

Peter M. Rule - Pedagogical Philosophy

Being an artist is the greatest joy of my life, and I consider it the utmost privilege to share that joy with others. Some of the most powerful moments in my young teaching career have been ones of genuine delight shared between myself and my students: when they make something they are proud of, or a concept finally fits into place. It is my utmost goal as an educator to create a safe playground for joyful artistic exploration, where students can innovate freely without the judgement of palatability so prevalent in our industry. I want students to interrogate what theatre can be, what it means to shape space and create worlds. I revel in finding ways to get my students excited about the material I am teaching, connecting the powerful emotions of art with the simple act of learning.

As a professor of theatre, I believe that design skills have universal value, regardless of career aspiration. I hope my students leave my classroom thinking critically about design, prepared for a lifetime of more conscious analysis of the hidden curated world around them. I will teach my students to be strong communicators, confident artists, and skilled technicians, prepared to build a successful career in the arts. I have created a proven design workflow for myself, and I will encourage my students to treat me as a resource, borrowing what they find useful from how I work, without pressure to approach design exactly how I do. My teaching is only as good as my knowledge base, and so I am committed to being a lifelong learner, trying and adopting new technologies where they suit me, and passing that knowledge on to the students I collaborate with. Industry best practices are also constantly evolving, and to keep myself in touch it is essential that I continue designing professionally as I teach. I will hold myself to enthusiastically pursuing design work in my free time, to keep my artistic passion alive, maintain my design skills, and to build professional connections as a further resource for my students.

As a neurodiverse person, I bring a unique perspective on the student experience. My closest mentors and most beloved professors have been the ones who were willing to actively accommodate my needs, those who I felt safe being myself around. That is the type of professor I want to be. I will bring a collaborative attitude to professorship, emphasizing kindness and empathetic expression, and encouraging my students as a resource and mentor, but never an absolute authority. I am committed to decolonizing the classroom and rejecting the unhealthy and white supremacist industry practices that necessitated the publication of *We See You White American Theatre*. I hold that self-care and hard work can coexist, and I will encourage my students to know their limits and their worth, ready to call for change in an industry that is far too willing to exploit them for their passion.