

Jennifer C. Greenfield – Statement of Teaching Philosophy and Interests

I seek a tenure-track faculty position in social work because I am proud to be a social worker and I am passionate about training new generations of social workers. As a community organizer, I have experienced the transformative power of social workers who help clients tell their stories in public forums while connecting those stories to policy using the best evidence available. I strive to employ similar strategies in the classroom, helping students to connect their own experiences and those of their clients with the problems and policies we study, and encouraging them to take action by employing both interpersonal and research skills. Regardless of the level of practice for which each student is training, I emphasize the interconnectedness of practice with individuals, organizations, communities and societies.

I have been teaching independently at the Masters level since 2010. As a professor, I strive to create a collaborative, strengths-based environment in the classroom so that students from diverse backgrounds can connect course content to their own personal and professional experience. I use a mixture of pedagogical techniques: brief lectures to introduce new material; small and large group discussion to explore how course content connects with practice; and brainstorming sessions, case studies, and other interactive activities to practice new skills and to encourage creative approaches to problem-solving. I believe strongly in experiential learning as well; to this end, I assign projects that require hands-on activities – such as meeting with legislators and drafting op-eds for local newspapers – paired with opportunities to reflect on and critically analyze these experiences.

As an instructor at the George Warren Brown School of Social Work, I have primarily taught policy courses. My goals in these courses are three-fold: students learn the content of the major, relevant policies; they build an understanding of the process of policy-making and the role of advocacy; and they practice skills necessary to impact the policy-making process. My advocacy and community organizing experience informs my teaching, and my relationships with policy-makers and advocacy organizations serve as invaluable sources for guest lectures and course projects. I believe that my first responsibility as a professor is to model the values and skills I expect my students to develop; therefore, I share stories of my own advocacy activities (past and present), and I demonstrate how my own research questions are driven by the social problems and policies we are studying.

As my course evaluations show, students respond well to my teaching style and consistently give me scores at the top of the evaluation scale and well above both department and University averages. For instance, last year I received a score of 4.8 on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) in response to the question, “Overall, I was satisfied with the quality of teaching in this course.” The department average for this question was 4.25. At the same time, I know that professional development is a life-long endeavor, and I will continue to take advantage of formal and informal training opportunities to improve my teaching.

I also recognize that mentorship is an important aspect of the faculty role. As an academic advisor for MSW students, I have advised students on course selection and practicum placement while also conducting practicum site visits. Additionally, I have been an informal peer mentor for incoming cohorts of doctoral students, and have supervised both Masters and PhD students

who were research assistants on projects I have led. Mentors like Drs. Nancy Morrow-Howell and Edward Lawlor have been critically important to my own professional development, and I hope to be able to follow their example as I provide guidance and encouragement to new social work practitioners and researchers.

In the MPH and MSW programs at the Brown School, I have taught both Health Policy and Administration and Social Policy and Aging. I have also assisted with a practice course, Geriatric Interdisciplinary Teams, which was cross-listed in graduate programs in Medicine, Nursing, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Psychology, Public Health, and Social Work. In addition to these courses, I am prepared to teach courses at Chicago's School of Social Administration such as: Social Intervention: Policies and Programs; Organizations, Management, and Social Policy; and Evaluation of Social Welfare Programs and Policies. I would also be happy to assist with SSA's Social Work with Older Adults program, as well as the Graduate Program in Health Administration and Policy.