**Statement of Teaching Philosophy**

Ashley Johnson

It is my wish as an educator to first create an atmosphere of conversation for my students. I believe that the best classrooms are discussion based, offering students the freedom and opportunity to ask and answer questions. I believe that a classroom should be a space where students are encouraged to voice their beliefs and are open to hearing and accepting their peers’ ideas. Knowledge is a fluid conversation, always changing and growing, so I would like for my students to learn to appreciate and understand the nature of knowledge in the classroom through guided, concrete practice.

I believe that it is critical to create a student-centered learning environment with real-world connections. In my experience, students are more willing to actively engage in material that they find significant, interesting, and applicable to their everyday lives or their future. For example, students who know that learning to create coherent, developed writing samples will make them marketable to employers are often more eager to participate than students who are blindly allocated what they feel are random and unimportant writing assignments. Furthermore, I believe that an approach to teaching across disciplines is effective. The inclusion of multiple contexts and writing styles in a classroom assists students to be prepared for the classes and roles they will encounter as they move forward.

Furthermore, as an academic, I acknowledge that I will always be learning, both from my colleagues and my students. Therefore, I must approach my classes with an attitude of humility, and a readiness to research and find desired answers. Lastly, central to my philosophy is that Christ has uniquely prepared me for His service, and no matter where I am placed, it is my duty to offer a Christ-centered perspective and a Christ-like grace to my students. I strive to show my students Christ in my actions and speech, through the emphasis that each student in the classroom is important and should be challenged and given the opportunity to succeed.

Finally, I believe that teaching first-year English offers a unique opportunity to impact students from the moment they step on campus. Because I believe the goal of teaching is to assist students to become holistically prepared for the life they envision, first year writing is the most effective setting to help students develop writing, reading, time management, and communication practices that will allow them to be successful in future courses and life after college. I enjoy working with first-year students and desire to see students discover that they are capable and prepared for their academic journeys through positive affirmation and constructive criticism. I believe that instructors are crucial to students’ retention. Thus, I desire to be a teacher that encourages students and instills a desire in them to continue in their academic careers.