My teaching philosophy has been developed through my experiences as a student and as a teaching assistant for several courses during graduate school. It is informed by 3 major values: 1) **student self-confidence**, 2) **expansion of worldviews**, and 3) **experiential learning**.

First, empowering underrepresented students to feel confident and excited about their contributions to the field of ecology is critical for their success and for the success of the field as a whole. To help foster **self-confidence** in students, I believe it is important to explain how course content is relevant and useful for society and our lives, so that students understand the value of the content, which has been shown to motivate and boost rates of learning. Meeting students where they are individually can help them feel seen, which is critical to helping them level-up from their respective starting positions of learning. Finally, reminding them that they are all "capable of doing good work", regardless of their current position or prior preparation, is critical for boosting self-confidence. For example, If they feel more self-confident, they will be more confident in their own ability to make decisions. This will be critical in the future as either a graduate student (i.e. designing their own research projects) or a professional (i.e. making decisions about a project when you're working with a time limit or budget limitations). This independence may be especially critical in ecology jobs that have a fieldwork component, where decisions need to be made about the practicality and health and safety of the team while in sometimes remote physical locations. Students need to feel empowered about their abilities and decision-making without the support of a teacher telling them what to do.

Next, facilitating a space for students to **expand their worldviews** is imperative for students to be able to grasp complex ecological concepts. Students are best equipped when they 1) have the ability to see an issue from several viewpoints and perspectives, 2) can recognize situations where they may never be able to fully understand other worldviews, and 3) see the value of holding space for other worldviews and possibly learning from them. Many topics and challenges that ecologists or land managers face are inherently complex, making the ability to see and understand nuance very important. For example, addressing the growing issue of wildfire in California requires looking not only at the ecological considerations of managing forests differently, but also understanding the atmospheric/meteorological components of climate change, and finally addressing the social, cultural, and historical context within which this problem has arisen. Many different stakeholders will need to collaborate and work together to mitigate this issue, which requires participants to understand the context of the other parties working with them. When students graduate and enter the workforce, they will need to have the ability to navigate these nuances and address parallel complexities.

Finally, **experiential learning** is essential for a comprehensive education in ecology. For a field that directly studies the outdoor natural world, it only makes sense that in-the-field experience would be necessary. For students to spend all their time indoors focused on a topic that is tangible and often easy to observe outdoors would be remiss and lacking an incredible learning opportunity. To really know something, it helps to have experienced it firsthand, and there are so many opportunities in the field of ecology for this to happen. I saw this in action when I served as an instructor in a non-profit organization, teaching elementary school children about the conservation of water and water systems. In addition to classroom modules, we led the children

on field trips to the local County park, where we hosted interactive activities (i.e. looked at contents of local river water, identified species of water-dwelling invertebrates). Seeing their eyes light up when they connected the dots between pollution sources and the water conditions in buckets in front of them was a compelling example of the value of experiential learning. One of my own experiences of this in graduate school was the opportunity to attend and watch a prescribed burn event. Because a majority of my PhD research is focused on prescribed fire effects on oak trees, attending in person gave me a clearer sense of the operational complexity of organizing a prescribed burn, and helped me better conceptualize the research questions I could feasibly ask and the data I could realistically collect. Therefore, this experience helped improve the quality of my research planning and results. In the future as an instructor, I hope to leverage these past experiences and use existing professional connections to identify opportunities for my own students to attend field trips or other in-person learning opportunities, where possible. This will not only help them absorb information better, but directly understand what it feels like to be in-person in several settings where future jobs (i.e. field biologist, park ranger) will take them, and help them know whether it's the right type of work setting for them.

Mentorship and the ability to work with students in a one-on-one setting is also incredibly important and rewarding to me. During graduate school I have had the opportunity to directly mentor two undergraduate students, incorporating them into my research team and teaching them field-based data collection skills as well as data management skills. As part of a program for underrepresented undergraduate students in STEM, one of these students and I received a Mentorship Award (from the Schmidt Family Foundation) to fund research-related stipends and cover field equipment expenses. Crafting the application and project budget together was a very constructive experience for both of us, and throughout our time working together, I was also able to give her advice on the process of applying to graduate school. I am very passionate about future opportunities to collaborate with and mentor students one-on-one, especially students that have had fewer privileges in their journey toward academia and STEM research. Because navigating post-graduation is not always easy, I'm also motivated to help them identify their specific career aspirations in the field of ecology.

I believe I would fit well at an institution that prioritizes the quality of the educational experience of the student, and therefore, the quality of teaching those students, rather than an institution which devotes more resources to research endeavors than teaching endeavors. My past experiences teaching at the elementary school, undergraduate, and graduate levels have prepared me to understand that there is nuance with every stage of life, but learning is a continual process. Meeting students where they are and building their self-confidence, helping expand their worldviews, and facilitating in-person learning experiences are lasting values that will drive and guide the way I help students.