaviours that they find particularly useful during discussions, and some they find to be an obstacle to discussion, and then I collect them and redistribute them randomly so no one knows who has said what. I then ask each student to read aloud what they have on their sheet. I make a list of all the suggestions and ask students to vote on them, anonymously. I then refer to this list later in the class as needed. In my Philosophy courses I have created a shared document on guidelines for respectful discussion to which anyone can anonymously contribute (on Google Docs).

Finally, I incorporate **peer feedback on writing** in all of my courses. It's built into Arts One as a weekly activity, but I also use it in all my philosophy courses. A great deal of research has shown that peer feedback is helpful for improving writing (e.g., Topping, 1998; Paulus, 1999; Cho & Schunn, 2007; Cho & MacArthur, 2010; Crossman & Kite, 2012). Though intuitively one might think that students would benefit most from receiving peer comments on their written work, a few studies have shown that student writing benefits both from comments given as well as comments received (indeed, sometimes the former more than the latter) (Cho & Cho, 2011; Li, Liu & Steckelberg, 2010). Students don't grade each others' work in my courses; they only provide written and oral feedback. I provide them with a marking rubric for essays and a worksheet for providing peer comments that closely follows that rubric. See the course materials in the appendix of this dossier for the marking rubric and the peer feedback worksheet (or, in the online version of the dossier, see here: <http://chendricks.org/portfolio/teaching/course-materials/>).

Reflection, metacognition, self-direction

Weimer (2013) also emphasizes, as part of student-centred learning, "students' reflection about what they are learning and how they are learning it" (p. 15). Such reflection can contribute to the **metacognition** that is required for students to become **self-directed learners**, according to Ambrose et al. (2010):

To become self-directed learners, students must learn to assess the demands of the task, evaluate their own knowledge and skills, plan their approach, monitor their progress, and adjust their strategies as needed (p. 191).

Metacognition refers to the ability to reflect on one's own knowledge, skills, habits, values, motivations, and more, so as to better be able to direct one's learning oneself. Providing students with opportunities to reflect on their work during a course can help them develop such skills, and move towards becoming self-directed learners. Nicol and McFarlane-Dick (2006) provide a list of feedback practices that can support metacognition and self-directed learning, including peer feedback and self-assessment. Peer feedback is useful because reading and commenting on others' work in relation to a set of criteria can help students understand those criteria better (pp. 206-207). Self-assessment engages metacognition directly, when students reflect and comment on the quality of their own work in comparison to a set of criteria or standards (pp. 207-208). See Ross (2006) for a summary of some of the literature that shows the efficacy of self-assessment for improving student learning.

To help promote metacognition about writing, I have often asked Arts One students to **report on how they are trying to improve their writing** based on feedback from their peers and/or from me. I ask them to do this on several papers throughout the term, but also in mid-year and end-of-year reflections on their writing. For these reflections I ask them to provide examples of essays as evidence of what needed to be improved and how they have improved, as a kind of portfolio of their writing over the course of the year. These are marked for completion only. See the course materials in the appendix of this dossier for the instructions for these assignments (or, in the online version of the dossier, see here: <http://chendricks.org/portfolio/teaching/course-materials/>).

In PHIL 102 (Introduction to Philosophy) in Summer 2015 I asked students to not only do peer feedback on an essay, but also to use the same worksheet (see previous section for a PDF of this worksheet) to engage in a **self-assessment** of their own essay. The worksheet for both the peer feedback and self-

assessment focused on the criteria in the marking rubric I use for essays, so that these exercises could help them better understand and apply the marking criteria for future essays.

Finally, in two of my Philosophy courses, PHIL 102 (Introduction to Philosophy) and PHIL 230 (Introduction to Moral Theory), I have asked students to write blog posts **reflecting on what they have learned in the course**. In PHIL 102 I have asked them at the beginning of the course to give their thoughts on what "philosophy" is, and then at the end of the course I asked them to do the same thing, and compare to what they thought at the beginning. In PHIL 230, at the end of the course I asked them to reflect on the value of engaging in philosophical discussions on normative value theory: what are the benefits of theorizing about what grounds decisions about good and bad, right and wrong (such as through Utilitarianism, Kantianism, or Virtue Ethics), whether for knowledge or ethical practice? See the course materials in the appendix of this dossier for the instructions for these assignments (or, in the online version of the dossier, see here: <http://chendricks.org/portfolio/teaching/course-materials/>).

