

# CHELSEA WAYANT

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## Teaching Statement

I expect the outcome of my teaching to go beyond learning the craft of filmmaking, but to also allow my students to become confident in themselves, their ideas, and their abilities.

To me a successful teacher opens student's eyes to both the power and craft of cinema. The teachers that inspired me most are the ones that gave me new ways to look at film. I will always remember spending an entire class period talking about a single close-up shot of Peter Lorre in the original *Man Who Knew Too Much* (1934) and in that moment realizing the power of the medium. My goal is to impart these "A-Ha" moments on my students by teaching them the language, aesthetics, and techniques needed to communicate using the moving image.

I have found that I am frequently the one who motivates and encourages my students to learn. It is my responsibility to make the classroom an open environment where students are able to experiment and feel comfortable taking risks. I accomplish this task by modeling appropriate behavior and by getting to know my students and their work so that I can help them find the right direction.

My expectation for student work is high. Filmmaking is significantly more difficult than most students expect; often they get flustered by the amount of work and want to quit. I have found that when I do not compromise my expectation of high quality work and instill confidence in my students, they often rise to the occasion and surprise even themselves.

For instance, a student taking my advanced production class was working on a narrative piece and her actors were not able to give the needed time commitment. Throughout the semester the student director would come to my office and complain that she wouldn't be able to complete the film. I listened and offered many alternatives, but the student wanted to give up and was fishing for an alternative assignment. Two weeks before the final screening she came to me once again saying, "the most important scene has not been shot and the actress has no more time." So we sat down, looked at the footage she had and talked about the story. Though, she left my office dejected and clearly wanting an incomplete, it was also clear that ideas were finally brewing. In this last hour instead of abandoning the film she finally accepted the limitations and found a solution. Problem solving is at the core of filmmaking and it can't be taught simply by lecture. This is also why film production classes are relevant within university curriculum. Whether or not this student goes on to be a filmmaker she grew as a person and learned to push herself beyond her own expectations.

Along these lines it is also important to look at how students learn. While lectures have their place in the classroom, students need to be engaged in other ways as well. I have found that incorporating discussions, screenings, workshops, and other interactive activities to be very successful. I often find myself using technology to extend the classroom and learning experience. In my screenwriting class I have my students upload and read each other's scripts before coming to class. This gives us more time to workshop and discuss their scripts.

What keeps me teaching is the interaction with my students. They keep me on my toes, and continuing to look for new and innovative ways to teach them.

-Chelsea Wayant