Scaffolded writing instruction

Writing an academic essay is a complex skill that requires practice, not just in writing complete essays, but in developing the component skills that are parts of the larger skill of writing an essay. Ambrose et al. (2010) explain that to achieve mastery of complex skills, "students must acquire component skills, practice integrating them, and know when to apply what they have learned" (p. 95). One way to help students along the path towards mastery is to "allow students to focus on one skill at a time, thus ... giving them the opportunity to develop fluency before they are required to integrate multiple skills" (p. 105). Scaffolded instruction in writing is one method of doing so: students are asked to build up, through sequential steps, towards being able to integrate various skills into writing a complete essay. Leong (1998) explains that "scaffolding" refers to a process whereby "an expert can facilitate the learner's transition from assisted to independent performance" (p. 4). The idea is to provide just enough guidance and support while also helping learners to progressively move from being novices towards mastery.

Coe (2011) describes scaffolded writing in Philosophy in a way that is very similar to what I myself am doing in my Philosophy courses. She provides a series of writing assignments: (1) explain the main argument in a short passage of text, (2) do the same for a longer passage, (3) compare two philosophers' positions, and (4) write an argumentative essay that includes one's own views and justification for them.

I have done similar series of written assignments in PHIL 102 (Introduction to Philosophy). I ask students to **build up an essay over successive stages**, such that they write one part, get feedback, revise it and add something else to it, and do the same thing again one or two more times. In Summer 2015 I first asked students to do an "argument outline" of a passage from one of the assigned texts. This just means putting the argument into standard form, with numbered premises. We practiced this in class before they had to do one on their own. The idea with this assignment was to get them thinking about the structure of an argumentative essay, that their thesis statement should be like a conclusion of an argument, and the body paragraphs should be like premises. They should be able to outline their essay as they outline an argument. For their first essay I asked them to summarize one philosopher's views on a particular topic. Then their next (and final) essay compared two philosophers' views on that topic and also gave the students' own views on one or more of the philosophers' arguments. When I taught this course during a regular term (rather than a summer term with a compressed time frame), I added in another step: for the second essay they could either: (a) compare/contrast two philosophers' views on the

same topic as the first essay, or (b) give and support their view of one of the philosophers' arguments from the first essay. Then for the third essay they had to do both of these things. In each successive essay they were revising the one before and adding to it. See the course materials in the appendix of this dossier for examples of scaffolded writing assignments (or, in the online version of the dossier, see here: <http://chendricks.org/portfolio/teaching/course-materials/>).

Authentic audiences and the "student as producer" model

The "**student as producer**" pedagogical model is one in which students are asked to do assignments that generate knowledge for each other and for an authentic audience—they become producers, rather than just consumers, of knowledge (Neary and Winn, 2009). Contrasting with the idea of the student as a "consumer" of knowledge transmitted by an expert, the student as producer model can be defined briefly as: "undergraduate students working collaboratively with academics to create work of social importance that is full of academic content and value" (Neary and Winn, 2009, p. 193). Bruff (2013), citing Bass & Elmendorf (n.d.), emphasizes the importance of students sharing their work with "**authentic audiences**," people beyond just the instructor who can benefit from what they are producing. In addition, Bruff (2013) lists two other elements of his view of the student as producer model: students work on open-ended questions or problems, ones that don't yet have a solution (rather than only working to get the "right" solution to a problem), and students have some autonomy in choosing and carrying out projects.

My course websites are all public, with just some of the course content behind password-protected walls or in a Learning Management System (things that should remain private, such as marks, are on the LMS). In my courses I have, over the last several years, asked students to **post their work publicly** as part of the assignments for the course (though they could choose to do so with a pseudonym, or to make their posts private only to the instructor and TA). This not only allows students to see their peers' work, as well as their questions and concerns about the course material, but also can serve as a resource for anyone else who is interested and finds the course websites. As noted above, I also ask them to post their presentations to the course website, and this means they are available to the public (unless the students choose to make them private).

In the "[philosophy in the world" assignment for PHIL 102](#) (Introduction to Philosophy) discussed above, I specifically wanted student posts to be public so that there would be a repository for anyone who is interested to see that philosophical activity happens in many areas of life. Similarly, for PHIL 449 (Continental Philosophy), the non-traditional artifacts students could choose to create instead of one of the essays [are posted on the course website](#) (click "non-traditional artifacts"), to again show anyone who is interested that philosophical activity can happen in artifacts beyond writing essays.

In PHIL 230 (Introduction to Moral Theory) in the Fall of 2014 I asked students to pick two days during the term to **write notes on the assigned readings** on [the public UBC Wiki page for the course](#). Since the course was large, I created separate wiki pages for each small group, and thus the small groups could see notes on the readings just from their small group, or from all the other small groups if they chose. I plan to continue doing this in the future, as many students said on evaluations they found the assignment useful—not only for having the notes that others wrote, but also for practice in writing them for others themselves.

In Arts One, we have a site called "Arts One Open" (<http://artsonone-open.arts.ubc.ca>) where we showcase not only videorecorded lectures by professors, but also **blog posts and Tweets by students**. The front page of this site aggregates all content by students and instructors, treating them as of equal value. You can click on any of the tags on the right side of the page and get content from both students and instructors. When students post to their blogs, they are not only making their posts public on their own blog sites, but we are publicizing that content to other students in the course, as well as to the rest of the online world.

Blended learning

By "blended learning" I mean **combining online and face-to-face learning**. I have begun to blend my PHIL 102 course (Introduction to Philosophy) by **creating videos to replace some of in-class lecture time**. There are several reasons for doing so: (a) I want to make the most of the small amount of time we have face-to-face in the classroom, doing things that require us to be in a room together, such as active learning activities; (b) having videos of lecture material provides students with the opportunity to view the lectures while reading, to help them with reading complex materials; (c) students can pause the video to take notes or reflect, go back to certain parts to review them one or more times if they find those things difficult. I started in Summer 2015 with three videos on the "trolley problem," discussing some arguments by Philippa Foot and Judith Jarvis Thomson. You can see those on YouTube, here: <http://is.gd/HendricksTrolleyVideos> (the capital letters in this URL are required).

In addition to providing the videos, I also asked students to do an online activity related to them: the students were to comment in an online discussion on one of two threads about the videos, with questions I provided (though they were free to, and did, raise other questions themselves). This was a bridging activity between doing the readings/watching the videos and doing in-class activities about the videos. In class, in addition to discussing our views on the trolley problems provided by Foot and Thomson, I asked them to get together in their small groups and discuss: (1) what real-world scenarios they thought the trolley problem example might fit, and (2) what other versions of the trolley problem they could come up with and what those versions would be designed to test. You can see their answers in number 9 on this wiki page for the course: <http://wiki.ubc.ca/Course:PHIL102/in-class-discussion>

I plan to create at least one more set of videos another part of my PHIL 102 course for Fall 2015, working eventually towards blending many of the parts of the course. Because doing so involves extra time for students out of class, I reduced the class meeting time for the "trolley problem" module in Summer 2015, and would do the same for the other blended modules. I still do some lecturing during the face-to-face time, to remind students of the main points of the videos, and to add further details where necessary. I don't plan to entirely replace in-class lectures with videos, just some of them; I will create videos that give students some of the basic points needed to really grasp the readings and their arguments well, and then go into more depth in class.

Applying research: In preparing the videos for this course I am guided particularly by research into video production methods that promote student engagement, such as that by Guo, Kim and Rubin (2014), which concluded that videos of less than 6 minutes are best, that videos with moving content on the screen are better than static slides, and videos that intersperse slides with an image of the instructor talking are more engaging than slides alone (but I wasn't able to achieve much of that for the videos above). In preparing the online and face-to-face activities in the blended modules for this course, I am

guided in part by Vaughan, Cleveland-Innes & Garrison (2013), who stress (among other things) the importance of closely integrating the online and face-to-face tasks so that students recognize the value of both and how they work together to support learning: "Online activities must be congruent with anticipated goals in the subsequent face-to-face class," as well as with the learning outcomes of the course (p. 37). This is something I worked to achieve in my first blended module, on the trolley problem, and will continue to work on as I blend more modules.

Innovations in the use of educational technology

WordPress

I use public WordPress sites for my course websites, and there was something I wanted to be able to do but couldn't accomplish on WordPress. So I spoke with instructional technologists the Centre for Teaching, Learning and Technology at UBC, who decided that what I wanted to do would be useful enough to others to build a tool that could be implemented across UBC.

What I wanted to do was this. In Arts One, students meet weekly in groups of four plus their instructor to give peer feedback on essays. I wanted students to be able to submit their essays online so that only their tutorial members and the instructor could see and comment on them. I wanted students to be able to comment directly on the essay itself, rather than downloading it and using something like MS Word or a PDF reader to do so. And finally, I wanted them to be able to easily see all the comments on each essay, so they could compare the comments from one essay to another, to see if there are any patterns in the comments (or if they stop getting some comments because they have improved).

So the Centre for Teaching, Learning and Technology built this functionality for my Arts One course site: <http://alhendricks.arts.ubc.ca>. You can see where the students submit their essays, and what it looks like when they do. You can't see the essays and comments, though, because only the students in a tutorial group and I can do so.

Here is a screen shot of a fake submission, though. Notice the comment icons on the right margin, with the numbers: those show how many comments there are on each paragraph. (These icons may show up as a very light grey on printed copies of this document.)

By [Christina Hendricks](#) on September 10, 2014

This is one of your submissions. It is visible to you and your instructor(s). Additionally, anyone in the same user group as you can see and comment on this submission. [Print this submission](#)

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When you click on those comment icons on the right margin, you can add a comment. It looks like this:

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n tincidunt
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 **clhendricks**
test comment

Post · Cancel

In addition, students can use a "print" command (see the top of the first screen shot, above) to get a printable copy of their essay with the comments underneath each paragraph. This way they can easily see all the comments on each essay.

We tested this system in Arts One in 2014-2015 and worked out a few bugs. We are refining it even more for 2015-2016, and soon it will be available to anyone at UBC who would like to use it.

New video software

I am part of a team of people from the Faculty of Arts, the Faculty of Applied Science, and the Centre for Teaching, Learning and Technology who are working on a new software tool for watching videos. This tool has several features:

- It automatically keeps track of what parts of a video a student has watched, and how many times; this is shown visually in a timeline at the bottom of the screen with those parts of the video watched more often being larger than those not watched or watched less often. This makes it easier for students, when they go back later to review for exams, for example, to find parts that they presumably found difficult or important (since they watched those most often).
- We are also developing a way for students to literally “highlight” parts of the video for later reference, so not only will they be able to easily see which parts they have watched more than once, but also which parts they want to purposefully flag for later viewing.
- This tool also allows students to create playlists out of parts of videos they select, thereby creating a new video with just the parts they want, stitched together.

We applied for and received a "Teaching and Learning Enhancement Fund" grant from UBC to develop and pilot test this tool. We tested it in my PHIL 102 class in Summer 2015 on the videos I used for the "blended" section of this course (see the previous section of this teaching statement), and are refining it based on student feedback. We will be testing the revised tool again in Fall 2015, in my PHIL 102 class as well as some classes in the Faculty of Applied Science.

Contributing to the intellectual development of students

We do not have an undergraduate thesis option (say, for example, in our Honours program), but I do get requests fairly often to help students with their own research interests in several other ways. One is through **directed readings courses**. Because of my busy schedule, I only rarely have time to conduct directed readings courses for students; I did one in Summer 2011 on Michel Foucault, Jacques Rancière and Giorgio Agamben.

Another request I often get is to be a faculty sponsor for **Student Directed Seminars**. Upper-year undergraduates at UBC have the opportunity to design and facilitate such seminars, working with a faculty sponsor as a mentor. I help the students with the course design and syllabus, including readings and activities, and read all of the final papers or projects. Usually those assignments are peer marked, and I am just ensuring that the peer marks are more or less close to the marks I would give.

I have been a faculty sponsor for two student directed seminars (SDS) so far, and will do so again in Spring 2016. In Spring 2010 I was a faculty sponsor for an SDS on the "counter-enlightenment" views of Friedrich Nietzsche, Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, and Michel Foucault (among others). In Spring 2011 I sponsored an SDS focused on reading Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Coming up in Spring 2016 I am sponsoring an SDS on "Philosophical Arguments in Traditional and Non-Traditional Media," which looks at various means of making philosophical arguments (traditional essays and lectures, but also blogs posts, podcasts, films, and written fictional narratives). This course is run by two

students, one in Philosophy and one in English, and includes readings from both philosophy and rhetoric. One of the impetuses for this course, one of the students told me, was my PHIL 449 (Continental Philosophy) course, in which students could choose to write an essay or make a philosophical argument in some other medium (see above under "student choice"). See the course materials in the appendix of this dossier for the proposal and draft syllabus for this SDS (or, in the online version of the dossier, see here: <http://chendricks.org/portfolio/teaching/course-materials/>).

I served on **the PhD committee** for a graduate student in Philosophy from 2009-2011. Jill Fellows wrote a dissertation entitled "Making up Knowers: Objectivity and Categories of Epistemic Subjects," in which she defended the aspiration towards objectivity as a useful ideal against those who argue that it is problematic. The abstract for her dissertation can be found here: <https://sites.google.com/site/fellowsjill/home/dissertation-abstract>.

I was also a mentor for a student on **an undergraduate research project**, presented at the UBC [Multidisciplinary Undergraduate Research Conference](#) in 2007.

Works cited

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